

Canadian bonanza for Orion

By CLAIRE McENTEE - The Dominion Post | Monday, 04 February 2008

Auckland software company Orion Health expects to earn "several tens of millions of dollars" from a deal that will see it become the preferred supplier of electronic health record software in Canada.

Orion Health's Concerto Physician Portal has been selected by Canada Health Infoway as the preferred solution for Canadian provinces that are looking to move to electronic health records. Infoway is a Government-funded, non-profit organisation that invests with public sector partners to improve electronic health records across Canada.

The portal is a web-based application that integrates patient information from different sources into a single record.

Orion Health employs 250 people and has offices in New Zealand, Australia, Canada, the United States and Britain.

Chief executive Ian McCrae says the company is already supplying the provinces of Alberta, Quebec and New Brunswick with health record solutions, and has won most of the electronic health record business in Canada to date.

A deal with another province could soon be announced, he says.

"Now instead of every other province going through the same tender process, they have a preferred supplier. "They can buy a different product but most follow Infoway's recommendation as a lot of federal money goes via Infoway to the provinces."

He says the value of the deal is difficult to estimate as different provinces spend different amounts on electronic health records.

"Essentially every province in Canada will buy one of these and every one of the purchases will be between \$10 million and \$100 million.

"Our part of that is usually a quarter, sometimes a half. So the deal is worth several tens of millions if not more."

Mr McCrae says New Zealand should follow Canada in adopting electronic health records.

At the moment, the emphasis here is on sharing information electronically as the need arises.

"We don't have an electronic health record where Dr Brown in a certain facility can log on, providing he has access rights, to Jane Doe's record and see all her medical information from GPs, laboratories, clinics and hospitals."

New Zealand has a National Health Index that hospitals and other health providers use to hold certain demographic details, and the HealthLink network, which allows health providers to exchange standardised medical information online.