



EHRnews@Infoway

A NEWSLETTER FROM CANADA HEALTH INFOWAY



VOLUME 4 – SPRING 2006

Welcome to the latest issue of EHRnews@Infoway. We hope you enjoy reading about the work that Canada Health Infoway is undertaking. 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 website at:

www.infoway-inforoute.ca

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Province-wide PACS for Newfoundland

From the President's Desk

Remember the old ad campaign that used the slogan: "You've come a long way, baby?" These ads, which featured an attractive woman smoking, made reference to the progress of the women's movement. (Of course, after that came the anti-smoking movement and cigarettes today are often associated with far less appealing images!)

In some ways, the electronic health record (EHR) has become a "movement" of its own. COACH, Canada's Health Informatics Association, illustrates this in its 30th anniversary publication appropriately entitled, "From Mainframe to Mainstream."

It's fair to say that *Infoway* has been a catalyst in the EHR movement. An independent third party recently evaluated our performance after five years of operation. The report, which is available on our website, concludes: "*Infoway's* work had positive impacts on interoperable electronic health records in Canada" and says results were "achieved that could not have been achieved without *Infoway*."

The evidence of our progress is becoming real as more of our initial investments come to fruition. For example, in this issue you'll read about the completion of our shared diagnostic imaging initiatives at the Thames Valley Hospital Planning Partnership (TVHPP) in southwestern Ontario. As we begin to measure the value of these projects after implementation, we're seeing positive results. A recent survey at TVHPP shows that:

- 90% of referring physicians (specialists or other doctors who order diagnostic tests) believe that the system has improved their efficiency.
- 85% of referring physicians indicated that the system has reduced the time they must wait to review an exam.
- 75% of referring physicians state that the system has improved their ability to make decisions regarding patient care.

When "movements" pick up steam, they sometimes move so quickly they don't reach out to others who are key to their success. Many of us recognize that the EHR movement did not always engage healthcare providers early enough in the process.

To help address this issue, *Infoway's* End-User Acceptance Strategy will help us gain a deeper understanding of what attracts clinicians to embrace the EHR, by evaluating existing projects and practices for successful examples.

We also plan to develop a Community of Practice based on face-to-face meetings and an online infrastructure, promote EHR training and support, promote building of new workflow models, and leverage EHR champions and "super-users" within the healthcare professional community.

Speaking of progress, although we're crunching the final numbers, it looks like we'll end off our fiscal year (March 31) with over 150 projects and over \$700 million approved for these projects



Richard C. Alvarez
President & CEO,
Canada Health Infoway

(since inception), which surpasses the targets we set out in our business plan!

Infoway's success – and the advancement of EHRs across Canada – speaks to the commitment and efforts of all the partners in our movement, including the jurisdictions, the healthcare professionals, the technology vendors and many others. Our movement will continue to gain ground as educational institutions, patients and others come on board.

I've been in the health information industry for over 23 years and it's heartening to see the strides we've made. I can only sum it up by saying: "We've come a long way, baby!" And this time there ain't no smoke!!!!

Infoway Program Update Summary

As of the end of the third quarter of its 2005-06 fiscal year, *Infoway* had 146 active or completed investment projects. Of these, 88 were jointly developed with provinces and territories. The other 58 are pan-Canadian projects sponsored by *Infoway*. Projects were underway in all nine investment programs and in all provinces and territories. Here's a look at each program and its progress as of the end of December 2005.

INFOSTRUCTURE

- 12 active and completed pan-Canadian projects.
- Board approval was obtained for establishment of an interim standards coordination and maintenance function to be housed at *Infoway*.

DIAGNOSTIC IMAGING SYSTEMS

- 25 active and completed projects in 10 jurisdictions.
- Notable new investments include: the Montreal/McGill Réseau Universitaire Intégré de Santé (RUIS) Diagnostic Imaging implementation project in Quebec and a DI implementation project in Manitoba.

REGISTRIES

- 26 active and completed projects in 10 jurisdictions.
- 2 new project planning phases were approved for the Ontario Client Registry Replication project and the Health Infostructure Atlantic (HIA) Pan-Atlantic Provider Registry Replication project.

