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EHRnews@Infoway



VOLUME 1 – FALL/WINTER 2004

Welcome to the first issue of EHRnews@Infoway. We hope you enjoy reading the articles. If you would like to provide comments or suggestions, please contact us at:

info@infoway-inforoute.ca

For further details on the articles in this issue, and other news features and events, please visit our Web site at:

www.infoway-inforoute.ca

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H. Arnold Steinberg Named Chairman



H. Arnold Steinberg has been appointed Chair of Canada Health Infoway's board of directors. He has been a member of the board since October 17, 2003.

Mr. Steinberg is Principal of Cleman Ludmer Steinberg Inc., an investment holding company. He brings extensive board experience to *Infoway* and currently holds positions as Director of Proviso Inc., the McGill University Health Centre Foundation and the MUHC Research Institute. He is also Chairman of the Advisory Board of the Faculty of Medicine at McGill.

For many years, Mr. Steinberg was a senior executive and director of Steinberg Inc., as well as a director of numerous charitable, educational and cultural organizations.

Mr. Steinberg is a member of the Order of Canada. He is a graduate of McGill University as a Bachelor of Commerce, and holds a Master of Business Administration degree from Harvard University. He was awarded an honorary doctorate from McGill University and is a Governor Emeritus of that university.

From the President's Desk



I welcome you to *Infoway's* new quarterly newsletter, your source for concise, regular news updates about *Infoway* and our partners – for our partners. This newsletter is an example of your feedback in action. Many partners told us that they wanted to hear straight talk about our programs, our investments and what's going on. Most importantly, you told us you want to know about results: what *Infoway* is achieving in joint projects with the provinces and territories.

At the Health Summit in September, the First Ministers set the tone and direction for major healthcare initiatives

in Canada, re-affirming the necessity of an Electronic Health Record (EHR) and emphasizing the role of *Infoway*. In "a 10-year plan to strengthen health care," they agreed "to accelerate the development and implementation of the Electronic Health Record" and "...to work with Canada Health Infoway to realize the vision of EHR through an ambitious plan and associated investment."

The development and implementation of a pan-Canadian EHR represents a strong step forward, ushering in new and significant advancements – a number of which are featured in this inaugural newsletter.

Of key importance to our jurisdiction partners are the three-year strategic planning sessions with each province and territory. These sessions will provide a clear idea of what each jurisdiction plans to achieve in EHR over the next three years, and the investments required to reach those goals. Stay tuned for more news on these sessions in future issues of EHRnews@Infoway.

As for me, it's been a great ten months (and counting!) in my new position at

Infoway; building bridges with new groups and individuals, accelerating joint investments with provinces and territories, and working with *Infoway's* excellent staff to expand on their previous work.

Over the summer, we developed investment strategies for Laboratory Information Systems, Telehealth and Interoperable EHR, and we are now investing in specific projects in these areas. In the meantime, we will work together to keep the momentum going in Registries and Digital Imaging, where projects and re-use opportunities are progressing well, and focus renewed attention on programs such as Drug Information Systems.

As many of you already know, I place a premium on candid discussions and open dialogue. I want to see this newsletter reflect that same approach. We fully expect it to evolve from an *Infoway*-focused update to an open forum for stakeholders to share their news. In the meantime, read on!

Richard Alvarez,
President and CEO

INFOWAY UPDATE SUMMARY

Infoway has partnered with 12 jurisdictions on a total of 76 ongoing and completed projects. Positive steps towards implementation of an Electronic Health Record (EHR) and improving access to health care for Canadians are being made in all of *Infoway's* nine major program areas.

On October 16, we presented our achievements to the Health Ministers and outlined our plans for accelerating a Canada-wide EHR, which received positive endorsement. Here is a brief summary of those results (financial information from September 30, 2004).

Infoway's board of directors approved \$150 million for its new Telehealth investment strategy.

The Registries program has 25 projects in 10 jurisdictions.



INFOSTRUCTURE, INTEROPERABLE EHR, INNOVATION AND ADOPTION

- For more targeted efficiency, the former Infostructure program was divided into three separate programs: Infostructure, Interoperable EHR, and Innovation and Adoption.
- The recently established EHR Standards Steering Committee has started work on setting standards that will ensure interoperability and facilitate collaboration.

REGISTRIES

- The Registries program has 25 active and completed projects in 10 jurisdictions.
- Newfoundland-Labrador and Alberta lead the way. The Newfoundland Labrador Centre for Health Information (NLCHI) and Capital Health, Edmonton have completed the implementation phase of their client registry projects.
- All provincial and territorial jurisdictions have identified developing Registries as a priority.

