



# EHRnews@Infoway

A NEWSLETTER FROM CANADA HEALTH INFOWAY



## VOLUME 4 – WINTER 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)

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Linking healthcare providers and patients
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New site focuses on broadening knowledge

# From the President's Desk

As I glance at the calendar, I can't believe that we're well into the New Year. I'm even more astounded that my two-year anniversary as CEO of *Infoway* is just around the corner.

It's certainly been a rewarding journey, though difficult at times. Some days, two years feels more like 10 because of the sheer intensity, energy and commitment it takes to deliver on our national and unique mandate.

As usual, my early days at *Infoway* were analogous to drinking at a fire hose; trying as hard as I could to understand the organization's key stakeholders, priorities and plans. After a while, I think I got it. But, I was still unclear on how they coincided with the plans, priorities and resources of our jurisdictional partners.

So I started by listening to our partners across Canada and understood that we needed to be in tune with their priorities. Hence, the three-year planning exercise was born. This straightforward, transparent process gave us a chance to sit down with leaders from the jurisdictions to discuss their vision, their plans and their resources for the advent of the Electronic Health Record (EHR).

Based on this information exchange, we were able to agree on three-year notional dollars that would provide them with the predictable funding that they could take to their treasury departments and the field as part of their planning and budget cycles.

In those early meetings, many jurisdictions did not yet have a clear picture of where they were headed. But it was a good start and got everyone

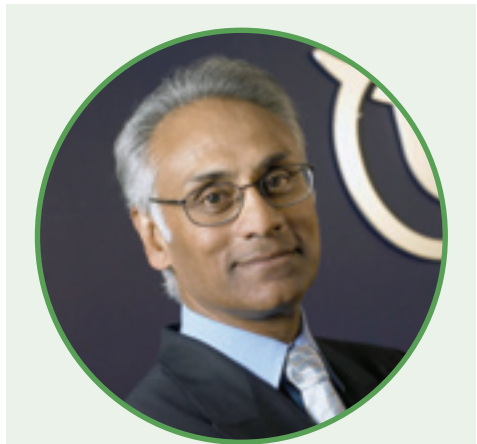
thinking in the same direction. So much so, that this year when we repeated our planning exercise, we were impressed with the progress and the clarity of vision that had developed across the country. Most of the provinces had definite plans and a timeline to roll out or complete development of an EHR.

Clearly, in many jurisdictions we are moving rapidly from planning to implementation. One of the factors that accelerated progress was the fact that *Infoway* was now covering an average of 75 per cent of project costs, rather than 50 per cent, thereby increasing the jurisdictions' level of confidence about securing funding. Additionally, many provinces were generous enough to point to *Infoway's* guidance, knowledge-sharing and joint-procurement strategies as a defining factor in their progress.

Despite this change in our funding ratio, the story in the territories was still challenging. The economic situation here made it difficult for the territories to come up with even 25 per cent of the funding.

In tune with this reality, our Board and Members recently approved up to 100-per-cent funding for projects in the territories on the understanding that Information Technology services are obtained from partners in the south. This should be a definite benefit to achieving the acceleration that we are looking for from the territories.

When I was in Prince Edward Island (PEI) a few weeks ago with Premier Binns and Health Minister Gillan to launch their province-wide EHR initiative, it really hit me how far we'd come as a country.



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

We are going beyond the blueprints, the theory and even the "building blocks" of registries, pharmacy and diagnostic imaging systems. It was rewarding to see how PEI, with demonstrated leadership, is putting the pieces together in a comprehensive whole for the benefit of their citizens and providers of care.

As I move into my third year as CEO, I think about what this year will hold for us as a country. I believe that we have the momentum for success. Let's not look back, but forge ahead, garnering the necessary political will, the clinical leadership and the financial resources that are so essential for a transformational project of this nature to be successful.

# Infoway Program Update Summary

As of the end of the second quarter of its 2005-06 fiscal year, *Infoway* had 141 active or completed investment projects. Of these, 82 were jointly developed with provinces and territories. The other 59 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 September 2005.

## INFOSTRUCTURE

- 12 active and completed projects.
- A second version of the EHRS Blueprint Enterprise Architecture in production.

## DIAGNOSTIC IMAGING SYSTEMS

- 25 active and completed projects in 10 jurisdictions.
- The DI/PACS Coordinated Procurement Project was launched and is expected to drive down costs, accelerate deployment and establish interoperability capabilities for DI projects
- The planning phases were approved for DI implementation projects in the Laval and Sherbrooke integrated university health networks in Quebec.

## REGISTRIES

- 26 active and completed projects in 10 jurisdictions.
- Phase 2 of the Quebec Client Registry implementation was approved.

