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Non-profit bodies in IT initiative

By WINSTON CHAI

WITH questions of mismanagement among charities still looming, some non-profit healthcare bodies are now turning high-tech to improve corporate governance while reducing the mountain of paperwork for doctors and nurses.

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Convenient: With IngoT, medical staff will carry handhelds that update patient records on the fly

With support from the Lien Foundation and local IT firm PulseSync, a \$3.5 million IT initiative has been launched with the aim of putting in place a common enterprise resource planning (ERP) system in 11 major healthcare non-profit organisations. These include the Home Nursing Foundation (HNF), HCA Hospice Care, National Kidney Foundation, St Luke's Hospital and the Tsao Foundation.

ERP software is typically used by large companies to monitor everything from inventory and warehousing information to sales and purchase orders. This announcement marks one of the first attempts to customise a version of this application for the non-profit sector.

'There is a sorry state of IT adoption among non-profits. They often have fragmented IT infrastructures, loads of paperwork and a lot of manual data entry processes,' said Lee Poh Wah, Lien Foundation's programme director.

'Not many IT vendors provide applications to support non-profits,' he told reporters at a media briefing yesterday. To help extend the benefits of technology to this overlooked market segment, the Lien Foundation is forking out \$1.6 million to support the project while PulseSync is responsible for developing the ERP application. The remaining costs will be borne by the 11 non-profit bodies through a recurring monthly subscription fee or an upfront hardware and software investment.

Called IngoT, the ERP system comes with various modules like finance, human resources and patient management, which are designed for different employees within a non-profit organisation. Once in place, it consolidates information that currently resides on different spreadsheets, paper docketts and filing cabinets into a common electronic interface.

For example, it will improve corporate governance by allowing senior management to have an instant overview of all aspects of their operations, ranging from expenses and income from donation drives to the utilisation rates of their healthcare facilities.

Doctors and nurses making housecalls will no longer have to lug thick paper files but instead carry handhelds capable of receiving updated patient medical records on the fly.

More than just improving the operational efficiency of healthcare givers, the system will also benefit patients, according to Eunice Tay, CEO of the



National Kidney Foundation.

The IngoT system has already been deployed at the HNF and the roll-out for the rest is expected to be completed by the end of 2008.



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