



29 January 2014

Internal Revenue Service
Attn: Julia Polenghi
TEGE, SE:T:EO:RA:T:3
NCA-534-23
1111 Constitution Ave, N.W.
Washington, DC 20224-0002

To Ms. Polenghi and Whom It May Concern:

Thank you for your letter from December 18th, 2013. We are happy to provide you with the clarifications as you've requested, alongside some additional contextual information that we hope you will find informative and helpful.

In response to question #1, we are certainly open to a 509(a)(1) designation. From previous conversations with Ms. Polenghi, we understand that our original request for a 509(a)(3) might be difficult to cleanly justify given the nature of OpenMRS' services. In the spirit of disclosure, would like to briefly clarify why we originally applied for this designation.

Specifically, we understand that 509(a)(3) not-for-profits uphold and operationalize the mission of the organizations which they formally support. The missions of both Partners-in-Health (PIH), and Indiana University's Center for Global Health (IUCGH) are to improve the quality and sustainability of health delivery for the poor. We believe that OpenMRS1, Ltd.'s operational strategy is consistent with this shared mission. By further developing and supporting an open source community of practice for the use of electronic health records in poor environments, the broader OpenMRS community directly creates processes and products that are used by PIH and IUCGH clinical care sites as well as many other underserved environments that these two organizations don't have the wherewithal to directly reach. Specifically, the OpenMRS process has been adopted in over 80 countries, mostly in Africa and Southeast Asia. We believe this amplifies the ability of our supported organizations to more provocatively respond to their mission. We believe OpenMRS1, Ltd.'s work to support the growth of this community of practice improves the quality and sustainability of health delivery for the poor.



However, the fact that we make these opportunities available to all environments makes it difficult to specifically ensure that we're only serving the poor. Said in another way, our "free products" can be used equally by environments that go beyond PIH and IUCGH's target populations. In discussing this concern with our leadership team, we tried to compare our approach to other not-for-profit organizations, and see almost universal challenges when attempting to focus the recipients of charitable activities. For example, charitable organizations that support a local arts community have the potential to influence the behaviors and interests of neighboring cities and regions.

When we applied for this designation, we didn't appreciate the relevance of this need to focus our charitable "goods". We still believe, based upon our understanding, that a 509(a)(3) designation is applicable to our organization. However, we defer to your guidance and judgment when it comes to our organization's application and will be pleased to consider both a 509(a)(1) designation as well as a 509(a)(3) designation.

In response to question #2, your description of "fact gathering" is an accurate synthesis of a fundamental activity that guides and supports the OpenMRS community of practice. This type of work is the primary foundation of how we prioritize volunteer engagement. By proactively seeking feedback from the resource limited countries and health systems we serve, OpenMRS1, Ltd. supports more specific development of functional requirements for electronic medical record systems that support our target populations. Many of the organizations and volunteers who come to support OpenMRS' mission have less familiarity with the specific, and often very different needs of these environments, and so this "fact gathering" is fundamental towards organizing in-kind work contributions into something underserved environments can benefit from.

If we looked at the resources allocated by OpenMRS1, Ltd. in 2013, approximately 80% went towards supporting this aspect of our work. One of the primary responsibilities of the OpenMRS Community Lead is to create the milieu to efficiently "onboard" and welcome new members of the community. His responsibility is to further develop a support infrastructure that increases the efficiency of eliciting this feedback from future implementations of OpenMRS. Additionally, the yearly implementer's meeting has a heavy focus on "fact gathering". By exposing leaders of health systems to other implementations of OpenMRS, it helps them more accurately describe their needs and helps the broader community find functions that are common among multiple settings. Finally, the support and further development of our online presence, <http://openmrs.org> has a significant impact on our ability to efficiently fact-gather and make environments aware of why we exist.



To perhaps serve as an example of how OpenMRS1, Ltd. directly supports fact-gathering activities, the community recently welcomed a new team responsible for providing health services to a refugee clinic in Tel Aviv, Israel. This clinic is comprised of volunteers supporting a growing African refugee population who would otherwise have no care alternatives (see <http://972mag.com/watch-refugee-health-clinic-a-step-in-the-right-direction/75954/> for more information).

OpenMRS1, Ltd. organized an Implementer's meeting where we first met Tobin Greensweig, one of the leaders of this clinic. His participation in the meeting allowed him to understand the process for implementing an electronic medical record, by allowing him to talk with some Rwandans, Kenyans, and others who have built similar systems. He was later able to join online mailing lists where community members helped him appreciate the specific functions that the community-curated OpenMRS core software has. He was able to identify missing features, such as the ability to support scheduling appointments for refugees given the very irregular schedules of clinical volunteers. These functions became work projects that other members of the community participated in, alongside local software developers in Tel Aviv. By working in this way, we help local environments support themselves effectively, and simultaneously create new functionalities and processes that are available to future community members.

We have numerous other examples of our approach to supporting the community, please let us know if you would like additional information.

Under penalties of perjury, I declare that I have examined this information, including accompanying documents, and to the best of my knowledge and belief, the information contains all the relevant facts relating to the request for the information, and such facts are true, correct, and complete.

On behalf of OpenMRS1, Ltd., we deeply appreciate the opportunity to apply for a charitable designation, and look forward to hearing more from the IRS about our application. Please do let us know if we can answer further questions.



Regards,

Paul Biondich, MD MS
Associate Professor of Pediatrics / Informatics
Indiana University School of Medicine
Executive Director, OpenMRS1, Ltd
+1-317-418-5612

410 West Tenth Street
Indianapolis, Indiana 46202-3012
United States