

THE INDIANAPOLIS STAR

TUESDAY, JUNE 24, 2008 *

* 50 CENTS * CITY FINAL

Startup gets grant for health-care software tool

My Health Care Manager wins \$1.9M from state to aid geriatric-care management

By Daniel Lee

daniel.lee@indystar.com

Local startup My Health Care Manager wants to tap the power of cyberspace in helping its customers care for their aging parents.

The Indianapolis-based company — which specializes in services to help

seniors and their families and caregivers navigate the complexities of the health-care system — today announced it has received a \$1.9 million grant from the state to help develop a new software tool for geriatric-care management. The software is called Senior Care Navigation System, or SCANS.

Tapping into online resources, the software, for example, could provide approaches for dealing with an aging father who doesn't want to give up driving but has health issues that would

make driving unsafe. Or it could provide information to set up a plan for helping an aging woman stay in her home after a debilitating fall instead of going into a long-term-care facility.

My Health Care Manager — which has about 80 clients in the Indianapolis area and also has a licensing business — sells its services directly to aging seniors and their family members, mostly adult children caregivers. Launched in



Alan Stanford is chief executive of My Health Care Manager.

» See Software, Page C2

Software

» CEO hopes to have SCANS to customers for use by year's end.

From C1

2006, the company also plans to offer services through employers for workers needing to care for aging parents.

The company's services include assistance in dealing with insurance issues, managing multiple medications and helping aging seniors live in their homes longer.

Officials hope SCANS can help improve care by compiling the latest data and research on geriatric care and combine that with personal information. That information then would be presented to caregivers and seniors to help them make decisions.

For the development of the new technology tool, the company is collaborating with researchers from Indiana and Purdue universities in areas including geriatrics, informatics and engineering.

"We can deliver all of the best practices," said Alan Stanford, chief executive of My Health Care Manager. "The real goal is to provide the best-known to the person who needs it."

The grant was awarded by Indiana's 21st Century Research and Technology Fund.

Mathew Palakal, research director for the Informatics Research Institute at Indi-

ana University-Purdue University at Indianapolis, said IU and Purdue's involvement in developing the new tool could help research efforts and position the schools to land federal grant money.

Stanford said he hopes to have SCANS offered to My Health Care Manager customers by the end of the year. A prototype already is in use.

My Health Care Manager offers a full membership with an initial assessment of health needs costing \$2,000 and monthly fees ranging from about \$125 to \$800. Services also are available for \$125 an hour.

"Family caregivers that are caring for a loved one need all the help they can get," said Deborah Halpern, spokeswoman for the National Family Caregivers Association, a Maryland-based nonprofit education and support group. "This is not a one-person job."

The association estimates more than 606,700 people in Indiana act as caregivers for chronically ill, disabled or aged family members or friends.

Halpern, who said she was specifically endorsing the new My Health Care Manager tool, said detailed and customized information could be a valuable resource for caregivers. But she added that many caregivers are from low-income families, placing extra services out of reach.

"Money is a key issue," she said.

★ Call Star reporter Daniel Lee at (317) 444-6311.