

Healthcare

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Siemens is the technology and market leader for connectors associated with the electronic health card

During the ongoing “10.000er-Tests” for the electronic health card in Germany, more than 80 percent of all participating hospitals, doctors' offices and pharmacies in the test regions are using the CardOS HealthCare Connector from Siemens Healthcare. The connector provides the link between the IT infrastructure of healthcare service providers and the nationwide central telematic infrastructure. Siemens was the first manufacturer to submit its new connector hardware to the Gesellschaft für Telematikanwendungen der Gesundheitskarte mbH (gematik) in mid-March, where it was successfully tested for use with the online insurance master data service. Thus, Siemens currently claims a top market position in Germany for connectors for the electronic health card – also from a technological point of view.

The field tests of Gesellschaft für Telematikanwendungen der Gesundheitskarte mbH (gematik) involve medical practitioners, pharmacies, and hospitals from seven German regions, as well as some 10,000 insured persons per region (“10.000er-Tests”). During the current test phase, the electronic health card is issued to patients for testing under real conditions. Service providers acquire a connector and test it in their own IT infrastructure. To date, more than 80 percent of participants have opted for the CardOS HealthCare Connector from Siemens.

In 2007 the Siemens connector became the first device to contain all the functions required to earn gematik's approval for the offline field test. The extensive usage in the tests at the 10,000 patients' level will enable Siemens to provide its customers and distribution partners with a fully mature connector for the rollout of the electronic health card planned for mid-2009.

The overall "connector" system typically consists of two components: the application connector and the network connector. The application connector controls electronic processes in healthcare with the use of electronic health cards, healthcare professional cards, and card terminals in doctors' offices, pharmacies, and clinics. The network connector handles and monitors the complete data exchange process with the telematic infrastructure. The current test phase analyzes the capability of the health card to update the health insurance data of patients in real time prior to reading the data into the computer system of a doctor's office.

The offline tests already tested the storage of emergency data and electronic prescriptions on the electronic health card with the help of the connector. Siemens considers the online field tests particularly important, since they test the online communication processes between hospitals, doctors' offices, or pharmacies and the central services. One example of such an online service is the automatic updating of the patient data on the electronic health card after an online comparison with the database of the corresponding health insurance provider. "Without the corresponding added value of the online functionalities, a nationwide rollout of the electronic health card results in a card that doesn't really highlight its actual benefits in comparison with a conventional insurance card," explains Volker Wetekam, Chief Executive Officer of Global Solutions, Siemens Healthcare Sector. "This added value comes from online services, such as the insurance master data service, which enhances the quality of patient care and improves cost efficiency. In addition, the early online field tests boost the customers' confidence in the security of the telematic infrastructure."

CardOS HealthCare Connector receives Red dot design award

The product design of the CardOS HealthCare Connector by Siemens recently won an honorable mention in the "Red dot Design Awards honourable mention 2008." For the first time, the jury awarded an honorable mention to products that stood out for especially well-designed detail solutions. Overall, some 137 products of the 3,200 submitted entries earned honorable mentions. The awards ceremony will be held in Essen in late June 2008. The Red dot design award is an internationally recognized competition. The "red dot" is prized in professional circles as a seal of quality that indicates high-value design. With over 7,000 entries from 60 countries, this award is one of the largest design competitions worldwide.

Siemens Healthcare is one of the world's largest suppliers to the healthcare industry. The company is a renowned medical solutions provider with core competence and innovative strength in diagnostic and therapeutic technologies as well as in knowledge engineering, including information technology and system integration. With its laboratory diagnostics acquisitions, Siemens Healthcare is the first fully integrated diagnostics company, bringing together imaging and lab diagnostics, therapy, and healthcare information technology solutions, supplemented by consulting and support services. Siemens Healthcare delivers solutions across the entire continuum of care – from prevention and early detection, to diagnosis, therapy and care. The company employs more than 49,000 people worldwide and operates in 130 countries. In the fiscal year 2007 (Sept. 30), Siemens Healthcare reported sales of €9.85 billion, orders of €10.27 billion, and group profit of €1.32 billion. Further information can be found by visiting <http://www.siemens.com/healthcare>