

Health Information Goes Mobile

Two software companies create wireless access for insurers, medical providers

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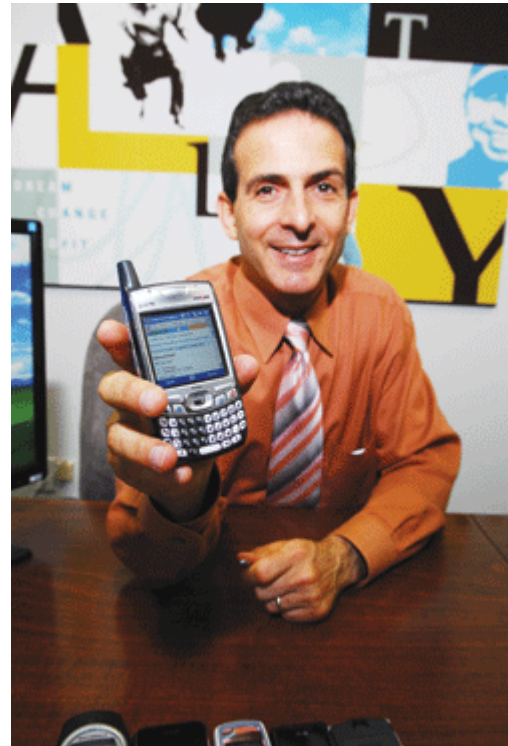
CLARK — Starting this week, a pair of local companies is launching a joint venture that offers insurers and health care companies a way to boost their marketing presence through cell phones and personal digital assistants. Called Mobile Health Technology, the venture comes from communications software providers Gold Mobile in Clark and Telcordia Technologies Inc. in Piscataway.

An early version is already employed by HTH Worldwide, a health insurer in Radnor, Pa., that uses the system to transmit doctors' profiles, physician training videos and other medical information to phones and PDAs carried by the company's clients. Customers browsing the Internet can click a button on the HTH Worldwide site to download the information.

Gold Mobile developed the software architecture behind Mobile Health Technology and teamed the service with Telcordia's analytic and security technology. Gold Mobile CEO Bob Gold says the service is tailored for use by medical equipment-makers, pharmaceutical companies, biotech firms and related businesses.

HTH Worldwide signed up for the service in January while the software was still in development. HTH provides health insurance plans for travelers who frequently journey abroad, and uses Mobile Health Technology to create and deliver a database of physicians and hospitals that use its coverage. "People traveling with their BlackBerry devices have ready access to all the information we provide," says Michael Hartung, HTH's chief product development officer.

HTH clients typically are students, business people and leisure travelers who spend lengthy amounts of time abroad. The company's databases include information on 4,200 doctors contracted with the insurance plans, and some 1,600 hospitals operating in more than 180 countries. "We have moved a lot of that [information] into a handheld device configuration," says Hartung.



Bob Gold, CEO of Gold Mobile, co-created Mobile Health Technology.
Steven J. Dundas/NJBIZ

He says HTH has some 150,000 insurance subscribers, of which about 1,000 early adapters have signed up for the initial Mobile Health Technology version. HTH is now preparing to market the service to its entire customer base.

Hartung says travelers find wireless access to medical information particularly useful in countries where English is not the common language. "If you are trying to navigate to a hospital with taxi drivers, or work with medical personnel who don't speak English, you can pull up results from our database on to the screen of your PDA and just show it," he says. The system can translate information into nine foreign languages, including Spanish, Italian, Russian, Chinese and Arabic.

Some of HTH's insurance partners also use the software. "It is an obvious conclusion for a company selling services to customers who access them globally," says Andrew Orr, product manager for the HTH mobile health program. "More business people are leaving their laptops at home because they can get a lot of what they need through BlackBerry devices," says Orr. "As mobile devices become more functional, [your services] have to be in there."

Mobile Health Technology licenses its software for an initial fee of \$5,000 to \$50,000, plus monthly fees based on the scope of the features and the number of end-users who access information. Gold says the monthly fees range from \$250 to several thousand dollars.

"If a health care company wants to offer health and safety tips on a weekly basis through mobile phones, users can opt in to receive them," says Gold. The service is free for the end-users.

Gold says drug companies can use Mobile Health Technology to provide doctors with training videos describing new drugs. "Physicians don't sit by their computers, but they are on their cell phones a lot," he says.

Mobile Health Technology is the first step in Gold's plans for the software. He says the company is working to create similar platforms for other industries. "We help mobilize a company's marketing, customer service and delivery of content," says Gold. "This is a natural fit for financial services."

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