



News Release

For Immediate Release

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FirstHealth of the Carolinas and Mid-Carolina Physicians Organization Choose ProviderLink™ to Support FirstShare Network

Cary, North Carolina, (PRWeb) December 14, 2005 – ProviderLink, Inc., a healthcare I.T. communications company dedicated to helping clients build results-driven online communities, announced today that FirstHealth of the Carolinas, a non-profit healthcare network serving 15 counties in mid-Carolina, and the Mid-Carolina Physician Organization (MCPO) have chosen ProviderLink to support the online exchange of patient information. Labeled FirstShare, the network will enable physician practices to exchange information electronically, increase practice efficiencies and improve the quality of external communications. MCPO is a regional network of leading physicians partnering with key community organizations including: FirstHealth Moore Regional Hospital, Health Care Savings, MedCost, FirstCarolinaCare and other health plans and employers. The goal of MCPO is to provide affordable, high quality medical care.

Dave Dillehunt, FirstHealth's chief information officer, states, "The FirstShare network is a major first step toward a community health record." Dillehunt adds, "ProviderLink's technology allows for the easy migration from unstructured (paper-based) data, to structured information exchange. Providers along the entire technology continuum can use the FirstShare network."

Through FirstShare, physicians now have the opportunity to join an existing network of ProviderLink users throughout the region, including: Moore Regional Hospital, Richmond Memorial Hospital, Montgomery Memorial Hospital, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina, FirstCarolinaCare Plan, Home Medical Equipment Providers, Skilled Nursing Facilities, Moore County Home Health & Hospice and the Moore Free Care Clinic. With the inclusion of physicians, every type of provider in the region can electronically and securely store, refer and share critical patient information, forms and orders online, abandoning their reliance on telephones, fax machines, couriers and postal mail.

Benefits for physician practices include reduced dependency on paper, lower administrative costs, online audit trail of all external communications, elimination of lost diagnostic and lab orders, and online sharing of critical patient information with other providers and hospitals.

Solution Embraces Physician Groups with Paper or Electronic Medical Records (EMR)

At the heart of ProviderLink's design is a technology that accommodates the communication needs of all providers, regardless of their EMR adoption rate. Dillehunt states, "The beauty of ProviderLink is that it solves the issue of how to have online communications in an environment where provider's medical records are both paper-based and electronic." With the use of barcodes and imaging, paper-based providers can bring their communications online immediately, precluding the need to implement an EMR first. Don Hendrickson, chief executive officer of MCPO comments, "Physician practices can communicate with other providers immediately and instantly realize the benefits of online communications, whether or not they have an EMR." For example, Pinehurst Cardiology Consultants, a five physician specialty practice, sees the benefit of an EMR, and has plans to implement one. However, today they use the FirstShare network to capture patient information and send and respond to external information requests. Pinehurst Surgical, a thirty physician all surgical practice, which currently uses an EMR, plans to use the FirstShare network to communicate patient information. William Edsel,

Pinehurst Surgical chief executive officer, said “The FirstShare network will enhance our EMR by allowing other providers to securely communicate patient information with us electronically.” For example, referring physicians can complete and submit a referral online and even attach all the related clinical documentation in the same online message, enabling Pinehurst Surgical to expedite receipt of the referral and respond online. Edsel continued, “Patients will benefit by not having to repeat demographic and insurance information, and they will not have to wait for staff to locate missing order information. Overall, we anticipate a more efficient flow of patient information between area providers.”

Grant funds subsidized by FirstHealth of the Carolinas give providers the opportunity for initial participation in the FirstShare network. Continued participation requires a nominal monthly fee. Roger McKinney, ProviderLink project director, sees the FirstShare model as an excellent step forward in the quest for regional patient information exchange. McKinney states, “FirstHealth of the Carolinas and MCPO have stepped up to the plate and championed the movement towards unified information exchange. Their leadership will benefit patients and providers in the mid-Carolina region.”

About ProviderLink -

ProviderLink is an I.T. communications company providing an innovative technology and methodology to successfully create online healthcare communities and information exchange initiatives. Using ProviderLink's Internet-based tools, clients are empowered to manage all of their communication transports such as fax, EDI, forms, web portals and paper communications through a single interface, workflow and patient-centric audit trail. Customers include major hospitals, post-acute care facilities, medical equipment companies, physician practices, private payors, Medicaid programs and RHIO initiatives. ProviderLink combines practical, non-invasive and cost-effective Internet-based technology and consulting services to help clients implement best practices around their communication workflows. Most important, ProviderLink empowers its customers with both the vision and tools they need to drive provider adoption of online communications while creating a smooth migration path to automating information exchanges with all of their communication partners. Contact ProviderLink at www.providerlink.com or 866.398.2804.

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