

RESOLUTION 073 - 2008

A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF MONROE COUNTY, FLORIDA IN SUPPORT OF TELEMEDICINE UTILIZING ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY AS A KEY TOOL TO BRING BETTER HEALTH CARE AND HEALTH EDUCATION TO FLORIDA'S RURAL COMMUNITIES.

WHEREAS, telemedicine has been defined as the use of telecommunications to provide medical information and services; and

WHEREAS, health information technology advances and innovations include electronic health records, computerized decision support systems, home health, and other technologies that store, protect, retrieve, and transfer clinical, administrative, and financial information electronically within health care settings; and

WHEREAS, rural communities like Monroe County are facing shortages in specialists, nurses, and mainland clinical care can be difficult for residents to access; and

WHEREAS, telemedicine can expand access, increase coordination, and improve the quality of health care services; improve and expand the training of health care providers; and expand and improve the quality of health information available to health care providers, patients, and their families; and

WHEREAS, telepathology (the sending of pathology slides electronically) can be utilized for diagnostic consultation, and teleradiology (the sending of x-rays, CT scans, or MRI's electronically) is a common application of telemedicine in use today; and

WHEREAS, videoconferencing technology achieves interactive "real time" consultations from urban-to-rural hospitals and locations; and

WHEREAS, almost all specialties of medicine have been found to be conducive to this kind of electronic inter-active consultation, including psychiatry, internal medicine, rehabilitation, cardiology, pediatrics, obstetrics, and gynecology and neurology; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) has created the Office of Health Information Technology (OHIT) within the HRSA to promote health information technology advances and innovations; and

WHEREAS, OHIT oversees the Telehealth Network Grant Program through the Office for the Advancement of Telehealth (OAT) in support of telehealth networks that provide services in different settings (e.g. long-term health care facilities, hospitals, community health centers or clinics, physician offices, schools, assisted living facilities, etc.) to demonstrate how telehealth networks can be used, and has awarded over \$250 million in grants to deploy electronic information and telecommunications to provide clinical care at a distance, patient and professional education, and health administration; and

WHEREAS, the Monroe County Board of Commissioners recognizes that advanced technology should be a key part of the strategy to address clinician shortages in remote areas to meet the health care needs of our aging population, to minimize the vulnerability of health systems and their patients to medical errors, to provide cost-effective care to the uninsured, and to be prepared to meet medical threats of bio-terrorism and infectious diseases;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF MONROE COUNTY, FLORIDA that:

1. The Monroe County Board of Commissioners hereby supports the development and promotion of telemedicine technology innovations in the State of Florida to bring better health care and health education to rural communities, and urges the Florida Legislature to approve funding to support pilot programs to demonstrate the value of telehealth networks to improve health services to Florida's underserved communities.
2. The Clerk is hereby directed to forward copies of this resolution to: Rep. Ron Saunders, District 120; Senator Larcenia Bullard, District 39; U.S. Congresswoman Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, District 18; Governor Charlie Crist; and also to Rep. Rene Garcia, Chair of the Florida House Committee on Health Innovation; and Senator Durell Peaden, Chair of the Florida Senate Standing Committee on Health and Human Services Appropriations.

Passed and adopted by the Monroe County Board of Commissioners at a meeting held this 19th day of March, 2008.

Mayor McCoy
 Mayor Pro Tem Di Gennaro
 Commissioner Murphy
 Commissioner Neugent
 Commissioner Spehar

Yes
Yes
 Not present
Yes
Yes

2008 MAR 31 PM 1:02
 DANNY L. KOLHAGE
 CLK. CIR. CL.
 MONROE COUNTY, FL.

FILED FOR RECORD



ATTEST: DANNY L. KOLHAGE, CLERK
 By: [Signature]
 Deputy Clerk

MONROE COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
 By: [Signature]
 Mayor Charles "Sonny" McCoy

MONROE COUNTY ATTORNEY
 APPROVED AS TO FORM:
[Signature]
 SUZANNE A. HUTTON
 COUNTY ATTORNEY
 Date 3/26/08