

Medical Intelligence pushing GPS bracelet

The Gazette

Published: Thursday, March 15, 2007

Medical Intelligence Technologies Inc. said yesterday it is negotiating a global strategic partnership with France Telecom to speed commercialization of its Columba bracelet that helps find Alzheimer's patients who have strayed from home.

The Quebec City firm has sold several hundred of the GPS-based bracelets to individuals in France in partnership with Orange, the mobile phone subsidiary of national carrier France Telecom. The first 1,000 "rescues" have convinced governments and institutions of the telesecurity system's efficacy, president Louis Massicotte said.

He is negotiating a broader partnership with France Telecom covering sales to institutional clients and potential expansion into other parts of Europe beyond Germany, Spain and Britain.

The Columba bracelet combines a hands-free mobile phone, GPS positioning and an alert system that warns caregivers or relatives when an Alzheimer's patient wanders outside his or her home zone. It instantly identifies the patient's location.

Columba sells for \$300 plus a \$60 per month subscriber fee. Government reimbursement of the cost is an active issue in marketing the device.

Medical Intelligence has firm orders for 4,500 units from Spain, where it is working with another partner, and for 5,000 units from Britain, he said.

The new pact with France Telecom could lead to "several thousand" sales.

He is also negotiating with partners to introduce the Columba in Canada and the United States by yearend. Europe and North America have about 30 million Alzheimer's sufferers.

He plans to introduce a GPS-based cardiac alarm system next year.

The company went public two years ago at 40 cents a share. The shares are now trading around 70 cents.