



Cerner Middle East & Africa is a global leader in health care information, and Dar Al Shifa Hospital (DASH), which was established as the first private hospital in the State of Kuwait, is a leading health care organization in the region. "Hospitals" magazine had the honor to meet with Mr. Ahmad Nasrallah, CEO, Dar Al Shifa Hospital, Ms. Eman Abdul-Sater, HIM Manager, Dar Al Shifa Hospital, Mr. Akram Sami, General Manager, Cerner Middle East & Africa and Mr. John Dunn, Client Accountable Executive, Cerner Middle East & Africa to discuss the future of Kuwait's health care industry in the medium and long term and talk about the initiatives that have been put in place with Cerner. Below is the full interview:

### What do you think of the future of Kuwait's health care industry in the medium and long term?

#### CEO, Dar Al Shifa Hospital Mr. Ahmad Nasrallah

The future of the health care industry in Kuwait shows a lot of promise, both at the medium and long-term level. At the medium level, the past decade has shown significant growth in both public and private sectors, which has been fueled by the increasing health care needs of

the population at large. Prevalence of chronic diseases and obesity are on the rise, putting pressure on health care organizations to effectively and efficiently treat the growing number of patients. On the public sector end, the government is currently implementing a very aggressive plan to expand Kuwait's health care infrastructure, which includes the replacement of old beds and addition of new ones, totaling 6,000-7,000; many of which are already available. In addition, the Government's increasing reliance to deliver an extended range of services within private and public hospitals, is part of its overall strategy to provide more specialized treatment within the country, by limiting



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the number of people going abroad for medical treatment. These factors have created the perfect recipe for Kuwait's health care industry to flourish in the past decade and will continue to do so in the decades to come.

Given this, we are continuously striving at Dar Al Shifa Hospital to deliver a holistic, high quality of care to patients. This strategic direction has successfully positioned us as a health care leader in Kuwait market. We are the first hospital to acquire International Accreditation in both the public and private sectors, reconfirming our commitment to patient quality and safety. Our consistent approach in introducing new service lines to help manage the rising preventive and chronic health care needs of the population is evidenced by more than 25 specialties currently available. Now, Dar Al Shifa is regarded by the Kuwait Community as a top leader in the private sector; so much so that our patient demand has led to an expansion project that will double our bed capacity and significantly increase the number of outpatient clinics and Emergency Department beds in the very near future.

### What initiatives have been put in place with Cerner where you have seen the greatest impact on patient and caregivers?

#### HIM Manager, Dar Al Shifa Hospital Ms. Eman Abdul-Sater

Dar Al Shifa Hospital is among the first hospitals in Kuwait to implement a hospital-wide EMR system. The full-scale Cerner implementation in late 2017 provided clinicians an integrated system, giving our care teams near real-time access to vital patient information. This was coupled with the simultaneous implementation of our patient portal, Sehaty Online, which gave patients 24/7 access to necessary health information which they can view, download or share at their discretion. The patient portal also allows patients to securely message certain care teams, providing another venue for patients to communicate with DASH physicians.

Aside from adopting standardized documentation templates, clinicians have embraced the use of care plans in the inpatient setting. The 300+ electronic templates not

only reduce the ordering time of physicians, but aid in maintaining an evidence-based treatment practices within the specialties. Our nursing care team's adoption of medication barcode scanning safeguards the five patient rights; while strategically-placed alerts to physicians and nurses assure patient safety risk is mitigated through timely interventions.

Dar Al Shifa's commitment to preventive health is being leveraged by Cerner's electronic health record (EHR) functionalities, which allow us to identify populations in need of screenings, such as breast, cervical and colorectal cancer in the adult population; and hip sonar screening for newborns. Moreover, BMI data is extracted and provided to relevant specialties to improve referrals for dietary services, as well as utilized to drive community outreach activities. In the near future, chronic disease management programs will be activated to improve patient awareness and improve patient compliance rates.

The Cerner EHR implementation for Dar Al Shifa was a stepping stone to its greater strategic objective of becoming a paperless hospital. For this reason, a three-year, multi-phased device integration roadmap was developed earlier this year and has already resulted in integration of devices in Critical Care areas and inpatient areas; allowing care teams to get accurate and timely patient information to facilitate treatment. Additionally, integration is currently underway in the maternity specialty, which will allow Obstetricians to monitor patients' labor progress anywhere within the hospital or remotely. All of the above is supplemented by an EHR project management team that provides around-the-clock field support, timely resolution to issues through a measurable ticketing tool, and a change control process to ensure an informed decision-making process about EHR localizations and customizations is achieved.

### How can technology be a key driver for growth and modernization of the health care sector in this region?

#### General Manager, Cerner Middle East & Africa Mr. Akram Sami

The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) health care sector has grown tremendously in recent years, with huge invest-



ments in people, buildings, equipment, and technology. Hundreds of hospitals have been built and transformed with the goal of providing better health care outcomes to its citizens. At Cerner, we believe that the usage of integrated systems, with structured workflows and Clinical Decision Support systems centered around the patient, is key to efficient operations, enhanced clinical outcomes, and better innovation.

The GCC, especially Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, and Qatar have embraced this notion and embarked on utilizing technology to achieve their critical and strategic goals in optimizing health care delivery. Kuwait in the next five years will witness rapid growth in the health care sector, reflecting heavy investment in the country's health care infrastructure and systems. An effective and rich hospital information system should be at the core of hospital operations for the successful delivery of patient care and enhanced health care outcomes. Clinicians who embrace and adopt these systems and information for health care delivery can prevent adverse drug interactions, allow for faster recovery and use data for epidemiological and research purposes. Clinical Decision Support systems are at the heart of improving patient care with a multidisciplinary approach and proactive leadership to drive positive change.

### What do you consider sets Cerner apart from others?

#### Client Accountable Executive, Cerner Middle East & Africa **Mr. John Dunn**

For Cerner, we are committed to the region and are lucky to have partners like Dar Al Shifa in Kuwait. We've been in the region for the last 28 years and I would say our strength comes from our strong presence in the region and commitment to our clients' success. We're very passionate about helping our clients succeed, but most of the time we see ourselves as enablers to help clients achieve their goals.

There is a huge opportunity to harness modern technology in health care to ensure people's health and well-being, to enable hospitals to provide safer care, improve support to the care givers and allow hospitals to operate more efficiently. It's our mission to relentlessly seek breakthrough innovation that will shape health care of tomorrow. And we believe that what we do doesn't just impact health care – it impacts the world. It's why, more than ever, health care is too important to stay the same.