## DRUG INFORMATION SYSTEMS

- 14 active and completed projects in 8 jurisdictions.
- 2 new projects were approved: The Drug Information System Value Proposition project to quantify health system benefits and costs of the DI system and the British Columbia DIS Expansion Strategy for the expansion of PharmaNet.

## LABORATORY INFORMATION SYSTEMS

- 9 active projects and completed projects in 8 jurisdictions.
- New projects were approved for British Columbia and Quebec as well as a Lab/iEHR cross-program project in Saskatchewan.

Project approvals in Q2 totalled \$85 million and exceeded the \$71 million Q2 forecast.

Twenty-three new projects valued at \$9 million were approved. An additional \$76 million was approved for existing projects.

## TELEHEALTH

- Comprises 25 active and completed projects in 10 jurisdictions.
- 4 new projects that specifically address the needs of Aboriginal communities and Official Language Minorities were approved in Q2.
- Strategic Plans for Alberta, British Columbia and Nova Scotia were initiated.
- 3 other new projects approved involve Telehomecare in Nova Scotia, Chronic Disease Management in Newfoundland and Labrador and Adoption/Change Management Planning for Alberta.

## PUBLIC HEALTH SURVEILLANCE

- 4 active and completed projects in 2 jurisdictions.
- 3 new projects were approved, including the Health Infostructure Atlantic Implementation Planning Project, a project for infectious disease monitoring in Quebec and the pan-Canadian Standards Scoping project.

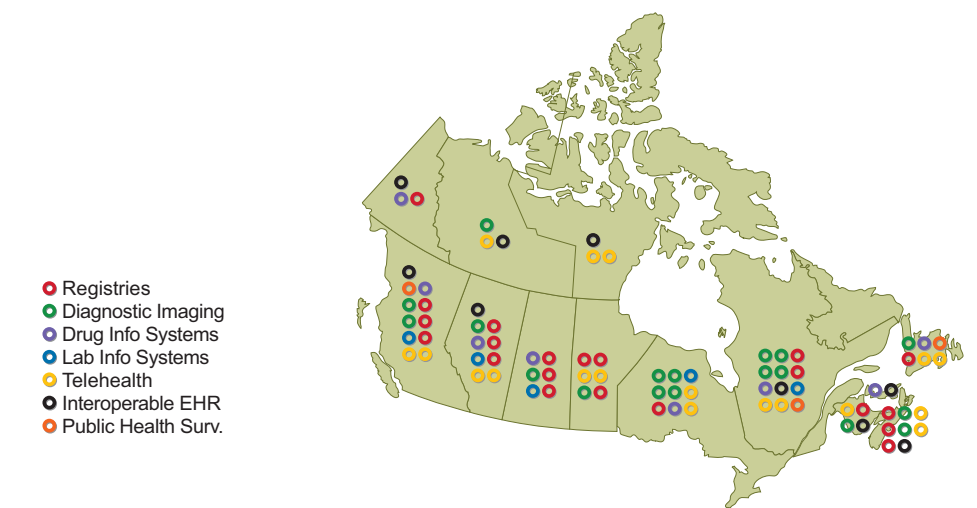
## INTEROPERABLE EHR

- 16 active and completed projects in 11 jurisdictions.
- 5 new projects were approved in Q2: 3 jurisdictional ones in British Columbia, Northwest Territories and the Yukon, and 2 pan-Canadian projects (pan-Canadian iEHR Standards and a pan-Canadian Cross-Program Knowledge Strategy).

## INNOVATION AND ADOPTION

- This program currently has 10 active and completed projects.

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



# In Brief



## PEI GOVERNMENT TO DEVELOP ELECTRONIC HEALTH RECORD

Prince Edward Island's Premier Pat Binns and Health Minister Chester Gillan have announced the signing of a contract to develop and implement a Clinical Information System, paving the way for the development of an Electronic Health Record (EHR) system in PEI.

The project is funded by Canada Health Infoway and six Island hospital foundations including: Queen Elizabeth Hospital Foundation, Prince County Hospital Foundation, Stewart Memorial Hospital Foundation, Eastern Kings Health Foundation Inc., Kings County Memorial Hospital Foundation, and Community Hospital Foundation.

"Canada Health Infoway is pleased to contribute to the EHR for PEI – a shining example of how information technology is underpinning healthcare renewal efforts in Canada," said Richard Alvarez, President and CEO of Canada Health Infoway. "PEI will be one of the first jurisdictions in Canada to have a complete provincial electronic health record, which will enable improved quality of care."

