Mirth Connect Alternatives for Hospitals after License Change

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Executive Summary

The change in Mirth Connect's licensing model by NextGen Healthcare has created a new landscape for public hospitals in Spain.

What for years was a critical infrastructure based on open source now faces a strategic decision with impacts on:

- Budget
- Operational risk
- Technological dependence
- Regulatory compliance
- Medium-term sustainability

This document analyzes:

1. The current risk
2. The available market options
3. A comparative 5-year economic analysis
4. Strategic recommendations for IT management and administration with the aim of facilitating a sustainable decision aligned with ENS requirements.

1. Current Risk Diagnosis

1.1 Context

Many public hospitals use open-source versions of Mirth Connect as their primary interoperability engine.

With the license change:

- New versions are proprietary
- Technology support requires an Enterprise subscription
- Priority support is only available for US-based customers.
- The future evolution of the product is under the exclusive control of the US manufacturer.

This creates a situation of uncertainty.

At Meditecs, we have conducted a survey to evaluate the impact and potential consequences of the Mirth Connect license change, analyzing the decision process regarding this modification.

More than 80% of the over 50 surveyed hospitals in Spain are concerned about the Mirth Connect license change, citing licensing costs, vulnerability support, maintenance, and security as primary concerns.

Access the full survey results here: Link to survey[1]

[1] https://www.meditecs.com/wp-content/uploads/Encuesta-Mirth-Connect-cambio-en-licenciamiento.pdf

1.2 Primary Risks

Use of Open Source Mirth Connect	Migration to Mirth Connect Enterprise (Paid License)
1 Operational risk - Use of open source version without clear roadmap and support - Potential progressive obsolescence **Impact:** Interruptions or vulnerabilities could affect care services.	2 Budgetary risk - Enterprise migration not foreseen in annual budget - Relevant increase in recurring cost **Impact:** Budget reallocation or delay of strategic projects.
3 Security and Compliance Risk (ENS) - Lack of documented official support - Difficulty justifying updates and patches for audits - Increasing cybersecurity demands **Impact:** Greater exposure in internal or external audits.	4 Technology Dependency Risk (vendor lock-in) Migrating to Mirth Enterprise involves: - Direct contractual dependence - Limited future negotiation room - Difficulty of exit **Impact:** Reduction of technological autonomy.

2. Options Available to the Hospital

There are currently four realistic scenarios:

Option 1 – Migrate to Mirth Connect Enterprise

Characteristics

- Official commercial license.
- Access to roadmap and new versions.

Advantages	Disadvantages
✔️ Continuity with the same engine. ✔️ Official but limited support. ✔️ Low technical change.	❌ Significant cost increase. ❌ Manufacturer dependence. ❌ Limited future flexibility. ❌ Priority support is available only to US customers. ❌ Difficulty in EU regulatory compliance.

Option 2 – Continue to use Mirth Open Source without official support

Characteristics

- Maintain the current version.
- Internal or informal support.

Advantages	Disadvantages
✔️ No license cost. ✔️ No immediate migration.	❌ No official support. ❌ Obsolescence risk. ❌ Difficult to justify for audits. ❌ Lack of technological evolution.

This is a temporary solution, not a strategic one.

Option 3 – Adopt an open source fork* without a formal provider

Example: Open Integration Engine (OIE) in community mode.

Advantages	Disadvantages
✔️ Open source model. ✔️ Independence from the original manufacturer. ✔️ No license cost. ✔️ Low short-term technical change.	❌ No structured support. ❌ Risk assumed by the hospital. ❌ Long-term technical governance complexity - Requires strong internal technical team!

*A fork of Mirth Connect is a derived version created from the last open source edition of the original engine.

- It allows development to continue independently of the manufacturer that changed the license model.
- It maintains a very similar architecture and technical logic, so it does not require rebuilding existing integrations.
- It reduces dependence on the original provider and offers greater technological autonomy.
- It can be used with internal support or with professional external support to minimize operational risk.

The Open Integration Engine Project is the Open Integration Engine designed for a wide range of healthcare stakeholders.

Project Values:

- Community-Driven Development: Prioritizing collaborative contributions to foster innovation and shared learning.
- Vendor Neutrality: Ensuring the engine remains adaptable and free from proprietary restrictions.
- Security and Compliance: Prioritizing patient data privacy and compliance with healthcare regulations such as HIPAA and GDPR.
- Community and Governance: The project thrives on the active participation of the global healthcare IT community.

Option 4 – Fork + Professional Support from a Certified Interoperability Provider

Characteristics

- Engine based on open source fork.
- Structured professional support.
- Technological evolution independent of the original manufacturer.
- Migration and integration services.

Advantages	Disadvantages
✔️ No license cost. ✔️ Technological independence. ✔️ Documented formal support. ✔️ Low technical change. ✔️ Controlled migration. ✔️ Reduction of operational risk. ✔️ Professional services from a responsible provider. ✔️ Optimized cost - Cost of migration and support services lower than Enterprise license. ✔️ Evolution aligned with EHDS[2], FHIR and current standards.	❌ Requires active strategic decision. ❌ Implies planned transition.

3. Comparative 5–Year Economic Analysis

An estimated model based on an average hospital is presented (medium-high volume of messages, critical production environment).

