

IB Salut deploys unified EHR to provide better care to patients

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MENORCA, SPAIN – IB Salu, the health service of the Balearic Islands in Spain, has implemented a new unified electronic health record across the Balearic region of Menorca, Mallorca, Ibiza, Formentera and Cabrera islands.

The new EHR, based on solutions from Orion Health, Oracle, and Fujitsu services, is expected to connect inhabitants and visitor patients with physicians on the islands.

Public officials said in order to improve patient care and safety, they chose for the Balearic Islands a portal-based electronic health record (EHR) solution to make medical records readily available and accessible to any health professional in any place that would care for them.

Although the resident population of 1.2 million people is spread over eight municipalities, nearly 40 percent of the population is concentrated in the capital city of Palma de Mallorca, said IB Salut officials, making it difficult to deliver public services consistently.

Officials of IB Salut said this problem gets worse as the healthcare system in the Balearic Islands is fragmented across several organizations including primary care, ambulances, hospitals, and long-term care facilities.

"We felt very strongly that we needed to modernize our medical facilities to help address the needs of our residents as well as people that were vacationing in our area. While we have high quality medical facilities, we needed to upgrade our network to ensure the highest quality medical treatment for patients," said Luis Fernando Manzanero, CIO of IB Salut.

In 2005 the ministry embarked on a long-term program to modernize its health IT systems, said IB Salut officials. The company plan was to roll out a modern and reliable health information system that could integrate healthcare information across the entire regional health network, which would include publicly funded private entities.

The initiative aimed to address the issues for patients and healthcare providers that include:

- Providing quality, accessible health services for all patients,
- Reduce accidents and unnecessary testing and treatment of patients
- Enabling providers to better diagnose patients and provide treatments, and automating manual processes to streamline the management of surgery.

In addition to the EHR, IB Salut utilized a Web-based clinical portal with the idea to better provide clinical information.

IB Salut officials said this is expected to provide a unified view of a broader selection of patient data, and enable the company to incrementally add data from different health information systems over time.

Another plus to using the portal, said company officials, was that it could be implemented in phases. Individual regions could roll out solutions quickly, providing immediate value that would help ensure buy-in from clinicians, said officials.

IB Salut selected the Concerto Portal, developed by Santa Monica-Calif.-based Orion Health, as its clinical portal.

"Medical records previously were scattered among various physician offices, hospitals and clinics, with doctors sharing some but not all patient information – and sometimes missing critical data," said Manzanero.

"This presented a number of challenges for the physicians in our region," he said. "But now, through our integrated health record system, doctors here have complete patient information. The additional information allows staff to make better clinical decisions, which leads to improved healthcare and, ultimately, better health outcomes."