DIAGNOSTIC IMAGING (DI) SYSTEMS

- Hospitals in Southwestern Ontario and British Columbia's Fraser Valley go digital. (Full story, page 6)
- DI planning projects are underway in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Newfoundland-Labrador, Manitoba and Saskatchewan.
- A national DI workshop, sponsored by *Infoway*, was held on October 27-28 with participation from almost all jurisdictions. The first DI toolkit was successfully launched at the workshop.

DRUG INFORMATION SYSTEMS (DIS)

- Approved project budgets in the DIS program total \$37.3 million.
- The Pharmaceutical Information Network (PIN) in Alberta, the DIS implementation in Saskatchewan and the Reusable Drug Profile Viewer in Ontario are active development/implementation projects.
- Four planning projects in Newfoundland-Labrador, Prince Edward Island, Quebec and Yukon have been started.
- A major initiative to establish national HL7 clinical messaging standards for drugs is underway.

LABORATORY INFORMATION SYSTEMS

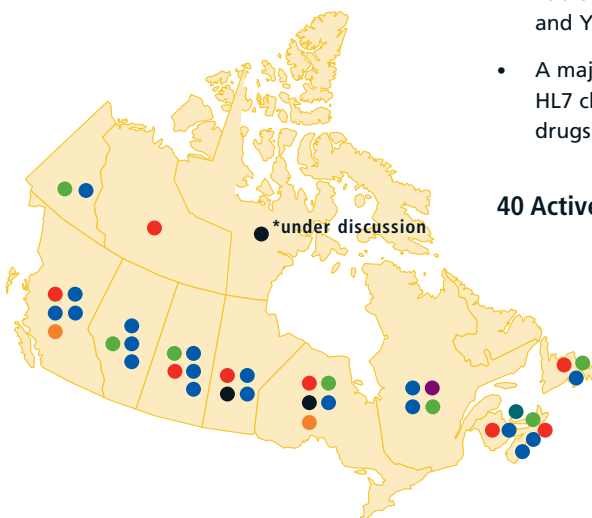
- *Infoway's* investment program strategy calls for investments totaling \$150 million in at least eight initiatives by 2009.
- A focus on Generation 2 technology will ensure secure exchange of laboratory results within privacy and security frameworks.
- Initial planning phases for new projects in Ontario, British Columbia and Alberta are set in motion.
- Project planning in Newfoundland-Labrador, Quebec and Saskatchewan to commence in 2005.

TELEHEALTH

- *Infoway's* board of directors approved \$150 million for its new Telehealth investment strategy.

PUBLIC HEALTH SURVEILLANCE

- *Infoway* will develop and implement a Canadian public health surveillance system focused on the control of infectious diseases.
- The newly formed steering committee is developing a pan-Canadian needs analysis and implementation strategy.
- The investment strategy was approved at the December meeting of *Infoway's* board of directors.



INFOWAY'S NEW COO PROMOTES EFFICIENCY



Mike Sheridan recently joined Canada Health Infoway as Chief Operating Officer after a 30-year career with Statistics Canada. Here he discusses what attracted him to *Infoway* and its mission.

“Why did I choose to join *Infoway*?” Mr. Sheridan asks. “It was the realization that working with *Infoway* towards the establishment of an interoperable pan-Canadian Electronic Health Record (EHR) was a tremendous opportunity to use my management skills while helping to improve healthcare services for Canadians.”

As COO, Mr. Sheridan is responsible for overseeing *Infoway*'s strategic alignment and management of investment programs and technology solutions, as well as providing leadership to all internal financial and administrative functions.

“The bottom line is giving Canadians value for money. We want to operate in the most efficient manner while still keeping our eyes on the main objective – electronic health records that will help improve the healthcare system in Canada.”

TECHNOLOGY AND HEALTHCARE LEADERS COME TOGETHER

“Efficient sharing of patient data puts critical information in the hands of healthcare providers more quickly and easily, enabling better-informed [health professionals], and faster diagnoses and treatment for patients.”

NORMAND LABERGE, CEO OF THE CANADIAN ASSOCIATION OF RADIOLOGISTS (CAR) AND FOUNDING PARTICIPANT OF IHE CANADA

Responding to growing concerns about our health system, Canadian healthcare and technology communities have founded Integrating the Healthcare Enterprise Canada (IHE Canada), an initiative to facilitate the sharing of patient information.

