

Our Ref: MOBI-HK/14/05261
26th May 2014

Mr. the Hon. Charles Peter Mok
Chairman
Bills Committee on Electronic Health Record Sharing System
Legislative Council Complex
1 Legislative Council Road
Central, Hong Kong

Dear Mr. Mok,

Re: Our support and suggestion to the proposal of Electronic Health Record Sharing System

Mobigator is one of the leading healthcare IT companies in Hong Kong. Our clients include public and private organizations, hospitals, clinics and laboratories in Hong Kong, China and overseas. Our solutions include hospital management system, specialty management system and clinical information system to name a few.

Our focus and strength in particular is in dealing with delivery and management of chronic illnesses and acute care where electronic health records are especially critical and useful. The development of the eHRSS is necessary and will certainly help to improve continuity of care across both private and public care delivery. We support the Government's initiative and commend the work done so far.

That said, the road ahead is full of challenges. Based on our experience working directly with many practitioners in both public and private healthcare sectors, we would like to put forth three issues and suggestions for the Government to consider for future planning and development:

1. There are currently few incentives for doctors or patients to participate in the eHRSS. Many private doctors welcome the ability to see a patient's eHR but what are the incentives for them to change their practices and contribute to the eHRSS? With voluntary participation, what are the incentives for patients to be part of the eHRSS in face of the privacy concerns? These are extremely difficult questions, but these are the questions that we need to answer in practice, and I believe the answer is available. For example, the Government can create or expand programmes that would subsidize patients with chronic illnesses, such as diabetes and heart diseases, to seek non urgent services from the private sectors. Such programmes will provide more direct and immediate incentives to doctors and patients to join the eHRSS than promoting other real but less visible benefits of eHR. It would also help to improve the imbalance between public and private care in Hong Kong.

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2. The Government and the Hospital Authority (HA) have undertaken the development of the eHRSS. We agree that it was necessary for the Government to take the initiative to build the territory-wide infrastructure and HA, with its huge resources and expertise, was the right implementation agent for phase 1, and CMS On-ramp and CMS Adaptation provide a near-term solution to facilitate clinics and hospitals to get on board with the eHRSS. On the other hand, the role of the Government and HA should be to build the infrastructure, the necessary piping and pumping so to speak, rather than becoming a software developer or an IT solution provider to private clinics and hospitals. The next phase should call on the free market dynamics to drive more sustainable development for the long run.
3. Finally, in order for the eHR initiative to succeed, resources are needed to support ongoing development of the eHRSS and to support the care providers. There is clearly a lack of healthcare IT professionals and health informaticians in Hong Kong. I noted from the minutes of previous meetings that some LEGCO members were concerned about HA would lose its staff to the private sectors. I would offer a different perspective. In 2009, at the eHealth Forum Round Table right after the eHR initiative had been announced, I raised the concern of where and how the Government and HA would acquire the additional 200 staff for the initiative. I emphasized at the time that there was no such resources, except in a few companies like Mobigator. In the past 4 years, more than half of my departed staff have joined eHRO or HA. I trust that our training for those staff was not wasted as they are helping the eHR development, but I would rather we work to creating a bigger pool of talents. I applaud the Government's plan, as mentioned in minutes of previous meetings, to work with universities to create new curriculums in healthcare IT or informatics. I hope see that put into action soon.

In conclusion, I support the Electronic Health Record Sharing System. As a citizen and a professional, I also hope to see a faster and broader adoption of the eHRSS, and a stronger collaboration between the Government, the HA and the local healthcare IT industry to build an effective and robust platform to improve health care management in Hong Kong.

Yours sincerely,

Ir. Clifford Tse
Managing Director
Mobigator Technology Group