- 2 Client Registry pilot projects were completed and closed: the Regional Enterprise Master Patient Index with Alberta's Capital Health and the "Best of Breed" with the Newfoundland and Labrador Centre for Health Information.

DRUG INFORMATION SYSTEMS

- 14 active and completed projects in 8 jurisdictions.
- No new drug projects were approved in Q3.

LABORATORY INFORMATION SYSTEMS

- 8 active and completed projects in 4 jurisdictions.
- Phase 2 of the Lab pan-Canadian Standards Project was approved.

88 jurisdictional projects developed with P/T as shown on map
58 pan-Canadian projects also underway

Infoway is on track to exceed the 2005-06 project budget approvals of \$275 to \$375 million.

Seven new projects with planning phases valued at \$4 million were initiated. An additional \$105 million was invested in follow-up phases for existing projects.

TELEHEALTH

- 29 active and completed projects in 10 jurisdictions.
- 5 new projects were approved in Q3 as follows: the Telehealth Integration Planning Project – Ontario, Cross Program Knowledge Strategy, Alberta Clinical Telehealth Innovation Program, Post Cardiac Surgery: Home-Telehealth Planning Project and Transformation of Telehealth Leveraging the EHR.
- 4 new phases of existing projects were approved in Manitoba and Alberta.

PUBLIC HEALTH SURVEILLANCE

- 5 active and completed projects in 4 jurisdictions.
- 2 new project phases were approved, including the Ontario Implementation Planning Project and Phase 2 of the PHS Standards Development project.

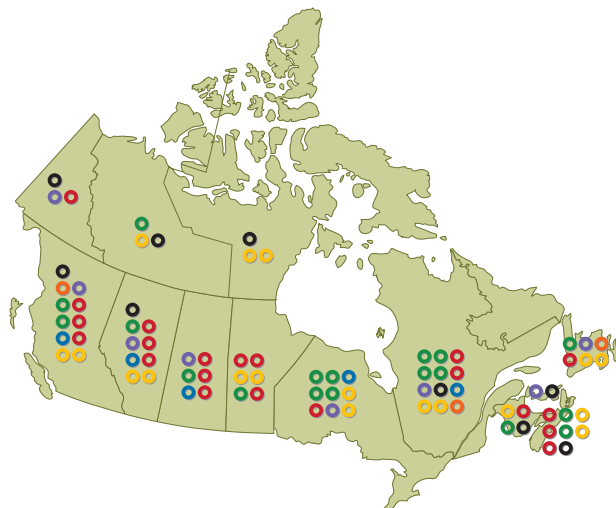
INTEROPERABLE EHR

- 17 active and completed projects in 11 jurisdictions.
- New approvals this quarter included an implementation phase for the existing pan-Canadian iEHR Standards project and a new iEHR Meditech Integration investment project.

INNOVATION AND ADOPTION

- This program currently has 10 active and completed projects.
- Nine of the approved projects are parallel implementation phases of the End User Acceptance Strategy.

- Registries
- Diagnostic Imaging
- Drug Info Systems
- Lab Info Systems
- Telehealth
- Interoperable EHR
- Public Health Surv.



In Brief



Dennis Giokas

The new version of the Blueprint is now available on *Infoway's KnowledgeWay* at: www.infoway-inforoute.ca

NEW PAN-CANADIAN STANDARDS COORDINATION FUNCTION CREATED

After extensive consultation and approval by their boards, Canada Health *Infoway* and the Canadian Institute for Health Information (CIHI), have agreed to establish a new Canada-wide coordination function to support and sustain health informatics standards. This decision has been approved by the federal/provincial/territorial conference of Deputy Ministers of Health.

This new standards function will be known as the *Infoway* Standards Collaborative. Currently, Canada's health information standards activities are managed by several different organizations and initiatives. The *Infoway* Standards Collaborative will begin integrating this work – helping to streamline efforts and increase efficiencies. It will be responsible for the implementation support, maintenance, conformance and education for EHR standards currently being developed by *Infoway*.

