

FIRST PHASE OF SINGAPORE NATIONAL EHR GOES LIVE

By [Jianggan Li](#) | 3 May 2011

After months of system implementation and user acceptance testing, the first phase of Singapore's US\$144 million National Electronic Health Record system (NEHR) went live last Saturday (30 April).

A copy of the summary information from different hospitals will be held at a central repository, while links and pointers will be provided should care providers require more details information, stored under different care providers' own systems.

The contract was awarded to a consortium comprising of Accenture, Oracle and Orion Health on 25 June 2010. The first phase implementation is expected to last until June 2012.

"We believed and we still believe that off the shelf projects have moved along and we could actually move to the market with a number of solutions which together can deliver an integrated national electronic health record," Dr Sarah Muttitt, CIO of Ministry of Health Holdings (MOHH), told FutureGov Asia Pacific.

MOHH is the corporate arm of Singapore's health ministry, managing all the public sector care providers in the island state. It also owns Integrated Health Information Systems, a company which manages all the public health IT centrally.

The holding company also owns Agency for Integrated Care (AIC), which is tasked to "smooth the transition of patients from one care setting to another".

Singapore's public healthcare system had been divided into two clusters until quite recently. With the two taking different paths in electronic medical record systems, the country rolled out EMR eXchange (EMRX), a system allowing public hospitals to exchange inpatient discharge summaries electronically, in 2004. Other patient information including medication data, radiology reports and laboratory tests were later included in the EMRX.

Singapore's public sector healthcare has recently been reshuffled from the original two clusters to five; and the current division of clusters is region-based, allowing best collaboration and sharing of services.

MOHH has recently awarded the contract for the general practitioners clinical information management and electronic medical record system to SingTel. About 50 general practitioners will be equipped with a standardised IT system during the first phase of implementation.

"Our Health Minister is very particular on delivering healthcare in a different way," Muttitt told FutureGov Asia Pacific.

According to Muttitt, with the introduction and enforcement of international standards, 'ability to exchange data globally when that comes to reality' has also been embedded in the design and implementation of NEHR.

Many healthcare stakeholders in Singapore whom FutureGov Asia Pacific has spoken to referred to NEHR as "MOHH's project". In response to that, Muttitt said education and engagement will be strengthened; however with so many stakeholders on board, this will be a long process.

Asked about how similar projects could be undertaken in larger economies (Singapore has a population of only five million), Muttitt says while leadership, governance and engagement are vital, continuous investment is also indispensable for the success of any EHR project.

"Unfortunately this kind of stuff does not come cheap," she noted.

PHOTOS



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