[2] https://www.sanidad.gob.es/en/areas/saludDigital/espacioEuropeoDS/home.htm

Assumptions

- 1 production environment + 1 testing environment.
- Average integration volume for a general hospital.
- 24/7 or extended support required.

Estimated 5–Year Accumulated Cost

OPTION	LICENSE PRICE	SUPPORT	MIGRATION	5 YEAR TOTAL COST (ESTIMATED)
1. MIRTH ENTERPRISE	HIGH	BASIC	LOW	RECURRING COST -100% (REFFERENCE*)
2. MIRTH OPEN SOURCE WITHOUT SUPPORT	0	INTERNAL	0	RECURRING COST - 0% (BUT WITH HIGH CUMULATIVE RISK) COST OF POTENTIAL INCIDENTS 50-250%
3. FORK WITHOUT SOPPORT	0	INTERNAL	MEDIUM STRONG INTERNAL TECHNICAL RESOURCES	RECURRING COST - 0% (BUT WITH AVERAGE CUMULATIVE RISK) COST OF INCIDENTS 30-150%
4. FORK WITH PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT	0	PROFESSIONAL	MEDIUM PERFORMED BY SUPPLIER	RECURRING COST - 0% INCIDENT COST - 0% MIGRATION AND SUPPORT SERVICE COST 10-20%

*Reference: Mirth Enterprise license cost as 100%

Qualitative Analysis of Real Cost

The cost is not only financial. The following must be evaluated:

- Risk cost
- Audit cost
- Cost of care service interruption
- Future dependency cost

In TCO (Total Cost of Ownership) analysis, the option with the best balance is Open source Fork alternative with structured professional support.

4. Strategic Comparative Evaluation

OPTION	COST	OPERATIONAL RISK	DEPENDENCY	ENS COMPLIANCE	SUSTAINABILITY IN 5 YEARS
1. MIRTH ENTERPRISE	HIGH	LOW	HIGH	HIGH	MEDIUM
2. MIRTH OPEN SOURCE WITHOUT SUPPORT	LOW	HIGH	LOW	LOW	LOW
3. FORK WITHOUT SUPPORT	LOW	MEDIUM	LOW	LOW	MEDIUM
4. FORK WITH PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT	MEDIUM	LOW	LOW	HIGH	HIGH

5. Strategic Recommendations

For IT management:

- Evaluate technological dependence
- Analyze roadmap for 5 years
- Consider progressive transition

For administration:

- Analyze real TCO, not just license cost
- Prioritize risk reduction
- Seek budgetary predictability

For operational management:

- Study the common autonomous model
- Standardize a sustainable alternative
- Reduce the overall budgetary impact

6. Conclusion

The change in Mirth Connect licensing is not just a technical modification.
It is a strategic turning point for hospital interoperability.

Organizations that adopt a planned strategy will be able to:

- Reduce technological dependence
- Optimize budget in the medium and long term
- Maintain operational continuity
- Prepare for advanced interoperability (EHDS, FHIR and APIs)

Organizations that do not act will assume an accumulative risk that will grow over time, both in operational, regulatory and budgetary terms.

7. Next Step

Request a Free Interoperability Consultation

At Meditecs we offer a free interoperability consultation with the aim of facilitating a sustainable decision aligned with security requirements and industry best practices.

What is included?

1. Free audit of your current Mirth environment
2. Detailed risk and continuity report
3. Phased migration proposal with a personalized action plan

The result:
The result is a clear strategy, adapted to your technical and budgetary reality.

Request Free Consultation

Click on the link or copy and paste this link on your browser:
https://calendar.app.google/WRiKo7RhooNNvNw16

About Meditecs

Meditecs is a specialized healthcare interoperability provider, trusted by leading public and private organizations such as Abbott, Leica, Tunstall, Cerba, Roche, Teleconsult, the NHS, Quirón and Boston Scientific.

Our interoperability platform has proven the ability to reduce integration costs by up to 40%, while ensuring high levels of security and regulatory compliance in data protection and healthcare regulation.

Meditecs in Figures

- More than 16 years of experience in healthcare interoperability.
- More than 100,000,000 patient records processed monthly.
- Operations and deployments in the EU, UK, Asia, Canada and Latin America.
- More than 100 hospitals and laboratories connected.
- More than 150 interoperability projects delivered.
- Certifications: ISO 9001, ISO 14001, ISO 27001, ENS (High Level) and in the process of implementing ISO 82304 (expected for 2026).

What sets us apart?

- Alignment with ENS High Level and advanced cybersecurity requirements.
- Deep knowledge of hospital IT systems.
- Continuous support and strategic guidance.
- Operational proximity and local response capacity.
- Training in Mirth Connect, HL7 and FHIR with knowledge transfer so that your teams can manage and evolve your integration engine.
- Official Sponsor of Open Integration Engine.
- Possibility of progressive evolution towards Meditecs Smart Connect.

Meditecs Smart Connect is an advanced integration engine based on Mirth Connect and Open Integration Engine (OIE), which allows:

- Advanced preventive monitoring.
- Scalability ready for EHDS environments.
- Storage reduction by up to 90% + It can be adopted as a natural evolution after an initial transition to Open Integration Engine + professional support by Meditecs.