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Rochester RHIO and Department of Veterans Affairs Partner to Support Better Patient Care

Canandaigua VA Medical Center is now participating in the Rochester RHIO's Health Information Exchange, improving Veterans' and caregivers' experiences.

ROCHESTER, N.Y. May 8, 2017 — The Department of Veterans Affairs' Canandaigua VA Medical Center is now participating in the Rochester RHIO's (Regional Health Information Organization) community Health Information Exchange (HIE). RHIO services support better patient care for the region's Veterans by connecting VA providers to Rochester RHIO services, which span 13 counties.

Many Veterans receive care from both VA and community providers. Participation in RHIO services will allow authorized VA users to securely look up medical information from community provider visits in the RHIO's clinical query tool, called Explore (with patient consent). By viewing secure data, clinicians will have access to a more comprehensive patient health record, which is important in determining a Veteran's care and treatment plan. Veterans will also receive better coordinated care when seen by multiple providers.

Nationally-recognized studies have shown that access to Rochester RHIO services results in more seamless patient care with fewer repeated tests, faster treatment, lower medical costs and a decreased risk of medical errors due to incomplete patient records.

"Our partnership with the VA represents the culmination of considerable perseverance and foresight by both organizations," says Jill Eisenstein, chief executive officer and president of Rochester RHIO. "This is our first step in expanding connectivity between VA and community healthcare providers. We look forward to collaborating with regional VA staff to help improve the quality and efficiency of healthcare for our Veterans."

"After years of working through various barriers, we are excited to partner with RHIO to provide secure health information access to VA providers. This will allow for improved continuity of care and help to reduce duplication of testing and services; with the ultimate goal being improved patient care for our Veterans, and reduced healthcare costs," says Thomas A. Rocco, Jr., MD, FACP, FACC, Research Program Coordinator and Research Integrity Officer at the Canandaigua VA Medical Center.

In addition to radiology reports and images, data available through the RHIO's health information exchange includes hospital admission and discharge transactions, hospital reports, medication history, lab reports, and basic demographic information. Other services available through Rochester RHIO include digital image exchange, hospitalization alerts, direct messaging, electronic results delivery, and public health reporting.

Rochester RHIO is part of the Statewide Health Information Network for New York (SHIN-NY), a "network of networks" that links it to New York's seven other regional Qualified Entities (QEs) – from Buffalo to the Bronx. This allows healthcare providers from each QE to exchange and access records securely across the State. As a RHIO participant, VA users will also have this capability.

"Our providers will begin RHIO training on Explore access to Rochester RHIO in May of this year," says Dr. Rocco. "Ultimately, if Federal administration allows, we would like to see availability of secure two-way health information viewing between community and VA providers, to enhance patient care even more in the Rochester/Monroe/Finger Lakes communities."

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About Rochester RHIO

Rochester RHIO is a secure electronic health information exchange serving authorized medical providers and over one million consenting patients in Monroe, Allegany, Chemung, Genesee, Livingston, Ontario, Orleans, Schuyler, Seneca, Steuben, Wayne, Wyoming and Yates counties in Upstate New York. The service allows a medical care team to share records across institutions and practices, making patient information available wherever and whenever needed to provide the best care. Patients benefit from fewer repeated tests, easier second opinions, a reduced risk of mistakes caused by poor handwriting or incomplete records, and more informed care during office visits and emergencies. It is a Qualified Entity of the Statewide Health Information Network of New York (SHIN-NY). Health care professionals and patients can learn more by visiting RochesterRHIO.org or by calling 877-865-RHIO (7446).

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