



# Medical manager goes global

Karen Dearnie | September 08, 2009

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**A LOCALLY developed chronic disease management system with potential to keep patients out of hospital emergency departments has an international patent pending on the core technology.**

The Chronic Disease Management Network (CDM-Net) -- which uses a web platform to support team care of people with complex medical needs -- was launched by Communications Minister Stephen Conroy on Friday in Geelong, where the concept has been trialled with diabetes patients.

"CDM-Net highlights the very real capacity for emerging technology and broadband to change the way we think about healthcare," he said. "Allowing care teams and patients to develop and track personal management plans in real time offers great opportunities for more efficient and targeted treatment."

Senator Conroy said the Victorian trial and an earlier pilot in Western Australia's Eastern Goldfields region had demonstrated a 200 per cent increase in the use of care plans, and a 300per cent increase in collaboration between GPs and allied providers.

Developed by Precedence Health Care and a consortium of local healthcare services, universities and IT suppliers with the aid of a \$2.2million Clever Networks grant, Precedence now plans a staged rollout.

Precedence chief executive Michael Georgeff said the system overcame key obstacles to the broad adoption of personal treatment plans and team care.

"The government pays GPs incentives to create and share plans with a patient's care team and to review progress on a regular basis, but that's not happening," Professor Georgeff said. "Only 25 per cent of people who should be on care plans actually are, and of those only 20per cent are routinely followed up by the GP."

"The problem is that patient records are siloed in GPs' desktops, treatment plans are drawn up on paper and then faxed to team members and existing software is not designed to support collaborative care."

Precedence's system uses the web's any-to-any connectivity to dodge interoperability problems, and has developed intelligent software to automate processes such as generation of best-practice care plans, appointments tracking, patient compliance and condition alerts.

"Our software automatically collects all patient information so that for the first time we actually have an electronic health record being continuously updated with data not only from the GP but also from allied providers and patients themselves," he said.

"As the information flows around, each practitioner becomes more effective. The physical educator knows the patient has seen the dietitian, everyone knows when tests are due and the GP knows appointments are being kept.

"It's a very good example of how IT can make a huge difference to healthcare by improving productivity."

At present, GPs pay a fee for using the service, but government investment would be needed for a nationwide rollout "that would really address the major issues" identified in recent primary healthcare and hospital reform reports. Precedence is also looking to sell CDMS into new markets.

Professor Georgeff said international examiners had approved a patent application for the core technology, and it is now before the local patent authority, IP Australia.

"Our partners Cisco, IBM and Intel are all reporting that they've not seen anything like this elsewhere," he said. "As a result we're exploring opportunities in the US, the Middle East and China."

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