

James L. Holly, M.D.

Press Release

For Immediate Release

Greater Houston Healthconnect Health Information Exchange Comes to Beaumont
Hotel Elegante

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"The foundation of excellent patient-centered care is access to all of a patient's healthcare information at the point of care. This is only possible with a community-wide health information exchange (HIE). Southeast Texas patients' 'safety, satisfaction and successful care will all be enhanced by all providers, hospitals, nursing homes, home health and other health care organizations belonging to the same HIE.'" (James L. Holly, MD, Quote for HIE Brochure)

For physicians, nurse practitioners, physician assistants, nurses, indeed for all health care workers, and for all public leaders, employers, and residents of SE Texas, this is a memorable day. It will forever be known as the day when the public laying of the cornerstone for the transformation of healthcare in Southeast Texas took place.

Fifteen years ago, on March 31, 1998, when Southeast Texas Medical Associates signed a \$650,000 check to purchase an electronic medical record and subsequently on January 26, 1999, when SETMA completed our first patient encounter with an EMR, it was obvious that our challenge was to bring all of a patient's healthcare information to all providers at all office, hospital, emergency department, nursing home, hospice, home health, pharmacy, physical therapy, primary care, and specialty visits.

In 2008, SETMA obtained the software with which to create a regional health information exchange in pursuit of this goal. After investing almost \$1,000,000, which was to be SETMA's gift to Southeast Texans, it became obvious to us that the barriers to our success were insurmountable. Yet, because the HIE is critical to

the promise of electronic patient management, we are delighted today to join with the Greater Houston Healthconnect Health Information Exchange. Of course, we look forward to the upgrading of the name to acknowledge that the Healthconnect HIE has now outgrown the geographic designation "Great Houston." However, whether or until that identification is upgraded, SETMA is delighted to embrace this last step toward the connecting of all participants in healthcare delivery in the counties of Jefferson, Orange, Hardin, Liberty, Chambers, Tyler, Newton and Jasper and others.

January 26, 1999, the first day SETMA saw patients "electronically," it was slow, awkward and hard. In fact, three of the patients I personally saw that day thought that I cared more about the computer than about their health. Yet, those early missteps were the foundation to the powerful tools we now use for the continued improvement of our patients' care. The fact that we publicly report our providers' performances by provider name on over 300 quality metrics at www.jameslhollymd.com is demonstrative that the early price we paid in cost, effort and energy has resulted in a return on investment in quality medicine which would have been impossible without those birth pains. No doubt, like EMR, the HIE will involve missteps and pain, but the result will be worth it all.

Today is both a conclusion, as it initiates the final critical step in electronic health management, and it is a beginning, as it initiates all healthcare providers in Southeast Texas being able to contribute their care of and knowledge about all patients to a powerful data base for the welfare of all patients. And, the fact that their contribution can be done in a secure, confidential and dependable manner is an assurance to all patients that their private healthcare information will continue to be private and confidential. Patient confidence is also enhanced by their knowing each patient will control which providers and agencies will have access to their information

This is a great day; it is the first day of a great future. It is the day of fulfillment for all of us of our truly entering the 21st Century of healthcare delivery. Today, we cease to be a gaggle of independent practitioners struggling to have some and hopefully most of a patient's record available for care, and we become an active part of a great team where all of a patient's healthcare information can be used for their safety and health.

Imagine, an unconscious patient being brought to the emergency room with only a wallet to identify them. No family, no friends, no history to help with the patient's care! With the HIE in place, the treating physician opens the patient's record,

finds that the patient has diabetes and seizures and immediately initiates the correct and life-saving care. Another patient sees her personal physician and reports that she has seen a specialist. What did he say? I don't remember. What did he do? I don't remember. An hour is spent trying to get the information. In another clinic, which is participating in the HIE, the physician accesses the specialist's consultation note and moves on to give excellent care to the patient. Time is saved. Quality of care is improved and the safety of the patient's care is increased.

All of Southeast Texas should rejoice today. I assure you that SETMA does. It will be our purpose to contribute all that we can to the success of the "Greater Houston Healthconnect HIE". The beneficiary will be the health of our community and the health of our friends and neighbors.

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