

## Orion wins Northern Ireland ECR deal

Tags: Northern Ireland Northern Ireland Orion

28 Sep 2009

Northern Ireland has named Orion as the winner of a procurement for a proof of concept project for a province-wide electronic care record (ECR).

The one-year deal will be to develop a new portal-based electronic health record, predominantly for use in secondary care but linking hospitals and practices, with the potential to also link social care.

Brian McKeown, head of ICT planning, commissioning and performance management with the Health and Social Care Board for Northern Ireland, said the deal was worth just under €100,000.

He said: "We want to get something up and running to pull out data from the various systems. Essentially it will be used in secondary care-unscheduled care and particularly for those with chronic conditions."

In the proof of concept project two hospitals and two GP surgeries will be connected to an ECR, intended to be used in A&E, and for out-of-hours services.

Desmond O'Loan, project lead Health and Social Care Board for Northern Ireland said the project would install an electronic health record in Belfast Acute Hospital and Ulster City Hospital, and two GP practices. Asked on Friday when the project would begin, he told E-Health Insider "Monday".

O'Loan said "We hope to have first live users in December and all identified interfaces up and running by end of March and evaluated 3-6 months after that."

He added that around nine months ago a team of senior clinicians and those with the potential to be involved in the project visited the US and Canada to visit sites with similar systems. "From those trips we learned that the project had to be driven by doctors," McKeown said.

Initially there were several companies that were selected when the Northern Ireland went out to tender for a low cost electronic care record in April 2009. Orion eventually won from a short list that included iSoft, dbMotion and CSAM.

"It will be like a clinical portal taking basic episode information from PAS [patient administration systems] including referrals previous episodes, radiology reports and pathology reports," McKeown said.

"At the moment we do not have plans to input any information at all, it's almost like an electronic version of a casenote using structured data."

He told EHI that the planned benefits should come from improved availability of information to frontline doctors. "We hope improved availability of information will help reduce unnecessary admissions and length of time in A+E and aspects of social care." The type of information to be held on the record will include details of allergies and prescribed drugs.

If the pilot is successful the intention is to run a follow-on procurement process for a national ECR.

"We're looking at the technology to see if we can do it and what benefits we can achieve if we do for real," said O'Loan

The development of province-wide electronic health records has been a policy objective in Northern Ireland since 2005.

*Sarah Bruce and Jon Hoeksma*

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### Readers' comments



#### Spot the ball - EHI style?

1

28 Sep 09 11:04

First we hear Wales is obtaining a ground-breaking centralised LIMS services for under £8,000,0000.

Now you inform us Northern Ireland is acquiring the Holy Grail of cross care boundary shared records for €100,000.

Is there perchance a dodgy zero key in the keyboards of the Home Nation's devolved healthcare administrations? If so can they please pass the name of their equipment supplier on to England's DoH.

At these prices you really don't care whether they succeed - which is probably just as well.

#### Why not?

2

28 Sep 09 18:50

Well why wouldn't you be able to connect a couple of GPs and a couple of acutes up to a summary record for about EURO100k ? Some people have been doing this for ages. Good idea though.

BTW I think the previous poster had no problems with decimal points but they went a bit mad with zeros:-)

#### Orion are a credible organisation

3

john.aird@uhl-tr.nhs.uk

29 Sep 09 12:00

What ever the nature of the actual programme, from personal experience I can confirm that Orion are a very credible organisation with good products and people.

#### Just checking

4

01 Oct 09 14:51

Either Post No 3 above is not, as it says, from the estimable John Aird, or there is subtle "joke" hidden away in the spelling mistakes? Which please?

#### Orion

5

john.aird@uhl-tr.nhs.uk

02 Oct 09 10:41

We have worked with Orion for a long time now and they are good.