

# ■ Remarks for Special Issue on Medical Care Systems

The environment in which medical care is provided in Japan is in the midst of radical change. As Japan races toward an Aging Society at a speed unprecedented in the world, a response to the burgeoning patient population and improvement of medical care are demanded. At the same, medical care is confronting numerous issues. One of the key tenets of government policy has been to reduce its burden of social security costs including the cost of medical care borne by the government. In addition, the burden carried by the doctors and nurses who are on the frontlines of providing medical care is on the rise. In 2006, the enactment of the “Medical Care System Reform Laws” brought about a variety of reforms including functional specialization/consolidation of medical institutions through reexamination of medical care planning, development of a response to the issues like the scarcity of doctors in some medical departments and local areas and strengthening preventative medical care through health examinations and guidance for specific areas of concern. Against this background, hospital administrators are faced with balancing the search for answers to questions like “How can we provide high-quality medical care service to patients more efficiently?” and “How can we secure the viable management of our hospital?” In order to lessen the concerns of people in the business of providing medical care even a little, NEC has been tackling ways to drive medical care IT (Information Technology) to the next stage of its evolution.

In 1966, NEC realized Japan’s first computerized system for health insurance claim forms. In 1984, we developed and introduced an ordering system for internal hospital use that enabled the handling of order forms as electronic documents and their speedy transmission to the relevant department such as the medical examination/testing department or pharmacy. In 1999 in response to the official directive issued by the Ministry of Health and Welfare (currently, the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare) regarding the “preservation of medical care records, etc., in electronic media,” we launched MegaOak-NEMR - an electronic medical record system. Applying the experience gained through the introduction of this system, carefully listening to the opinions of the people who are engaged in the day-to-day processing of medical information, and conducting extensive research and analy-

sis, we developed our second-generation electronic medical record system “MegaOakHR” and launched its commercial release in 2006. Currently numerous customers rely on this system.

The electronic medical record system, which is the heart of medical care IT, has already moved beyond its infancy and is considered to be entering a period of maturation. In this second stage of its development, NEC will not only equip the system with the functions of recording, storage and retrieval/viewing of medical records, but also enhance it with other needed functionality including:

- support for standardization of the medical care planning and execution process by employment of electronic clinical pathways;
- support for cost reduction by accurate inventory control of pharmaceuticals and other medical care materials; and
- data warehousing to facilitate collection and analysis of the diverse information generated within the hospital, diagnostic and clinical research, and improvement of hospital management.

Also the year 2011 has been targeted for the complete transition to online processing of health insurance claim forms. When this is achieved, a new network infrastructure linking medical facilities, prescription pharmacies, specified health examination facilities, payment auditing organizations and insurance institutions will be created. Medical care IT is expanding from networking within a medical facility to “regional medical network” that links various facilities related to local medical care service and eventually transforming into a resident-centric “health care network” that connects health care, medical care, welfare, nursing care and the government. In this special issue, NEC would like to provide the reader with a total picture of our company’s activities in the field of medical and health, a detailed introduction to some of our solutions, and our vision for the future.



**HIGASHINO Tadashi**  
Associate Senior Vice President