



# EHRnews@Infoway

A NEWSLETTER FROM CANADA HEALTH INFOWAY



## VOLUME 4 – SUMMER 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:

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

[www.infoway-inforoute.ca](http://www.infoway-inforoute.ca)

## ISSUE HIGHLIGHTS

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Health IT leaders set up working group
- 7 **Fulfilling the promise**  
Infoway reports on 2005-06 performance

# From the President's Desk

I recently met with *Infoway* employees, as I do every quarter, to update them on progress and new developments. I told them to brace themselves because, although they had been working very hard, things would get even more intense. With more than half of our initiatives now in the implementation phase, this is where the rubber hits the road – for *Infoway*, for the provinces and territories and for solutions providers.

Our move from planning to action was recently acknowledged by our Members – the Deputy Ministers of Health from across Canada – at our Annual General Meeting. They seemed to truly take ownership in *Infoway* and showed unanimous support for our annual results.

In 2005/06, we initiated 58 new projects and approved \$381M for new investments, surpassing our targets for the year. This brings our total investment to date to \$702 million for 163 initiatives across the country. A story on our AGM is featured in this issue. (Please see “*Fulfilling the promise: Getting there*” on page 7)

As we move ahead, it's important to maintain existing support and build new understanding about the value of electronic health records. In mid-June, I had the opportunity to meet with a rare mix of senior healthcare policy-makers and health information executives at a conference hosted by *Infoway* and the Health Council of Canada. Our goal was to help inform their decisions through concrete examples of benefits and challenges.

International experts at the conference showed us that Canada is not alone in its quest to renew the healthcare system. Denmark and New Zealand have improved communications and teamwork amongst healthcare providers, reduced medication errors and developed more efficient healthcare. Presenters from several Canadian provinces showed how they have harnessed the power of innovative technology to improve patient safety, make health care more accessible and better serve remote and rural communities.

Also at the conference, *Infoway* was recognized for its contribution to laying the foundation for better health care. Dr. W. Ed Hammond, Professor Emeritus at Duke University, said: “Of all the countries moving ahead with plans for electronic health records, Canada is the most likely to succeed because of its consultative approach and its unrelenting focus.”

Despite the good work being done, electronic health record development is, in some ways, at a crossroads in Canada. The current resources available and plans in place will not enable us to extend the benefits of electronic health records to all Canadians.

To guide future development, *Infoway* recently began a process of establishing a clear long-term vision– the vision for 2015. This consultative endeavour will be guided by the input of a top-notch steering committee. I look forward to sharing the plan with you later this year.



**Richard C. Alvarez**  
President & CEO,  
Canada Health Infoway

At my quarterly update meeting with *Infoway* staff, as I mentioned earlier, I told them to brace themselves for the challenges ahead. I also told them they should take ownership of our success, as all of our stakeholders should.

Like a pebble thrown into the water, our efforts are now creating a ripple effect that, in time, will reach all patients and healthcare providers across the country.

# Infoway Program Update Summary

As of the end of the fourth quarter of its 2005-06 fiscal year, *Infoway* had 163 active or completed investment projects. Of these, 103 were jointly developed with provinces and territories. The other 60 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 March 2006.

## INFOSTRUCTURE

- 12 active and completed pan-Canadian projects.
- Project approvals to date represent 70% of the Infostructure program funding envelope.

## DIAGNOSTIC IMAGING SYSTEMS

- 25 active and completed projects: 18 projects in 10 jurisdictions and 7 pan-Canadian projects.
- Notable new investments include three implementation phases of existing projects in Quebec (Laval and Sherbrooke) and New Brunswick.

## REGISTRIES

- 26 active and completed projects: 20 projects in 10 jurisdictions and six pan-Canadian projects.
- The Ontario Client Registry project moved into the implementation phase in Q4.

## DRUG INFORMATION SYSTEMS

- 14 active and completed projects: 8 projects in 8 jurisdictions and 6 pan-Canadian projects.
- The implementation phase of an existing project in Newfoundland and Labrador was approved.

## LABORATORY INFORMATION SYSTEMS

- 8 active and completed projects: 5 projects in 4 jurisdictions and 3 pan-Canadian projects.
- The first phase of the implementation phase for an existing project in British Columbia was approved.

The \$162 million in Q4 project approvals exceeded the \$85 million Q4 forecast by \$77 million.

Seventeen new projects with planning phases valued at \$15 million were initiated. An additional \$147 million was invested in follow-up phases for existing projects.

