

# Orion Health starts \$9.6m health IT project

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Health technology company Orion Health has just received \$4.78m in funding from Technology New Zealand, forming part of a \$9.6m project which will fast-track its development of a revolutionary health IT product, expand its business into new sectors in this market and double its New Zealand-based development staff numbers.

Ian McCrae, Orion Health CEO, likened the company's progress to that of Olympic rowing: "just like rowing races, this industry is all about momentum. If we can get going, it just carries on and this significant influx of funding gives us a massive boost in momentum."

Mr McCrae says this should play a strong part in the company's goal of being New Zealand's first \$100m software company in the next few years.

He said work had already begun on the two-year project to develop a highly modularised Health Information System. The component system uses modules to create highly complex applications and he believes Orion Health can use this Lego-like building block approach to be at the forefront of a new logic-complex technology which historically has been difficult to achieve.

"We are throwing all our resources behind this as it's crucial to get to market quickly. The process itself is commercially sensitive but the outcome will be a completely new way of putting health IT software together to meet a wide variety of needs."

Mr McCrae said large hospitals typically are being swamped with isolated islands of information from as many as 500 - 1,000 different, stand-alone software products. All have different parts of information relating to a patient or activity.

Orion Health aims to develop a common functionality that will allow this information to be easily shared, minimising errors and adding to the overall efficiency and workflow of a health organisation.

"We are working right at the edge with technologies that are very new; so new in fact that Orion Health is developing some of these as we go and it opens up other possibilities that these in turn may become available to other companies."

Joseph Stuart, Technology New Zealand business manager said: "We have made this investment because it will enable Orion Health to move to market quicker with a bigger and better product. This should lead to the company achieving the international growth it is seeking and reinforce its position as New Zealand's leading software exporter."

Orion Health's existing clinical systems products help hospitals and doctors streamline patient information and data exchange across hospitals, clinics and countries. The new product will expand the company's product suite both across existing areas as well as opening doors into new markets; the \$9.6m project fast-tracked by the \$4.78m funding.

Orion Health is also poised to double its development staff to around 240, based primarily in Auckland.

The company plans to grow its Wellington development studio and is considering setting up an additional development function in Christchurch.

"We are actively looking for graduate developers through to experienced development managers," said Ian McCrae.

"Our international offices and markets are a great springboard for people wanting to work overseas, and we are putting a lot of emphasis on making Orion Health a fun place to work here in New Zealand, with company breakfasts, innovation days and active encouragement for staff to follow their personal goals outside work."

Orion Health is New Zealand's largest locally-owned software exporter and has won a slew of awards internationally and in New Zealand, where it was named last week as Auckland exporter of the year.

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