Hong Kong Linux Industry Association

28 February, 2009

Dr the Hon Joseph Lee Kok-long,
Legislative Council Member,
Hong Kong Special Administration Region.

Dear Dr. Hon Joseph Lee,

Supporting an Electronic Health Record Sharing Infrastructure in Hong Kong

The former Chairman of US Federal Reserve, Alan Greenspan expressed repeatedly the necessity of adopting information technology (IT) to drive better standard of living and at the same time lower the cost of healthcare. The new US President Barack Obama echoes.

On behave of Hong Kong Linux Industry Association, I write to support the Government's initiative to develop a territory-wide electronic health record (eHR) sharing system.

To develop such system, it requires close co-operation and collaboration between the medical and IT professionals for years or decade to define and implement the complex system.

We wish to point out that the eHR system is an expensive investment for the Government but will bring along long-term benefit to the private sector and the patients. In light of the maturity of Open Source Software, we wish to mention the following points in considering to control cost, security and adaptability of the eHR system.
1. Adopt Open Standards such as ISO26300 for record keeping and data interchange.
2. Adopt Open Source Software for better value for money
3. Apply Web 2.0 for interactive applications
4. Apply Cloud Computing for slim and lean software and hardware on client side.

We believe that our expertise in Open Source Software could be applicable to public and private healthcare providers in upgrading their information systems with much lower cost, high system reliability and yet bettering the quality and delivery of care to patients and minimizing medical errors.

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Being able to participate in this project and in many constructive partnerships, involving both public and private sectors across both healthcare and IT, will be a major boost to the local IT industry. We believe that the eHR will create demand for skills and expertise for the local IT and health informatics industry. eHR will also make a significant contribution towards the Digital 21 strategy.

Dr. Samson Tam proposed Digital Pearl River Delta. The eHR system will play a crucial role in further developing Hong Kong as a leading digital city in the region. This in turn will provide business opportunities for IT sector. Successful implementation of the eHR system will enable local IT expertise and vendors to be equipped with the necessary experiences for assisting in the development of similar systems in the mainland China and in the region.

We wish to contribute to the society through this innovative initiative and look forward to seeing the approval of this pivotal infrastructure by the Panel on Health Services and the Finance Committee of the Legislative Council.

Yours sincerely,

Alan Kan
Chairman