## TELEHEALTH

- 41 active and completed projects: 33 projects in 11 jurisdictions and 8 pan-Canadian projects.
- A new implementation phase for the existing Saskatchewan Telehealth Expansion project was approved.
- In Q4, 11 new projects were approved, including a British Columbia Telepathology project, a Nova Scotia Telehealth Network Expansion project and planning phases for a suite of 8 Telehealth projects in Quebec.

## PUBLIC HEALTH SURVEILLANCE

- 5 active and completed projects: 4 in 4 jurisdictions and one pan-Canadian project.
- In Q4, the implementation phase of the Public Health Surveillance Pan-Canadian Detailed Design and Architecture project was approved.

## INTEROPERABLE EHR

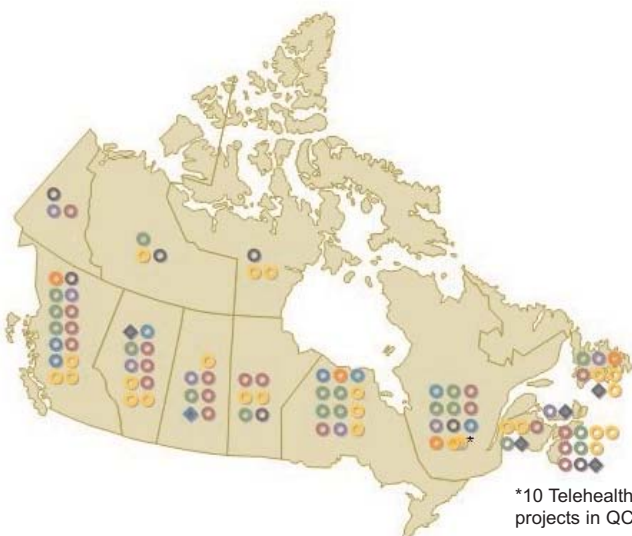
- 19 active and completed projects: 12 projects in 11 jurisdictions and 7 pan-Canadian projects.
- New approvals in Q4 included a joint iEHR/Lab project in Newfoundland and Labrador and an iEHR pan-Canadian project.

## INNOVATION AND ADOPTION

- 13 active and completed projects: 3 projects in 3 jurisdictions and 10 pan-Canadian projects.
- Q4 approvals included the first 3 jurisdictional projects: the Quebec and Alberta Chronic Disease Management projects and the Ontario Computerized Physician Order Entry System.

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

- ◊ Registries
- ◊ Diagnostic Imaging
- ◊ Drug Info Systems
- ◊ Lab Info Systems
- ◊ Telehealth
- ◊ Interoperable EHR
- ◊ Public Health Surv.
- ◊ Innovation & Adoption
- ◊ Cross Prog. Project
- 100 Number of Projects



# Infoway invests to benefit all Canadians

## QUEBEC APPROVES 10 EHR PROJECT AGREEMENTS WITH INFOWAY

The government of Quebec recently approved 10 new agreements reached with Canada Health Infoway for electronic health record and patient registry projects as well as eight telehealth projects.

“The work and preliminary studies carried out since the beginning of 2005 by the ministry and in conjunction with Canada Health Infoway have contributed greatly to the development of our computerization plan. The approval of these agreements is the launching point for development and expansion projects that will soon produce tangible results for the users of Quebec’s health and social services network and all other stakeholders,” said Philippe Couillard, Quebec’s health and social services minister.

Included in the 10 projects is an electronic health record project that will make it possible to establish a data-sharing infrastructure for health information. These systems will be tested in the Montreal and Laval areas and will then be ready for a rapid migration into other regions of Quebec. A patient registry project will make it possible to securely store information that will uniquely identify the users of Quebec’s health and social services network.

In addition, planning for eight telehealth projects sponsored by the Integrated University Health Networks (RUIS) will be carried out. The total of all 10 projects and project stages – including those related to the electronic health record, patient registry and telehealth – will cost \$25 million to complete. Of this amount, \$19 million will come from Canada Health Infoway.



## NOVA SCOTIA TO REPLACE FILM-BASED IMAGING ACROSS THE PROVINCE

The completion of a new digital diagnostic system at hospitals across Nova Scotia will allow physicians and their patients to make faster and better treatment decisions.

“Our plan is to introduce new information technology across the province that will improve the quality of care and access to tests and treatment,” Premier Rodney MacDonald said. “The PACS system will mean quicker treatment decisions and the reduction of unnecessary travel for many patients.”

The Department of Health is investing more than \$10 million in new equipment as part of the Picture Archive and Communications System (PACS) expansion project. The project, which is already underway in some districts, will replace film-based imaging in the province with faster, safer and more streamlined processes. The project began in 2004 at a total cost of \$25 million. Canada Health Infoway is contributing \$12 million, with the remaining \$3 million to come from the federal medical equipment fund.

