

Public institutions such as the *Instituto Mexicano del Seguro Social (IMSS)*, Mexican Institute for Social Security, the *Instituto de Seguridad y Servicios Sociales de los Trabajadores del Estado (ISSSTE)*, Institute of Security and Social Services for Public Sector Employees, as well as the large private hospitals, have in-house engineering departments which are responsible for preventive maintenance and equipment repair. In most hospitals, however, there is little to no preventive maintenance provided for medical equipment. The larger hospitals within the National Health Care System allocate an estimated one percent of their budgets to the installation, maintenance and repair of equipment.

When highly technical and sophisticated equipment is involved, most institutions purchase a service policy to extend the warranty from the original equipment manufacturer. *IMSS* usually requests a minimum warranty of 18 months. In many instances, it purchases a set of spare parts and consumables with the equipment. *IMSS* has a department dedicated to equipment maintenance, but the more technical problems will be handled by the original equipment manufacturer, or its Mexican representative.

### **SPECIALIZED SERVICES**

The problems of financing major equipment purchases continues to discourage acquisitions. This is likely to lead to an increased reliance on subcontracting certain specialized services that depend on expensive equipment. For example, private magnetic resonance centres have recently opened. Private laboratories are also being used by the hospitals for specific services. Equipment-calibration services are often contracted out by the private hospitals. The market for these specialized services is expected to grow, as hospitals and other health care entities adapt to increasingly constrained budgets.

### **TRAINING**

When health care organizations purchase new equipment, they often face a technological gap because their staff are not qualified to use it. The traditional solution has been to require the seller to provide a comprehensive training. As hospitals attempt to manage existing equipment more effectively, training will become a bigger issue.

Original equipment manufacturers may not be the best suited to provide this training. There is a potential market for training that focuses on the effective use of the overall equipment infrastructure, and is not limited to the use of any particular device.

