

Clinical Connect Health Information Exchange names new president



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Phyllis Szymanski, Clinical Connect Health Information Exchange.

CLINICAL CONNECT HEALTH INFORMATION EXCHANGE

By [Paul J. Gough](#) – Reporter, Pittsburgh Business Times

Phyllis Szymanski has taken over the reins of Clinical Connect Health Information Exchange, western Pennsylvania's health information exchange organization.

Szymanski replaces [Christian G. Carmody](#), who had served as president for its entire 10-year history and is also SVP of enterprise infrastructure at UPMC. Szymanski has been a director at CCHIE for eight years.

CCHIE connects disparate hospitals and health systems' medical records so that providers can access patient records smoothly for the benefit when more than one hospital and health system is involved. That includes lab results, hospitalizations, medications and other information that the patient approves. There are 21 regional health organizations that are involved in the exchange with 10 million patient records.

In an interview, Szymanski said CCHIE makes it easier for physicians to look at a patient's chart and becomes an important part of the workflow.

CCHIE members include UPMC, Excelsa Health, St. Clair Health, Washington Health System, Butler Health System and Heritage Valley Health System, among others. [Norman Mitry](#), president and CEO of Heritage Valley Health System and chair of the CCHIE board since its founding, said the Clinical Connect portal allows care providers at one hospital to see the patient's results and other information to make sure that there are no duplications or redundancies.

"It's very important for a caregiver, whether it's a physician or an advanced practice provider, to have as much information as they possibly can," Mitry said. "It's high-quality and effective to have that (Clinical Connect) information in the palm of your hand."

Szymanski said the organization wants to continue to grow and improve its services, which have been needed more than ever given the Covid-19 pandemic and its aftermath.

"We want to broaden our vision, if you will, and like many other health care organizations focus on health equity and the social determinants of health," she said. "The attention that has been put on health inequities, that's something we want to be able to assist with."

That includes not just patient information, but also helping to connect other nonmedical services like access to transportation and food banks, among others.

Mitry said CCHIE remains a big priority for local health systems and has continued to be led by the upper management of each hospital: CEO, chief information officer and chief medical officer. Several, like Mitry, have been part of Clinical Connect since the beginning in 2010.

Carmody will join the CCHIE board of directors.