

Microsoft Partners With Implantable RFID Chip Maker VeriChip

Users of VeriChip's VeriMed technology can now utilize a Microsoft HealthVault account to access and manage their personal health data stored in the VeriMed database.

By Beth Bacheldor

Dec. 2, 2008—[Microsoft](#) plans to make [VeriChip's](#) VeriMed Health Link system accessible through Microsoft's [HealthVault](#) platform, a secure, online repository that consumers can use for free to manage their health records. The VeriMed Health Link system includes implantable passive RFID tags used for human patient identification and medical records tracking, as well as a hosted database for storing electronic medical records. According to Sean Nolan, the chief architect for HealthVault, VeriChip is the first RFID company to partner with Microsoft on the online platform.

"We created the HealthVault platform to help jump-start innovation around health care," Nolan says. "Our belief was that if we did the hard plumbing work to make it easy for individuals to collect and share their health information, forward-looking companies would seize on the opportunity to provide new solutions to difficult health-care challenges. VeriChip's decision to integrate the VeriMed product with HealthVault is clear evidence that the market is responding."

Unveiled in 2007, HealthVault lets consumers set up their own private health-record repository so they can manage their health and wellness information online. To protect this personal data, the information is encrypted and users can also set up personal privacy controls, including a password, and determine which information is stored in the account, as well as who can access it (see [Microsoft Seeks RFID Support for HealthVault](#)).

Today, Nolan says, HealthVault is integrated with more than 40 applications and more than 50 devices, including glucometers, heart rate monitors, pedometers, weight scales and blood pressure monitors. These devices can be utilized to download data directly into a HealthVault account. "In addition," he adds, "we announced our device certification and logo program—devices that have been tested to ensure they meet certain standards for uploading data to HealthVault are eligible to display a 'Works with Microsoft HealthVault' logo on products, packaging and marketing material."

The VeriMed Health Link system is designed primarily to assist in emergency situations by providing nurses and doctors with vital patient information. Each VeriMed implantable tag (which operates at 134 kHz and is compliant with the ISO 11784 and 11785 standards) is encoded with a unique 16-digit ID number associated with the patient's medical records stored in the VeriChip-hosted database. When an unresponsive patient enters the hospital, the staff can employ an RFID interrogator to scan that individual's arm. If the patient has had a VeriMed chip embedded, the reader will indicate its unique ID number, which can then be inputted manually, or directed wirelessly to VeriChip's Web-based database. If the facility is an approved care provider, it can immediately access the patient's identification and health records.

Thanks to the VeriChip-Microsoft agreement, VeriMed Health Link customers can open a HealthVault account and use it to access and manage their personal health records and data that are stored in the VeriMed database. "VeriMed adds an exciting RFID-based option for HealthVault users trying to keep themselves and their families safe," Nolan says.

Despite the Microsoft partnership, the future of VeriChip—and its VeriMed Health Link business—is uncertain. In May 2008, VeriChip announced it had hired investment banking firm [Kaufman Bros.](#) to assist in the sale of the VeriMed Health Link business, as well as the possible sale of the entire company (see [VeriChip to Place Implantable Division on Block](#)). At that time, the firm also announced it was selling its Xmark division—which sells RFID-based products and services designed to help track infants in hospitals, as well as other patients and physical assets—to [Stanley Works](#). That \$45 million deal was finalized in July (see [Stanley Bolsters RFID Portfolio With VeriChip's Ex-Subsidiary](#)).

Last month, VeriChip announced that private investment and business consulting company R&R Consulting Partners, owned by VeriChip's former chairman and CEO, Scott R. Silverman, purchased 5.4 million shares of VeriChip common stock, held by [Digital Angel Corp.](#) Digital Angel manufactures RFID tags that are implanted in pets and wildlife for tracking purposes, as well as active transponders used as emergency location beacons to find people during search-and-rescue applications (see [Personal Location Beacons Usage Grows](#)). The deal provides Silverman, who had existing holdings of 861,000 shares, with control of 6.2 million shares—or 53 percent—of VeriChip.

RELATED_ARTICLES In a separate transaction, VeriChip also purchased from Digital Angel all patents related to an RFID-enabled sensor tag that could make it easier for diabetics to monitor their blood-sugar level. Digital Angel, VeriChip and [Receptors](#) had been working together on this tag (see [VeriChip, Digital Angel Partner With Receptors LLC to Develop Glucose Sensor](#)). Receptors is a company in the field of proteomics (the study of proteins) and the development of artificial receptors.

VeriChip's difficulties do not worry Nolan, however. "Innovation can be hard—and innovation in health care all the more so, especially given the nature of the economy today," he says. "We've created HealthVault as an open ecosystem so that the market can ultimately decide which new ideas will succeed, and which will not. VeriChip's business is all about new ideas, and we are excited they've chosen to work with HealthVault."

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