New Straits Times via NewsEdge Corporation :

THE sight of files arranged in cabinets next to rows of medicine bottles in a clinic administration area may soon be a thing of the past. Software company TRM NETT Systems (M) Sdn Bhd has come out with a software solution to allow clinics to go paperless.

For a general practitioner, running a clinic is not just about attending to patients and prescribing medicine. Other aspects of the business like clinic administration, managing patient and drugs records, and communicating with panelists and insurance companies are equally important.

To operate efficiently, the manual way of doing things is rather outdated, hence the need for innovative solutions to make things run smoother and more manageable.

According to TRM NETT Systems (M) Sdn Bhd's senior consultant Tirrumaran M, in today's competitive and fast-paced world, managing an outpatient clinic requires more than just medical expertise.

"Doctors have to wear two hats; one as a medical practitioner and another as a business owner. They have to preserve and increase their bottom line and at the same time, provide quality healthcare services to meet the increasing operational overheads," he says.

To help doctors run their clinic better, TRM NETT Systems created a clinic management software called ClinicPlus, which is said to automate the workflow in a general practitioner clinic, company or factory in-house clinic and specialist clinic.

SOFTWARE RELEVANCE. As the bulk of clinics' income derives from corporate clients, practitioners have to ensure their services are professional and organised.

"At the same time, dealing with corporate clients will increase the complexity of administration, billing and communication for primary medical care providers," says Tirrumaran.

For a typical claim amount between the range of RM25 and RM30, clinics have to spend a considerable amount of time and resources completing the paperwork and complying with corporate client's conditions.

"Without proper control on claims submission (billing), the clinic can lose substantial income based on services rendered. Effective credit control tool will enable the clinics get their payments from corporate clients within a pre-agreed credit term," he says.

HOW IT WORKS. ClinicPlus is a network-enabled client-server software. It does not require any special hardware or expensive software tool to be installed. It runs as standalone, peer-to-peer or on a managed local area network (LAN) environment, and runs on Microsoft Structured Query Language (MSSQL) database to ensure reliability and cost-effectiveness.

"The software also supports Tablet PC, touchscreen panel and handwriting recognition, Windows 98, Windows XP, Windows 2000 and Vista. It comes bundled with MyKad reader for faster and accurate retrieval of patients' data," explains Tirrumaran.

Installation of the software requires a minimum of two workstations to perform the common functions in a typical clinic.

A user can register cash and panel patient and place them on the doctor's patient queue. The entire history of patients' previous visit will be available at the doctor's terminal. The doctor will feed in the current medical notes and prescription. There will be minimal data entry for the doctor as most of the common inputs will have a lookup.

Once the doctor completes the medical notes and prescription, the pharmacy will dispense the medication and cashier collects the payment for cash patients. For panel patients, the invoice will be generated at a predetermined period, usually at the end of the month.

"At a business point of view, ClinicPlus allows complete visibility on transactions across the process chain. Numbers and statistics can be churned out instantly on patient visits, revenue, receivables, payables cashflow and profitability," says Tirrumaran.

IMPLEMENTATION. To date, ClinicPlus is used at over 400 clinics nationwide. This include outpatient facilities, specialist clinics and factory inhouse clinics. The software is developed in Malaysia using local talents.

"We strongly believe that localised software is one of the critical success factors for this adaptability in Malaysia. The first version was released in the year 2001 with strong inputs and participation of a team of nine doctors," says Tirrumaran.

He says the design and requirements for the software comes from practising doctors themselves.

"In the last six years, we have spent over RM1.2 millions in development resources to enhance the software solution and to address the needs of primary healthcare industry," he adds.

Commenting on the marketing strategy, Tirrumaran says TRM NETT Systems has engaged authorised resellers nationwide for implementation outside Klang Valley.

"We are planning to implement ClinicPlus at another 100 sites by the fourth quarter of 2008. Besides that, we also plan to set up a training centre in the second quarter of 2008 where we will train clinic administrators on clinic management and computerised clinic management software," he says, adding that the training centre will also be used to recruit and train dealers/resellers.

Tirrumaran says the next release on the application development roadmap is the enhanced application interfacing all related parties in employee healthcare benefit management process flow.

"It provides the link between payers and the service provider," he says.

For more information please visit : www.clinicplus.com.my

<<New Straits Times -- 10/30/07>>