Better health care for Canadians demands a patient-centric system that tracks the patient's journey across the care continuum. IHE Canada is part of a growing worldwide movement working to remove incompatibility barriers that impede the effective flow of clinical and administrative data in health care.

The creation of IHE Canada was made possible through the collaboration of its founding participants, including Canada Health Infoway, the Canadian Association of Radiologists (CAR), the Information Technology Association of Canada (ITAC), Canadian Healthcare Information Technology Trade Association (CHITTA), Healthcare Information and Management Systems Society Ontario (HIMSS), École de Technologie Supérieure (ÉTS) and the Ontario Hospital eHealth Council.

Read more about IHE founding participants on our Web site at:
www.infoway-inforoute.ca

Or go directly to the IHE Web site at:
www.ihe-canada.com

EHR STANDARDS STEERING COMMITTEE BEGINS IMPORTANT WORK

In September, the EHR Standards Steering Committee held its first meeting in Toronto. This meeting marks a significant step towards realizing the success of the EHR (Electronic Health Record).

Interoperability between diverse care settings, distinct information systems and all provincial/territorial jurisdictions can only be achieved by collectively developing and adopting standards. To facilitate collaboration and consensus, *Infoway* has developed an engagement model that encompasses the diversity of its stakeholders. The model also recognizes the need for representation from across Canada.

Members of the steering committee include senior executives from all federal, provincial and territorial jurisdictions as well as the Canadian Institute for Health Information (CIHI), the Standards Council of Canada and representatives from the nursing, pharmacist and physician communities.

The steering committee will promote and recommend the adoption of EHR information standards in the jurisdictions and organizations represented by the EHR Standards Steering Committee. In addition, it will develop and prioritize the strategic direction for *Infoway* information standards, ensure appropriate Canadian and international alignment, and monitor the progress and outcomes of *Infoway* standards investments. The steering committee will also play a leadership role in creating strategies for the maintenance, conformance and compliance of approved standards.

NEW TELEHEALTH STRATEGY APPROVED

In September, Canada Health Infoway's board of directors approved a new Telehealth investment strategy. The strategy provides \$150 million of investment funds to increase the clinical use and sustainability of existing Telehealth networks. The injection of financial resources will also stimulate the expansion of Telehealth programs in northern, remote, rural, aboriginal and official language minority communities. *Infoway's* Telehealth strategy will:

- Optimize governance, management and operational capabilities of existing Telehealth networks
- Deploy interoperable technology solutions to integrate Telehealth networks with Electronic Health Record (EHR) initiatives
- Leverage investment of the public sector, private sector employers and third-party payers to expand Telehealth coverage

"There's no doubt that the steering committee recognizes the immense value of the work it is undertaking and there's also no doubt that the group is absolutely committed to creating success."

DENNIS GIOKAS,
CHIEF TECHNOLOGY OFFICER, *INFOWAY*



Hospitals Celebrate Shared Digital Imaging



Hospital groups in the Thames Valley, Ontario and the Fraser Valley, British Columbia recently celebrated the successful implementation of Picture Archiving and Communications Systems (PACS). This shared digital imaging technology enables healthcare providers to electronically store, manage, distribute and view diagnostic images, such as MRIs, X-rays, CT scans and PET scans, from any location connected to the network – regardless of where the original test was conducted. Digital imaging of diagnostic procedures generates faster image and report results. The immediate retrieval of images by a clinical team using PACS – locally or remotely – helps hospitals improve patient care.

By reducing patient transfers between healthcare facilities, eliminating film processing and avoiding duplicate procedures, the Canadian healthcare system could save an estimated \$350 million annually.

Working together with *Infoway*, several jurisdictions are accepting the challenge of implementing shared diagnostic imaging (DI) services that will reduce costs and benefit all users.

“...the ease of accessing the [diagnostic] images is a boon to consultations. Digital imaging has transformed the delivery of health care.”

DR. DONALD TAVES, CHIEF OF RADIOLOGY, SJHC

On November 3, 2004, eight hospitals of the 12-site Fraser Health Authority in British Columbia celebrated PACS “go-lives.” *Infoway*’s president, Richard Alvarez, was on hand to acknowledge the success and underlined that “Fraser Health’s multi-hospital achievement means that, for the first time, smaller hospitals and clinics will have access to the benefits of new digital testing and much improved access to scarce radiologists.”

All 12 hospitals of the Fraser Health Authority will be connected to the shared DI services by September 2005. To date, *Infoway* has contributed \$4.8 million of an expected \$11.8 million investment to the project.

