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## FIRST PERSON

# Paper-less technology puts the patient first

**USAID enables patient-centered service delivery by the Palestinian government health system.**



*Photo: Bassam Al Mohor/Chemonics International*

***“I trust the health system now. Health service is much safer now.***

— Jamal Darwish

Jamal Darwish has spent a lot of time at government health facilities since suffering a severe injury in the 1980s. Each time he went to an appointment, his patient file grew fatter with more medical documents. “My file was really big,” he said. “When I used to carry it, I used to feel like carrying 5-6 kilos.”

The paper file soon began to interfere with his medical care. “When I registered, I had to wait two to three hours for my file to be fetched. Often, my paper file would be lost,” he explained. “A doctor who sees 30-40 patients a day cannot spare time to read through my fat file. That is why errors happen.”

The only thing Jamal needs to bring with him now is his government identity card, since the Palestinian health ministry automated its management of health information, with USAID support.

Clinicians have immediate access to patient data through the automated system, enabling patients to receive more thorough and safer care. Each patient’s full medical history is available at the click of a mouse, eliminating the need for paper record files.

“I don’t have to carry papers,” explained Jamal. “With the new health information system, they can access my entire file anywhere in the West Bank.”

The Palestinian health ministry can treat over 1.71 million Palestinians through the system. The automated system will cover over 74% of Palestinians in the West Bank by 2014.

Funded through USAID, the health information system enables patients to receive unified care throughout the government clinics and hospitals.

“Now when I go to my clinic, they use the system to make an appointment for me at the hospital. When I see my doctor at the hospital, he has all my details on his computer. All his diagnostic notes and tests are done through the computer. It’s all very organized,” he explained.

“I trust the health system now,” said Jamal. “Health service is much safer now. There are no errors.”

### Telling Our Story

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