The Collaborative will also encompass four of the country's core standards initiatives currently managed by CIHI – the Partnership for Health Information Standards, HL7 Canada, the secretariat for ISO/TC 215 (the health informatics Technical Committee to the International Organization for Standardization) and liaison with Digital Imaging and Communications in Medicine (DICOM). *Infoway* and CIHI are working together to ensure a seamless transition of resources and responsibilities.

The standards coordination function will be housed within *Infoway* on an interim basis. It will be headed by Dennis Giokas, *Infoway's* Chief Technology Officer. For more information, please see the Spring 2006 Standards newsletter available online at www.infoway-inforoute.ca

PAT CHAPMAN JOINS INFOWAY AS GROUP DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE AFFAIRS

Pat Chapman brings to her role at *Infoway* her extensive leadership experience in Public Affairs, Government Relations and brand positioning, especially in the area of healthcare. In her new role as Group Director Corporate Affairs, Pat will have accountability for the leadership and oversight of the Corporate Affairs department with responsibility for developing, implementing and managing the *Infoway* Strategic Communications Plan, and ensuring alignment with our business objectives – as well as establishing *Infoway's* visibility in the marketplace.

Pat is a bilingual communications executive with significant and broad-based private and public sector experience. Prior to joining *Infoway*, Pat was President and CEO of Avanti Communications, a national communications consulting firm where she was responsible for setting up the Communications Department of the Ontario Ministry of Health Promotion, in addition to working at the Director level within the Communication Branch at the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long Term Care.

She has nearly 10 years private sector experience at Shell Canada as Director of Public Affairs, where she was responsible for leading a national team and directing communications strategies. She began her career as a journalist with the *Globe and Mail*. Pat holds an MA in Journalism from the University of Western Ontario and a BA (Hon) in English from Queen's University.



Pat Chapman

HCC: Accelerate EHRs

Infoway supports report's recommendations for improved health care

Canada Health Infoway recently issued a statement in support of the Health Council of Canada's (HCC) recommendations to speed up the development and use of linked electronic systems for patient records, prescriptions, and clinical decision-making. The report, *Health Care Renewal in Canada*, calls information technology systems "powerful tools to support the delivery of safer, more appropriate health care." *Infoway* also expressed support for the HCC's call for increased funding to accelerate the development of electronic health information systems.

Richard Alvarez, *Infoway's* President and CEO, said the HCC should be congratulated on its continued efforts to shed light on the areas that are essential. "Significant progress has been made in implementing electronic health records (EHRs) across the country, but competing priorities in health care mean that this initiative may not get the attention it deserves. The HCC report will help to keep this issue top of mind," he said.

The report said that, to improve the health of the nation, Canadians need quality health care – not just quicker health care. Some of its recommendations included accelerating the development of EHRs for all Canadians by 2010; making drug information systems and e-prescribing mandatory and linking them to EHRs; making greater use of tele-triage and telehealth technologies; and tracking and auditing unusually long wait times experienced by some patients.

Alvarez said that, despite the challenges, most provinces have moved from planning to implementation of the EHR, which would provide an individual with a secure, private lifetime record of his or her health history and care within the health system.

For example, shared diagnostic imaging (DI) networks are underway in every province across the country. These allow healthcare providers to view a patient's electronic X-Ray, MRI or CT scans, avoiding problems due to lost film and patient transfers. These systems make it easy for healthcare providers to consult with one another and to "zoom in" on problem areas which helps improve diagnostic ability. Two of *Infoway's* earliest DI projects – one linking eight hospitals in southwestern Ontario (*please see Page 6*) and another linking 12 hospitals in BC – are now fully implemented.

"The system has resulted in direct benefits to patient outcomes," said Dr. Jonathan Burns, Emergency Physician, MSA Hospital. "Our ER physicians and our neurosurgeons would have difficulty practising without it. It's all about giving the right data to the right person at the right time."

Drug information systems are also taking shape in many provinces. These systems give authorized healthcare professionals – such as doctors, nurses and pharmacists – confidential access to the medication records of their patients. They help healthcare professionals select the best medication to avoid drug interactions and duplications of therapy, enhancing the safety of the healthcare system.

