

**FLORIDA AGENCY FOR HEALTHCARE ADMINISTRATION ANNOUNCES PARTNERSHIP
WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE**

*~Partnership marks the first time the Defense Department and a non-federal entity form network
to share electronic medical records~*

TALLAHASSEE – Florida’s Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA), together with the Department of Defense (DoD), today announced the formation of a partnership to pursue an interoperable network for sharing electronic medical information.

This pilot collaboration between the State of Florida and the DoD is a model initiative between a state and the federal government to create a mechanism to share and exchange personal health information and data. Through this relationship, health care providers who treat current and former military personnel and their families will have an opportunity to electronically access and exchange personal health information about their patients held by the DoD. When fully implemented, this initiative will improve providers’ ability to access and share information that may be used to treat uniformed and retired personnel at DoD and non-military locations within the state of Florida.

“On behalf of all Floridians, I am honored the Department of Defense has selected our state as the inaugural site for this groundbreaking exchange of electronic health information,” Secretary Agwunobi said. “This partnership will not only enhance the quality of health care services provided to Florida’s active and retired military personnel and their families, it will strengthen Florida’s efforts to bring this vital health information technology to Floridians state wide.”

In 2004, President George W. Bush called for all Americans to have a privacy-protected electronic medical record by 2014. In August 2006, he expanded this initiative by calling on federal agencies providing healthcare to electronically share health information with each other and also with their private sector partners to enhance the quality and continuity of care for their beneficiaries.

“Today the Military Health System and the State of Florida begin an unprecedented partnership to exchange healthcare information that will enhance quality and efficiency for our mutual beneficiaries,” said Dr. Stephen Jones, Acting Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs. “We hope to use the successes of this collaboration as a model to form sharing agreements with other states and healthcare entities in the future. It is an important step forward for healthcare IT.”

This new partnership between the State of Florida and the DoD, which will be executed through the Tampa Bay RHIO, a state- and privately-funded entity, is the first of its kind.

The location of this pilot project will be the Tampa Bay area, with the Tampa Bay RHIO taking the lead in developing the interface with AHLTA, the Military Health System’s (MHS) electronic health record system.

The MHS has approximately 700,000 beneficiaries who are residents or part time residents of the State of Florida, in addition to a large number of beneficiaries who visit the state and may find themselves in need of healthcare during their visit. Because of the comprehensiveness of the clinical data AHLTA collects, and because of the high number of active duty and retired military and their dependents living in or visiting the state of Florida, DoD has the ability to provide vital information to Florida’s physicians to assist them with the care they provide to

these Service members and their families, while at the same time stimulating the further development of Florida's HIT network and its ability to share electronic health information.

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