

ER Card developers attract 'angel' investors

By Susan A. Baird,
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WEST WARWICK – Health care investment group Angel Health Strategies LLC of Providence has teamed up with electronic medical records vendor Professional Records Inc., developer of the ER Card, to establish ER Card LLC.

The deal was announced this week by John Houle, of JH Communications in Providence, ER Card's marketing adviser. Financial terms were not disclosed.

The new company replaces Professional Records of Coventry, which was founded in 1999 by sisters-in-law Maria and Janice Gil, to produce and market their personal medical records system. The idea came from Janice Gil, a former manager and chief technologist of the Women's Diagnostic Imaging Center at Kent Hospital. Maria Gil, vice president of Chase Machine and Engineering and a member of the R.I. Department of Health's Health Services Council, was brought aboard to help implement it.

Their company had enrolled more than 3,500 ER Card members and developed partnerships with the City of Warwick, University of Rhode Island and a number of civic and nonprofit organizations, before the new investors bought in early this year.

"Maria and Jan Gil have done a great job starting the business, operationalizing a vision," said lead investor Bernie Lambrese, senior partner at Healthcare Strategies LLC and a founder of Respiratory Solutions Inc. and EvoCare. They had "a great product that didn't previously exist in the marketplace."

Subscribers get three plastic cards, for their home car and wallet, each of which bears their ER Card ID number. They also get stickers for their home and car, to show that they are ER Card members. In an emergency, licensed medical personnel can use that ID number to obtain data including the member's blood type, medications, allergies and full medical history.

"Complete and accurate information can help prevent problems," Lambrese noted, "and in health care, problems are expensive."

Janice and Maria Gil remain in charge of operations, he said, with Maria concentrating on business development and Janice on

management and customer service. But the new investors became “an engaged board of directors that provides not just financial capital but also intellectual capital to help them grow the company.” With their aid, ER Card has moved to larger quarters in West Warwick and added a Web-based component to its encrypted database.

“We also are using the money to sort of improve the distribution channels,” Lambrese said, “talking to members, cities, towns, travel agencies ... about how this is good for their clients.”

Besides him and longtime backer George Gil, Maria’s husband, the directors include Angel Health Strategies LLC members William F. Cesare of Angel Healthcare Investors LLC; Dr. Edward A. Iannuccilli, a Brown Medical School professor and former chairman of the board at Rhode Island Hospital; Dr. Michael Rothman, founder of Clinical Studies Ltd.; and Joseph Haley, a partner in Healthcare Strategies and former CFO of Respiratory Solutions and EvoCare.

Dr. Robert D. Coli, founder of Gastrointestinal Associates and Diagnostic Information Systems Co.; Peter J. Fontaine, chair of the government affairs committee of the R.I. State Nurses Association and a founding partner of Respiratory Solutions; and Kelly Lambrese, Bernie’s wife, a founder and senior partner in Healthcare Strategies LLC and a co-founder of Respiratory Solutions and EvoCare.

“Locally and nationally, the subject of health IT is viewed as a hope for the future,” said Maria Gil. “Our new partners understand that the ER Card is already a viable option – and by hitting the ground running, our team is helping change the way medical information is delivered.”

Additional information on the company and its services is available at www.er-card.com.