Hospitals will be using digital technology to capture, store and transmit digital images including X-rays, CT scans, ultrasounds and MRIs. Medical images will be available instantly to healthcare providers across the province.



# EHR projects rollout across country

## BC ANNOUNCES \$150M INVESTMENT IN E-HEALTH TO IMPROVE PATIENT CARE

George Abbott, British Columbia's minister of health, recently announced an investment of \$150 million towards e-health initiatives designed to improve and modernize patient care throughout the province.

"This investment will promote major transformation and modernization in the healthcare system, providing better care for patients and maximizing the return on taxpayers' investment," Abbott said. "We are building on the success of our e-health strategy so that health professionals are able to deliver faster, more effective treatments to patients through new information technology and telehealth. With the most relevant and accurate patient information at their fingertips, health professionals can make the best possible decisions about patient treatment and diagnosis."

Canada Health Infoway has conditionally agreed to allocate up to approximately \$120 million to BC for e-Health initiatives between 2005/06 and 2008/09. The Ministry of Health is providing an additional \$30 million over the same period.

BC's e-Health strategy comprises 22 projects grouped into nine areas – primary care, hospital care, home and community care, public health, laboratories, pharmacies, diagnostic imaging, telehealth, and foundational projects – that will build an integrated, electronic record of a patient's journey through the health system.

## ALBERTA INITIATES WORLD'S FIRST ELECTRONIC SURGICAL REPORTING

Alberta cancer surgeons have implemented the world's first Web Surgical Medical Records program (WebSMR) and will be extending the program to other parts of the province, thanks to \$1.4 million in funding from Canada Health Infoway.

The new tool, developed by Alberta surgeons, allows doctors to fill out a standardized electronic report after performing surgeries. The reports can be shared by the entire cancer care team, enabling them to make better decisions and improve the quality and safety of post-operative care for patients. Surgeons previously dictated reports after surgeries, which were later transcribed and filed. The process was expensive and time consuming and retrieving information for analysis required an exhaustive chart review.

## NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR TO IMPLEMENT PHARMACY NETWORK

In keeping with its commitment to establish an electronic health record system for the province, Health and Community Services Minister Tom Osborne has announced that the Newfoundland and Labrador Centre for Health Information (NLCHI) will begin implementation of a provincial Pharmacy Network.

The Newfoundland and Labrador Pharmacy Network is a provincial drug information system that will offer province-wide, online, real-time medication profiles, as well as comprehensive drug information and an interactive database to assist pharmacists and physicians in identifying potential adverse drug interactions and events.

The cost of the project over four years is \$25 million. Canada Health Infoway has committed \$17 million in funding and the Department of Health and Community Services will provide \$8 million.

Newfoundland and Labrador became the first Canadian province to integrate its diagnostic imaging repository with its client registry when it announced a province-wide PACS system earlier this spring.



# International EHR focus

## Health IT leaders agree to collaborate, form working group

Leaders of health information technology initiatives in Canada, the US, Australia and the UK have agreed to collaborate more closely and pursue common opportunities.

Richard Alvarez, *Infoway's* president and CEO, met this spring in San Francisco with David Brailer, former US national coordinator for Health IT; Richard Granger, director general of IT, National Health Service (England); and Ian Reinecke, chief executive officer, National eHealth Transition Authority (Australia).

The decision to collaborate more closely came following an in-depth discussion of common themes and goals that could be aligned and experience that could be leveraged on an international scale. The topics discussed included:

- Patient safety and quality improvement needs;

- Globalization of healthcare information technology;
- Need for international sharing of knowledge and experience;
- Adoption of convergent standards;
- The case for using common terminologies;
- Testing for conformance, compliance, and certification; and
- Challenges faced in clinical adoption

“Australia, the US and the UK are facing challenges similar to those in Canada as they harness the benefits of information technology to improve the healthcare system,” Alvarez said. “Closer collaboration with these countries will allow us to share our Canadian success stories, to learn from other countries and to align key initiatives beyond borders.”

The four leaders have agreed to set up an informal working group, which will help to reinforce – at a very senior level – the



work being done by a number of international organizations dealing with health information technology.

Adoption of standards will be a key focus of the ongoing collaboration. Common standards will facilitate a seamless exchange of information, which could be critically important in dealing with global public health threats. In addition, common international standards can help simplify the procurement and deployment of health information technology solutions, and increase the rate of adoption.

