Philippines tests health app for remote islands

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Using the app, designed for tablets using Google's Android operating

system, the health officer of a remote town can upload medical records and clinical information on a patient, which can then be viewed anywhere by doctors and nurses.

So far, about a hundred tablets preloaded with the locally-developed application have been distributed by the ministry to towns in four islands to test its viability.

If successful, about 450 remote towns in the archipelago will get their own tablets, with mayors and health officers—local officials responsible for community medical care—then better able to track the area's health needs using the data they obtain.

"This is for communities that are isolated, remote and hard to reach. Its chief advantage is its portability," said Vincent Tablos, the project coordinator for the government's Department of Science and Technology.

"If it is adopted widely by our local health (workers), then we can consolidate it as part of our national health system," he told AFP.

Under the pilot scheme a mayor and health officer each get one tablet loaded up with government health forms, including for health insurance, via the app.

After an individual's health data is uploaded, all of the information on the required forms can be easily called up during consultations.

"Once they go to the health centre, they will have all their records available. Instead of waiting two hours just filling out forms, they go straight to the doctor," he said.

If a person moves to another town, his existing health records can be

viewed immediately through the app, Tablos added.

The communities targeted are all located far from major cities, where health centres are not readily accessible to local populations, making it difficult to send or receive patients' information, Tablos said.

The device also includes a communication system that allows for easier data sharing between the local health officer and mayor.

"This will help in decision-making. The mayor can chart any outbreak or see any rise in dengue or malaria. He can see what kind of medicines have to be bought, what they must prioritise for next year," he said.

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