In Southwestern Ontario, eight hospitals of the Thames Valley Hospital Planning Partnership (TVHPP) will soon share a DI system. St. Joseph’s Health Care, London (SJHC) has already put into practice its hospital-wide DI program and the London Health Sciences Centre will implement PACS at all campuses soon.

At recent celebrations marking St. Joseph’s implementation milestone, Richard Alvarez congratulated the team, saying, “The success you celebrate here today will certainly contribute to the development of shared DI services in other parts of Canada in the months and years to come.”

The pilot phase of the TVHPP DI project is jointly funded by Canada Health *Infoway* and the Ontario

Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care. Discussions are already underway to investigate linking a further 33 hospitals in Southwestern Ontario as an extension of the initial project.

“[This technology] enables a physician to access their patient’s images even before the patient has a chance to walk out of the exam room. The advantages to a patient’s health management are incalculable.”



NICK SAURO, MEDICAL RADIATION TECHNOLOGIST, SJHC

Kurtis Bishop, *Infoway*’s Group Director of Drugs and Diagnostic Imaging, said, “The early indications from our work at Thames and our other projects are providing compelling evidence that *Infoway*’s DI strategy and the integration of DI results in EHR can provide huge benefits. These systems...streamline workflows within and between hospitals and clinics, which can lead to major increases in the productivity and effectiveness of healthcare services in Canada.”

By the beginning of next year, *Infoway* anticipates that the Fraser and Thames Valley projects will capture approximately 900,000 examinations on PACS annually. The information that will be stored on shared DI repositories represents 70% of the target for the two pilot projects.

Practising Physician Joins *Infoway*



She may have started as a “technoklutz,” but this family doctor has seen how much patients and physicians benefit from electronic health records.

Dr. Susan MacLean joined the *Infoway* management team earlier this year as Senior Medical Advisor. Dr. MacLean is responsible for strengthening *Infoway*'s relationships with the healthcare provider community and ensuring their perspectives are central to *Infoway*'s work. When asked to join the *Infoway* team, there were important questions Dr. MacLean had to ask herself.

Could I give up my practice?

“The decision to give up practice was incredibly difficult. Fortunately, *Infoway* recognized the benefit of bringing a practising physician on board. So I will continue to do some clinical work and participate in the after-hours call schedule.”

Did I know enough about health informatics?

“Despite no formal informatics training, I've gone through the experience of converting a large, busy family practice from paper records to one that is totally electronic and integrated with our key partners in the healthcare system.”

“Having lived through the experience myself, I have incredible insight into the needs – and concerns – of physicians contemplating the move towards an Electronic Health Record (EHR). I'm also a champion of the important benefits EHR can bring to patients and the work quality of physicians and other professionals.”

“In my Telehealth role, I have seen the advantage for patients of having access to a province-wide health information and triage service.”

Having served as medical advisor to Telephone Health Advisory Service (THAS) and Telehealth Ontario since its inception in 2001, Dr. MacLean witnessed the benefits of shared EHR first-hand.

As well as working on a national umbrella strategy that complements provincial and territorial efforts to support health professionals' adoption of new systems, Dr. MacLean's next steps at *Infoway* will include working “...with clinical leaders, medical schools, professional organizations and chronic care groups to develop innovative approaches that result in measurable progress. We still have some way to go before *Infoway* can present an integrated plan that includes input from these important groups. But I do know that, just in the last few years, health professionals and their institutions have become much more interested in the potential of EHR, and my job is to build on that.”



DR. SUSAN MACLEAN

Dr. Susan MacLean (pictured above with patient) is a family physician and founding member of Markham Family Physicians. In 1999, her clinic implemented a fully integrated EHR which currently serves over 35,000 patients.

Dr. MacLean has been medical advisor to Telehealth Ontario since its inception in 2001, and to the Telephone Health Advisory Service (THAS). She has also served as Chair of the Medical Liaison Committee for Clinidata Corporation. Dr. MacLean graduated from the University of Western Ontario, School of Medicine in 1982 and received her CCFP designation in 1984.

Our Mission

Infoway's mission is to accelerate the development and adoption of compatible electronic health information systems. These systems provide healthcare professionals with rapid access to complete and accurate patient information, enabling better decisions about treatment and diagnosis. The result is a sustainable, more cost-efficient healthcare system offering improved patient safety and better quality of care.

Our Role

Infoway invests in Electronic Health Record (EHR) initiatives and then shares the knowledge and experience gained with jurisdictions across Canada to speed implementation and reduce risk.

Infoway is an independent, not-for-profit corporation whose members are the federal, provincial and territorial deputy ministers of health.



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