## INFOWAY LAUNCHES NEW VERSION OF EHRS BLUEPRINT

Infoway is pleased to announce a significant enhancement to its Electronic Health Record Solution (EHRS) Blueprint. First published in 2003, the Blueprint is Infoway's vision for the business and technical architecture for the implementation of a pan-Canadian Electronic Health Record (EHR). The updated document includes such features as refined information on its use within the context of the whole health enterprise including key economic drivers, documentation of key requirements of an EHR, storyboards and use cases which document clinical activities, and detailed descriptions of services and interoperability between services – including public health surveillance and Telehealth. The new Blueprint is available beginning in February 2006 on Infoway's KnowledgeWay which is accessed through our website ([www.infoway-inforoute.ca](http://www.infoway-inforoute.ca))

More information on Standards and Architecture is available in our Standards and Architecture newsletter – to view it, please visit our website at: [www.infoway-inforoute.ca](http://www.infoway-inforoute.ca)

## Sylvain Rocque appointed Infoway's new chief financial officer



Sylvain Rocque brings to his role at Infoway his extensive leadership experience in financial management and the direction of corporate finance especially in the area of health-related not-for-profit organizations. For 11 years, he was Chief Financial Officer for the Canadian Institute for Health Information (CIHI). While at CIHI, he was responsible for providing overall vision and direction for CIHI's strategies, programs, policies and information systems in the areas of finance, corporate administration and human resources. He was also responsible for the development and negotiation of a series of bilateral funding agreements with the federal, provincial and territorial jurisdictions. Prior to joining CIHI, he was the Director of Finance and Administration of The MIS Group, a not-for-profit national health agency which was a CIHI predecessor. He holds an Executive MBA from Queen's University, a community college diploma in accounting and has completed a certificate program in executive leadership from the Professional Development Centre of Queen's University School of Business.

# Seen at a glance

## Ontario launches drug viewer for emergency rooms

The Government of Ontario recently launched its web-based application known as the Drug Profile Viewer which enables authorized hospital emergency department staff to view the prescription drug history of more than two million patients who benefit from provincially funded drug programs.

Since October, some Ontario hospital emergency departments have been provided with real-time access to the prescription drug claims history of patients receiving benefits through two provincial drug programs: the Ontario Drug Benefit (ODB) Program, which covers seniors, recipients of the Ontario Disability Support Program, and people on social assistance; and the Trillium Drug Program, which helps people who have high drug costs compared to their income. The government is moving towards full implementation of the project by summer 2006.

The Ontario government is collaborating on the start of this new \$10 million system with Canada Health Infoway.

Bob Serviss, Infoway's Group Director, Drugs, Labs and Innovation and Adoption, explained that emergency room access to seniors' drug profiles is the "low hanging fruit" of the drug program. "In most Canadian jurisdictions, lack of access to patient drug information in hospital emergency rooms is a major source of medical error. While many technical, privacy and process challenges need to be overcome in a project of this kind, adoption by ER staff is high and patient safety is significantly improved. The implementation of the viewer in Ontario emergency rooms is a major step forward for the drug program in this jurisdiction."

The Drug Viewer provides an electronic record of all prescription drugs covered by the ODB program, dispensed by an Ontario pharmacist and submitted to the ministry for payment. The emergency room doctor or nurse can then use this information when deciding how best to provide treatment to the patient. Personal health information will continue to be private and confidential. Patients will have the right to prevent their prescription history from being disclosed to hospitals, at all times and for any reason.

There are significant benefits to providing electronic access to drug profiles. They include:

- Quicker identification and prevention of harmful drug reactions;
- Faster emergency assessments, leading to faster diagnosis and treatment;
- Maintenance of a patient's current medications as needed;
- Assistance if patients don't communicate or know drugs/dosages; and
- Reduce need to repeat drug information to each healthcare provider.

At right, Shelley Edwards, RN, uses the Drug Profile Viewer to discuss a patient's drug history with Dr. Trevor Jain at Kingston General Hospital.

"The implementation of the viewer in Ontario emergency rooms is a major step forward for the drug program in this jurisdiction." – Bob Serviss, Group Director, Drugs, Labs and Innovation and Adoption, Infoway.

"Everyone is very excited about this new way of sharing information. Clinically, it's a very useful assessment tool and provides a significant advantage in figuring out a patient's medication list." – Shelley Edwards, first regional co-ordinator of the Drug History Project and a registered nurse at Kingston General Hospital.



# Telehealth

Increasing access to care for Canadians

In October 2005, Canada Health Infoway agreed to invest into two MBTelehealth (Manitoba's provincial telehealth network) projects which will provide a dramatic expansion of the telehealth network from 26 to 43 sites. More importantly, the projects will provide services to 10 northern First Nations and to seven Franco-Manitoban communities located throughout the province.

**“Our work with Infoway has allowed MBTelehealth to lay the foundation for growth allowing the network to reach more Manitobans. Investment from Infoway has also been a foundation for the multi-sector relationships that have made the First Nations expansion project possible.” – Liz Loewen, Director of MBTelehealth.**

The projects are significant from multiple perspectives. Firstly, the projects underscore the commitments by both MBTelehealth and Infoway to increase access to healthcare services for all Canadians, to implement technical solutions that will ultimately enhance the productivity of the healthcare system and to deploy quality programs that can be delivered regardless of geography. Secondly, they represent a significant milestone for Infoway's telehealth program as they are the first two investments in the direct implementation of telehealth solutions.

