

# OnTrack

July 15, 2009



at the Lackawanna Train Station - 45 Lewis Street, Binghamton, NY 13905

607.651.9150

[www.sthlny.com](http://www.sthlny.com)

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## Informational Meeting for Physicians & Practice Managers on August 5th

Get to know STHLNY and how our mission to link patients and providers through secure technology can support your goal of high quality patient care. Hear more about the technology exchange, how the patient consent process will work, ask questions, and get resources. Join us on August 5<sup>th</sup>, from 7:30-8:30am at the STHLNY Office in the former Lackawanna Train Station. This is jointly hosted by the County Medical Societies. Please RSVP by August 3<sup>rd</sup> to [info@sthlny.com](mailto:info@sthlny.com) or (607) 651-9150 if you plan to attend.



## The Question of Consent



Many of the doctors' offices and hospitals in the Southern Tier already use electronic medical records (**EMRs**), and a growing number of patients are also taking advantage of programs that help them maintain their own personal healthcare record (**PHR**). This year, STHLNY will launch a Health Information

Exchange (**HIE**) that will link those EMRs and participating PHRs. As the network expands, patient records can be accessed across the region electronically by doctors, hospitals, labs, pharmacies, clinics and other healthcare professionals who provide services to patients. Aside from saving time (no more waiting for records), resources (less paper), and energy (no need to carry or send documents to new providers), the bigger benefit comes from having up-to-date information in the hands of the provider who needs it, at the point of care.

As the Regional Health Information Organization (**RHIO**) in the Southern Tier, STHLNY is responsible for implementing this exchange and providing additional services that will improve the quality of care in our community. We've spent the last two years building the partnerships and the technology foundation that will support the information exchange; the next phase of work centers on informing patients about the opportunity to share their records and asking for their consent to participate. Even though all patient records will be stored in the HIE, they cannot be shared without consent from the patient.

In fact, the privacy and security of these health records is not only a top priority, but sometimes a complicated issue. For example, New York's current guidelines allow minors to grant or withhold access to their medical records for certain procedures. Which procedures, who can have access, and how these restrictions would affect patient care are questions that generate great debate among providers and consumer advocates. As a result, the first release of the health information exchange will disallow access to any medical records for minors aged 10-17, except in case of emergency. So while a child's regular doctors would still have their own paper or electronic medical records, exchanging the information between doctors and facilities would still have to be done the old fashioned way – on paper, carried in hand by the patient.

## Consent, continued...

Clearly, this new way of sharing health information is generating lots of questions. The health information exchange is scheduled to go "live" this Fall with Lourdes, UHS and Southern New York Neurosurgical Group. Other practices will come on board over time. But before that, STHLNY will be getting the word out to consumers at every opportunity. The next issue of On Track will devote extra pages to the topic of consent, and STHLNY will be using the newspapers, radio, and local TV to educate and engage the public on participating in the HIE.

We will also be making presentations to community groups, service organizations, business and health associations and employers, as well as hosting information sessions at our office in Downtown Binghamton. If you would like to have someone from STHLNY speak to your group, please give us a call at (607) 651-9150 or email [info@sthlny.com](mailto:info@sthlny.com).

### PARTNER SPOTLIGHT

## CARDIOLOGY ASSOCIATES

**CARDIOLOGY ASSOCIATES'** mission is *"to provide the finest quality comprehensive, state-of-the-art cardiac services to enhance the quality and duration of life of the patients we serve."*

Their website ([www.cardioassoc.com](http://www.cardioassoc.com)) offers pages of important information about the heart -- its functions, conditions, procedures, and risk factors, as well as recommendations for a heart-healthy lifestyle.

Cardiology Associates is a founding member of STHLNY and cardiologist Dr. Afzal ur Rehman, who specializes in Cardiac Electrophysiology and Interventional Cardiology, is the physician representative on the STHLNY Board of Directors.



### FIRST FRIDAY ART WALK EXHIBITIONS

#### Open House for the Community

STHLNY is pleased to open its doors each month to the community by participating in the First Friday Art Walk, an open house-style evening that not only provides a gallery for local artists but also gives us the chance to talk with healthcare consumers, build visibility at our unique location, and be an active member of our community.



Coming up next month:

#### **"Dance on the Walk"**

Ballroom Dance Exhibition

by Southern Tier chapter of USA Dance  
and

#### **"Celebrating Dance"**

Painting by local artist and dancer Chuck Williamson

#### **July 3rd, 2009, 6-9PM at our offices**

Dance performance and an artwork exhibit, where guests can participate in lessons and social dancing as well as view paintings of ballroom dancers.

### WHAT'S COMING UP

- ✓The Question of Consent – Part II: *What's in it for me? Privacy, the Consent Process, and The Benefits to Patients*
- ✓Partner Spotlight: Southern Tier Neurosurgical Group
- ✓Our New and Improved website!