"We'll get safer care when there is an electronic health record for all Canadians. We'll get more appropriate care when the right healthcare providers are available to the public in the right numbers at the right time, in the right place. We'll get better care when primary healthcare teams equipped with the right electronic tools offer effective chronic disease management and better health promotion."

– Michael Decter, Chair, Health Council of Canada, commenting on the latest HCC report.



Filmless in Thames Valley

Woodstock connection marks project completion

The Thames Valley Hospital Planning Partnership (TVHPP) in southwestern Ontario recently marked the completion of an eight-hospital shared digital imaging project with the connection of Woodstock General Hospital (WGH) to the Thames Valley Digital Imaging Network.

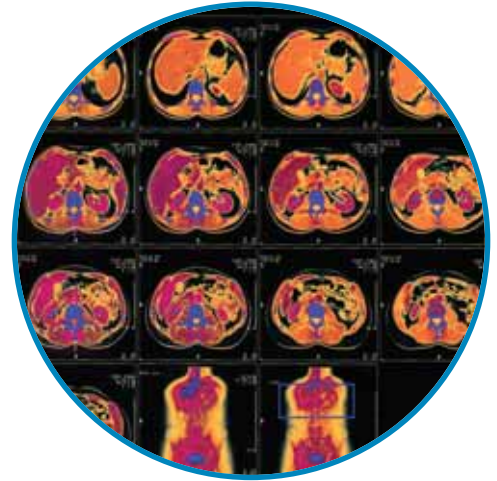
This project, one of the largest of its kind in Canada, has served as a model for other health information network projects across Canada. It was initiated by the Thames Valley Hospital Planning Partnership (TVHPP) and jointly funded by Canada Health Infoway and the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-term Care. *Infoway* has committed an investment of \$19.9 million to this initiative.

"This is yet another milestone towards establishment of a pan-Canadian Electronic Health Record," said Richard C. Alvarez, *Infoway's* President and Chief Executive Officer. "The Thames Valley group was one of the first to work with us on such an ambitious project in the diagnostic imaging field. Their shared governance and network models are now being leveraged

in other jurisdictions across Canada. We are proud to have been partners in this undertaking and to see the emerging benefits it is bringing to healthcare providers and patients alike."

During celebrations marking the project's completion, Natasa Veljovic, WGH President and CEO, stressed the successful rollout of the project. "As the shared digital imaging project spread throughout the Thames Valley, implementations went exceptionally well." Thanks to the pioneering work of the TVHPP project, similar implementations are spreading throughout Canada, helping to enhance the quality of care by providing faster access to diagnostic reports and images.

Shared digital imaging helps to improve healthcare delivery in rural communities by increasing access to radiologists, nuclear medicine physicians and other specialists at tertiary care hospitals. The eight TVHPP hospitals now sharing their images include Alexandra Hospital in Ingersoll; Four Counties Health Services in Newbury; London Health Sciences Centre; St. Joseph's Health Care, London; St. Thomas-Elgin General Hospital; Strathroy-Middlesex General Hospital; Tillsonburg District Memorial Hospital, and Woodstock General Hospital.



Dr. Malcolm McLeod, general surgeon and Woodstock's Chief of Staff, says he is finding the shared digital system more valuable every day in both his practice and for teaching scenarios. "The images come to you, no matter where you are," he said. "Recently, I was able to electronically access the images of a patient transferred here from Ingersoll. With just the click of a mouse I reviewed the patient's X-rays taken in Ingersoll to compare them with our X-rays to note changes and improvements."

Dr. Bob Vinson, Chief of Diagnostic Imaging at WGH, noted that the new system has finally provided the solution to the most commonly asked question in diagnostic imaging departments since physicist Wilhelm Roentgen invented X-ray technology in 1895: "Where are the films?" The answer: "In the computer."



At left, John Burns, Infoway's Senior Vice-President, Investment Programs Management, cuts the cake during celebrations at Woodstock General Hospital. Looking on are, left, Natasa Veljovic, WGH President & CEO, and right, Karen Palmer, WGH's Manager, Diagnostic Imaging.