“The MBTelehealth projects hold significant importance for us,” said Robert Vigneault, Telehealth Program Director, Infoway. “Not only are these projects our first implementation investments, but they are a direct result of our Telehealth Strategy and demonstrate that some of the barriers

to telehealth investment, such as governance, funding and cross-jurisdictional health service delivery, are being removed as a result of our investments in management models and jurisdictional telehealth strategy.”

On the heels of the “implementation” breakthrough in Manitoba, Infoway also announced investment in the Ontario Telehealth Transformation Project. The project is focusing on the convergence of the three Ontario telehealth networks – VideoCare, CareConnect and the NORTH Network – into a single Ontario Telehealth Network. All three networks have been Canadian leaders in the deployment of telehealth and in adopting innovative approaches and technologies to diminish distance as a barrier to accessing quality healthcare services. The investment complements one of Infoway's key investment strategy dimensions aimed at ensuring that telehealth management models across Canada continue to evolve to meet the needs of Canadians.

Both the investments in Manitoba and Ontario demonstrate the increasing significance of telehealth service delivery across Canada. The investments also clearly demonstrate the importance of the Infoway investment program towards ensuring that telehealth programs can expand and increase clinical programs as well as utilization, integrate into the healthcare system, and develop or apply interoperability standards to ensure seamless delivery regardless of the jurisdiction.

In many ways, the two investments are the tip of the iceberg, as other jurisdictions, most notably Quebec, British Columbia, Alberta and Newfoundland are finalizing telehealth strategies which will lead to more investments in implementation projects.



**“Ontario's transformation project will provide an opportunity to build on the strengths and success of the three existing telehealth networks. Their work over the past five years in particular has made telehealth services a strong feature of the Ontario health delivery landscape, and the single provincial network that is currently being planned collaboratively with the networks will position telehealth for an even greater role.” – Vytas Mickevicius, Telemedicine Lead for the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care's e-Health Office**

In order to prepare and facilitate increased investments in telehealth across the country, Infoway is currently updating the eligibility criteria for project costs. The program is also adding resources across the country to increase communications with stakeholders and to more readily identify investment opportunities. The revisions of the strategy and eligibility, and the growth of the program team, are a direct result of discussions with stakeholders from across the country and from the program's commitment to ensure that our approach evolves as rapidly as the technology and innovation associated with the telehealth programs across Canada.

# The Power to Connect

Infoway launches new corporate website

Canada Health Infoway recently launched its new corporate website which can be found at [www.infoway-inforoute.ca](http://www.infoway-inforoute.ca). The website was launched with the objective of providing a single integrated source of information to serve a wide and growing group of stake-holders with a more complete and flexible information resource.

Regular online visitors will discover many changes to the Infoway website. As well as providing reliable, accurate

information on a timely basis to meet current and anticipated stakeholders' needs, the new look and feel of the website is more user-friendly, presenting a significant opportunity to raise public awareness about EHR, tell the EHR story and communicate the tangible benefits of the EHR to end users, media and all Canadians.

With the new enhanced website content, visitors will find easy access to a wealth of knowledge. Some content highlights

include: access to Infoway's corporate business plan, our Standards and Architecture newsletter, the EHRnews@infoway newsletter and other resources such as analyses and strategies; a gateway to Standards forums with the purpose of facilitating partnerships and community of practice; a human resources section providing online job applications and resume submission functionality; and, the articles and news releases on what's “in the news” about Infoway.

Regular visitors will still find the latest information on upcoming events and meetings with the private sector. As the site grows, visitors can expect to find more educational content that incorporates forward-thinking ideas about EHR-related topics, knowledge transfer initiatives and progress in other countries, as well as testimonials, real-life stories and successes.



## Dr. Mark Dermer joins Infoway's Medical Advisory Team

Dr. Mark Dermer has joined Infoway as a Senior Medical Advisor on a part-time basis and is based in Ottawa. Dr. Dermer will work with Dr. Bob Burns as a member of Infoway's Senior Medical Advisors' team with primary responsibility for supporting the implementation of the End User Acceptance Strategy and Projects.

Dr. Dermer is a fluently bilingual general practitioner with extensive experience in using and promoting electronic medical records within his practice and within the physician community in Canada. He is the founder and managing associate of an 11-doctor group practice that uses an electronic medical record.

An Assistant Professor of Family Medicine at the University of Ottawa, he has active hospital privileges at The Ottawa Hospital, where he is a member of the Clinical Ethics Committee. Prior to entering medicine, he worked in the computer industry and he now has over 20 years experience in matching computer capabilities with user needs.



# 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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