## Infoway's clinician team welcomes three new members

Canada Health Infoway has added three new members to its clinician advisory team: Dr. Claude Poirier, QC, Dr. Rose Anne Goodine, New Brunswick, and Garry Cruickshank, a pharmacist from Ontario.

Other team members include Dr. Robert Burns from British Columbia,

Dr. Mark Dermer and Dr. Lynn Nagle from Ontario.

The creation of the clinician team is a key part of *Infoway's* plans to foster technology adoption by healthcare professionals and to ensure electronic health records exist for 50 per cent of Canadians by the end of 2009.

*Infoway's* clinician team is already playing an active role in fostering the adoption of EHR in their respective professional communities. Team members have met with national physician and nurses organizations and have engaged in dialogue with several provincial health organizations to discuss the challenges and best approaches to clinician engagement. The clinician team works in collaboration with *Infoway's* Health Provider Advisory Groups. For more information, visit [www.infoway-inforoute.ca/en/News-Events/InTheNews](http://www.infoway-inforoute.ca/en/News-Events/InTheNews)

*From left, Dr. Mark Dermer, Garry Cruickshank, Dr. Lynn Nagle, Dr. Robert Burns, Dr. Claude Poirier, Dr. Rose Anne Goodine.*



# Fulfilling the promise

*Infoway reports on 2005-06 activities; investments hit \$702 million mark*

Canada's healthcare system received a shot in the arm last year with an injection of \$381 million in funding from Canada Health Infoway, bringing the organization's total investment since 2001 to \$702 million in all provinces and territories.

*Infoway* reported on its progress at its Annual General Meeting held in Fredericton, NB, June 16, with the corporation's directors and members which include Canada's federal, provincial and territorial deputy ministers of health. The deputy ministers showed unanimous support for *Infoway* and its annual results. During the meeting, both the Annual Report and the Corporate Business Plan were tabled and accepted by the members.

"It has been a breakthrough year for electronic health records – a pivotal year

***Infoway's Annual Report and Corporate Business Plan are available as downloads from our corporate website.***

[www.infoway-inforoute.ca](http://www.infoway-inforoute.ca)

**We welcome your opinion – after you have viewed these documents, please take some time to complete our online survey.**

that has laid the foundations for better healthcare across this country," said Arnold Steinberg, *Infoway's* Board Chair.

"Every province and territory has made efforts to ensure that electronic health records remain a priority for Canada to improve its healthcare system," said *Infoway's* President and CEO, Richard Alvarez

*Infoway's* work supports national and regional healthcare priorities. Whether it be primary care reform, pandemic control, wait-time management, health-care access for remote communities, patient safety, cancer control or chronic disease management, the electronic health record infrastructure will provide the components necessary to capture, analyse, disseminate and handle the information required to effectively manage, not only our health, but also our healthcare system.

For example, *Infoway* invested in drug information systems in several provinces last year to help reduce the number of adverse drug effects, resulting in better patient safety. Diagnostic imaging systems in a number of provinces also enabled healthcare providers to capture and access patient X-ray results faster, helping to reduce wait times and reduce film storage costs.

## Canada Health Infoway 2005-06 Highlights

- \$381 million in new investment approvals, a 95-per-cent increase over 2004-05.
- Cumulative investment approvals since inception more than doubled to \$702 million from \$321 million mark at the end of 2004-05.
- 58 new projects launched across Canada bringing the total to 163.
- Half of the projects are now in implementation phase, a five-fold increase from 2004-05
- All 25 projects targeted for completion in 2005-06 were successfully delivered on time, on scope.

Alvarez explained that, though significant progress has been made, many challenges remain including obtaining additional funding to extend the benefits of electronic health records to all Canadians.

Over the next 12 months, *Infoway* is planning to approve an additional \$335 million in new project investments. By March 31, 2007, it is expected that \$1 billion – or approximately 85 per cent of *Infoway's* investment capital – will be approved for specific projects.



## SARAH MUTTITT NAMED ACTING VICE-PRESIDENT, INNOVATION & ADOPTION

Dr. Sarah Muttitt, MD, FRCPC, MBA, has been named *Infoway's* acting vice-president, Innovation & Adoption. Her role is to focus on emerging electronic health record solutions, their adoption by clinicians and their effect on healthcare quality, access and productivity. A graduate of the University of Alberta medical school and the University of Western Ontario's Ivey Business School, she holds subspecialty certification in both Canada and the US. Prior to joining *Infoway* in 2004, she consulted in the telehealth industry and was a former director of MBTelehealth, responsible for the strategic and operational leadership of Manitoba's province-wide telehealth network. She brings to her new role more than 20 years experience in the healthcare industry including experience in the development and implementation of innovative healthcare technologies.

# 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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