



**CHARLIE CRIST**  
GOVERNOR

April 17, 2009

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APR 21 2009

COMMUNITY RESOURCES  
Agency for Health Care Administration

Secretary Holly Benson  
Agency for Health Care Administration  
2727 Mahan Drive  
Tallahassee, Florida 32308

Dear Secretary Benson:

The adoption of electronic health records that enable the exchange of medical information among providers at the point of care is an essential step to improving health care and using our health care dollars effectively. The passage of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) has provided stakeholders with an opportunity to invest in health information technology to enable better health care for Floridians. It provides state grant funding and monetary incentives to hospitals, physicians and other health care providers for the adoption of electronic health records.

To insure that these efforts are coordinated, I am requesting that the Health Information Exchange Coordinating Council (HIECC) within the Agency for Health Care Administration be designated as the State recognized public advisory group that will advise the Agency, other state agencies, public and private institutions, health care providers and other participants on the development of health information exchange in Florida.

Along with you, as Chair of the Council, the membership of the HIECC represents health care providers, health plans, consumers, health information organizations, information technology development organizations, and a representative from the Florida Department of Health. Members have expertise in state and national developments related to health information exchange, certification standards for electronic health records, and the information requirements of health care providers and as a result are in a position to advise on how Florida can maximize and ensure the most appropriate and coordinated use of funds. In addition, I ask that you expand the group to include two members from hospitals and clinics, a member from a Florida medical school and a member from the Office of Economic Recovery.

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The HIECC is charged with assisting the Agency in implementing health information exchange in Florida through a public-private partnership that is responsive to state and local needs and is inclusive of public and private participants. The HIECC will also assist the Agency in setting policies and standards for safeguarding the privacy and security of health records. With the assistance of the HIECC and others, the Agency will work to enable more health care providers and consumers to benefit from these new health information technologies.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Charlie Crist". The signature is stylized and cursive, with a large initial "C" and a long, sweeping tail.

Charlie Crist