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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## A national first for Rochester:

### **Patients can upload health care proxies so**

### **doctors have online access through Rochester RHIO**

*Excellus BlueCross BlueShield employees mark National Healthcare Decisions Day by uploading their own health care proxies to RHIO patient portal*

Rochester, N.Y.—Rochester is the first market in the nation to enable patients to upload their own advance directives to a regional health information exchange.

In a local observance of National Healthcare Decisions Day, Excellus BlueCross BlueShield employees in Rochester will be among the first to use the new Rochester RHIO patient portal to upload PDF files of their health care proxies and living wills, assuring that the documents are available to a physician whenever they are needed.

National Healthcare Decisions Day, which happens every April 16, is a collaborative effort of national, state and community organizations, as well as dedicated individual advocates, committed to ensuring that adult Americans have the information and opportunity to communicate and document their healthcare decisions.

Health care proxies and other advance directives can be stored electronically by a physician or hospital. Now, through the Rochester RHIO patient portal, consumers can help make sure they are available whenever and wherever needed. Patients also can log on to the site to provide consent for specific physicians to view their health information, and to request an audit of health care providers who have done so.

**From 10:30 to 11:30 a.m. Friday, Rochester RHIO representatives will be onsite at the Excellus BlueCross BlueShield 165 Court Street office to help employees upload health care proxies.**

### **About Advance Directives**

- A health care proxy designates an individual to make healthcare decisions on behalf of a person who is unable to communicate their preferences for treatment.
- A living will documents what kinds of medical treatments a person would or would not want at the end of life.

“The introduction of our patient portal—and its capability to make advance directives available to treating physicians and hospital staff—continues our focus

on providing value to both health care providers and their patients” said Ted Kremer, executive director of Rochester RHIO. “Patients are at the center of all health care, and this effort helps us move forward in assuring that a patients’ information and their wishes go where they go.”

“Every adult 18 and older should have a health care proxy in place,” said Patricia Bomba, M.D., vice president and medical director, geriatrics, Excellus BlueCross BlueShield. “Excellus BlueCross BlueShield is pleased to lead the way so that our employees understand and use the new Rochester RHIO patient portal.”

“We’re confident that this new tool will expand awareness so that more people complete and upload their advance directives, and use the Rochester RHIO patient portal to make sure their preferences are available to the doctor whenever they are needed,” added Bomba, who is chair of the National Healthcare Decisions Day New York State Coalition.

All 15 hospitals in the 10-county Rochester RHIO service area supply patient information to the Rochester RHIO health information exchange. Rochester RHIO has grown to serve more than 3,800 authorized health care providers and nearly 1,200 physicians. More than 430,000 patients have consented to share their health information on the exchange, including one-third of Monroe County residents.

Physicians and their staffs use Rochester RHIO to view essential patient-care information such as lab reports, test results, medication history, demographic information, radiology images and reports, hospital discharge summaries, and elder services data. The information is available over secure Internet connections wherever physicians need it to provide their patients high-quality care.

RHIO’s health information exchange helps make routine office visits run more smoothly—and helps physicians make better-informed treatment decisions in an emergency. Patients benefit from fewer repeated tests, easier second opinions, a reduced risk of mistakes, and more informed care during emergencies.

#### **About Rochester RHIO**

Rochester RHIO is a secure electronic health information exchange serving authorized medical providers and consenting patients in Monroe, Allegany, Genesee, Livingston, Ontario, Orleans, Seneca, Steuben, Wayne, Wyoming and Yates counties in Upstate New York. It makes health information available wherever and whenever needed to provide patients the best care.

Physicians and patients can learn more about Rochester RHIO by visiting [RochesterRHIO.org](http://RochesterRHIO.org) or by calling 877-865-RHIO (7446).

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