Making the Connection

Newfoundland and Labrador announces province-wide PACS

Canada Health Infoway and Newfoundland and Labrador (NL) recently announced a \$14.5-million investment in a province-wide PACS system during a news conference held at the Memorial Regional Hospital, in Corner Brook, NL. Patients and healthcare professionals alike lauded the fact that medical information can now be communicated from one site to another – connecting rural with city healthcare sites – right across the province.

“Currently, the Picture Archiving and Communications System is fully operational in Eastern and Central regions. Canada Health Infoway’s investment of \$10.5 million combined with our province’s Budget 2005 investment of \$4 million will enable us to implement Picture Archiving and Communications System in Western and Labrador Grenfell regions and link all regions together in a central repository managed by Eastern Health.” – John Ottenheimer, former Minister, Health and Community Services, NL

Newfoundland and Labrador is the first province to integrate its diagnostic imaging repository with a provincial client registry. This means all images in the province can be associated with each and every patient in the province. And scarce health professional resources can be shared between rural and urban healthcare facilities.

“This initiative is first and foremost about the patients across Newfoundland and Labrador. The project demonstrates that, through the use of technology, combined

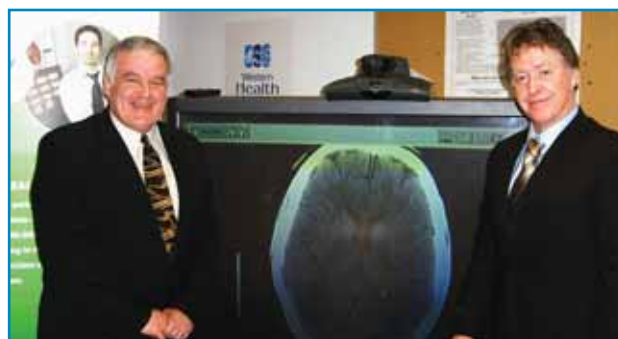
with the perseverance of our healthcare leaders, we can overcome geography in order to provide the services communities need,” said Mike Sheridan, Infoway’s COO, speaking at the announcement event.

By 2007, there will be 27 PACS sites throughout the province. The project, being managed by the Newfoundland and Labrador Centre for Health Information, allows for primary reporting, on-call coverage and immediate remote consultation, enabling both the clinician and the referring radiologist to review the same images at the same time. It also means fewer exams are repeated when patients are sent to secondary and/or tertiary sites for consultation.

Dr. Ed Mercer, Chief of Radiology, at Corner Brook’s Memorial Regional Hospital, recognized the benefits of increased efficiency to patients of the new PACS system. “The time it takes to transfer images across Newfoundland is less time than it takes to print the images to film,” he said.

The vision of advancing digital health information on a wider scale is benchmarked by the Newfoundland and Labrador project – making this another important step in advancing pan-Canadian Electronic Health Record systems.

It’s a vision appreciated throughout the province of Newfoundland and Labrador. “Canada Health Infoway has provided a clear vision of how



From left, John Ottenheimer, former Minister of Health and Community Services, NL, and Mike Sheridan, Infoway’s COO, at a news conference announcing the province-wide PACS.

advances in information and communication technology can be used to deliver improved health care for Canadians,” said Susan Gillam, CEO, Western Health, Corner Brook.

“A newborn baby from a rural community in Newfoundland required urgent treatment, but was unable to be transported out to St. John’s due to a snowstorm. With the availability of PACS technology, the rural physicians were able to obtain advice and direction from the neonatologists in St. John’s. The neonatologists were able to monitor the chest X-ray changes on the PACS system until the baby could be transported to St. John’s.” – Dr. Benvon Cramer, Radiologist, Janeway Child Health Center, Eastern Health, St. John’s, NL

About us

Canada Health Infoway Inc. invests with public sector partners across Canada to implement and reuse compatible health information systems that support a safer, more efficient healthcare system. *Infoway* is an independent, not-for-profit corporation whose members are the 14 federal, provincial and territorial Deputy Ministers of Health.

OUR MISSION

Infoway's mission is to foster and accelerate the development and adoption of electronic health information systems with compatible standards and communications technologies on a pan-Canadian basis, with tangible benefits to Canadians. *Infoway* will build on existing initiatives and pursue collaborative relationships in pursuit of its mission.

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