



EHRnews@Infoway

A NEWSLETTER FROM CANADA HEALTH INFOWAY

VOLUME 7 – WINTER 2009

Welcome to the latest issue of EHRnews@Infoway. We hope you enjoy reading about the work Canada Health Inforoute 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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From the President's Desk

Recently, the federal government announced a \$500-million allocation for *Infoway* in its 2009 Budget. I know I speak for everyone at *Infoway* – as well as our jurisdictional partners – in expressing our appreciation for the continued support of the development of Canada's electronic health record systems (EHRs).

I also want to thank our jurisdictional partners, as well as our colleagues in national associations, for their contribution to the pre-budget consultation process. Their steadfast support of the move to modernize the country's health information systems was heard by the federal government and responded to both positively and generously.

The continued development of Canada's EHR systems is an important undertaking for the health care field for two reasons. First, there are the associated health benefits. Second, there are considerable economic benefits. Both are extensive and far-reaching.

EHR systems have the capacity to securely record and track millions of health transactions, from your newborn's weight to your grandmother's hip replacement, and more. These transactions enable health care professionals to deliver better care through timely access to consistent health care data, reduced duplication of effort, and shorter time lags from one stage of care to the next. Among the many crucial and lasting benefits is the potentially life-saving advantage of health professionals having access to critical health information for all of us, no matter where in Canada we live.

Infoway continues to work with every territory and province to implement individual solutions that are starting to deliver benefits now and that will combine to deliver enhanced value in the future. This will not only give health professionals ready access to patient information, but also enable better-informed decisions about diagnosis and treatment, and empower patients by giving them access to their health information and involving them in their care plans.

We're already seeing this in such areas as diagnostic imaging (DI). Thanks to the investments *Infoway* and our partners are making in DI solutions, including Picture Archiving and Communications Systems (PACS), some 79 per cent of people across Canada will have their X-ray images digitized by the end of March 2009.

Going digital eliminates the cost and inconvenience of handling film, and allows radiologists in urban centres to provide diagnostic services to remote or underserved locations. The result is greater access for patients and increased productivity and cost savings for radiologists and hospitals. PACS is showing results in improving reporting and consultation efficiency by an average of 27 per cent – roughly equal to adding another 500 radiologists, assessing up to nine million additional exams in the Canadian health system annually. Furthermore, PACS improves efficiencies by reducing the number of unnecessary duplicate exams.

As you know, *Infoway's* mandate to support the acceleration of Canada's EHR record systems is based on a well-established Blueprint and a clear vision for future investments. We've made substantial progress to date, however considerable work lies ahead, work that will continue because of Canada's financial support.

Over the next two years, Canadians can expect to see the positive impact of our efforts to modernize the country's health system with information technology. The new \$500 million in funding will go a long way in supporting e-health projects in every province and territory. It will also help to create thousands of jobs across various sectors, including, but not limited to, the health and IT sectors.

In 2007, we asked the Conference Board of Canada to explore the economic benefits associated with *Infoway's* investments. The Board found:

- For every dollar *Infoway* and its jurisdictional partners invest in electronic health record programs, another \$1.34 is added to overall GDP.



Richard C. Alvarez
President & CEO,
Canada Health Infoway

- For every \$100 million invested in e-health initiatives, more than 1,500 jobs will be created, with half being IT positions.
- For every \$100 million invested in e-health initiatives, an estimated \$42 million in corporate pre-tax profits is generated.

Now, with additional financial support available to *Infoway*, Canadians will see the continued modernization of health care as well as the related job stimulus over the next two years, particularly important during these challenging economic times.

We've come a long way in building Canada's electronic health record systems. This recent infusion of federal funding will help to ensure the legacy of an EHR network that contributes to a health system distinguished by quality, accessibility and productivity across the country and down the years.

To reach our goal, we are currently working diligently – in consultation with our partners – to develop strategies that will take us closer to achieving a pan-Canadian EHR network. I look forward to providing you with additional information in the next edition of *EHRnews@Infoway*.

Infoway Program Update Summary

At the mid-point of its 2008-09 fiscal year (end of Q2), *Infoway* had 272 active or completed investment projects. Of these, 173 were jointly developed with the provinces and territories. The other 99 are pan-Canadian projects sponsored by *Infoway*. Projects were underway in all provinces and territories. Here's a look at each program and its progress as of the end of Q2.

For more information, please visit our website at <http://www.infoway-inforoute.ca/lang-en/about-ehr/ehr-progress-map>

Q2 project approvals totaled \$31.3 million, bringing life-to-date net investment approvals to \$1,518.6 million.

INFOSTRUCTURE

- 24 pan-Canadian projects: 8 active and 16 completed.

DIAGNOSTIC IMAGING SYSTEMS

- 30 projects: 16 active, 14 completed.
- Notable new project phase approvals during the quarter: Phase 2 of Diagnostic Imaging Replication projects in Ontario LHINs 3, 4 and 11.

REGISTRIES

- 29 projects: 13 active, 16 completed.
- A notable new project phase approval: Phase 2 of the New Brunswick Provider Registry project.

DRUG INFORMATION SYSTEMS

- 20 projects: 11 active, 9 completed.

LABORATORY INFORMATION SYSTEMS

- 9 projects: 5 active, 4 completed.
- A new project phase approval: the British Columbia HL7 v3 Lab Interfaces Analysis and Development.

TELEHEALTH

- 74 projects: 41 active, 33 completed.
- Four new project phases were approved during the quarter: Ontario Telehealth KOTM First Nations Expansion - Phase 0 & 1; UHN Telepathology Pan Northern E-Slide Phase 2; Québec First Nations TeleOphthalmology Phase 2; and BC First Nations Telehealth Expansion Phase 2.

PUBLIC HEALTH SURVEILLANCE

- 14 projects, 11 active, 3 completed
- A new project phase approval: the Manitoba Public Health Surveillance Project Phase 1.

INTEROPERABLE EHR

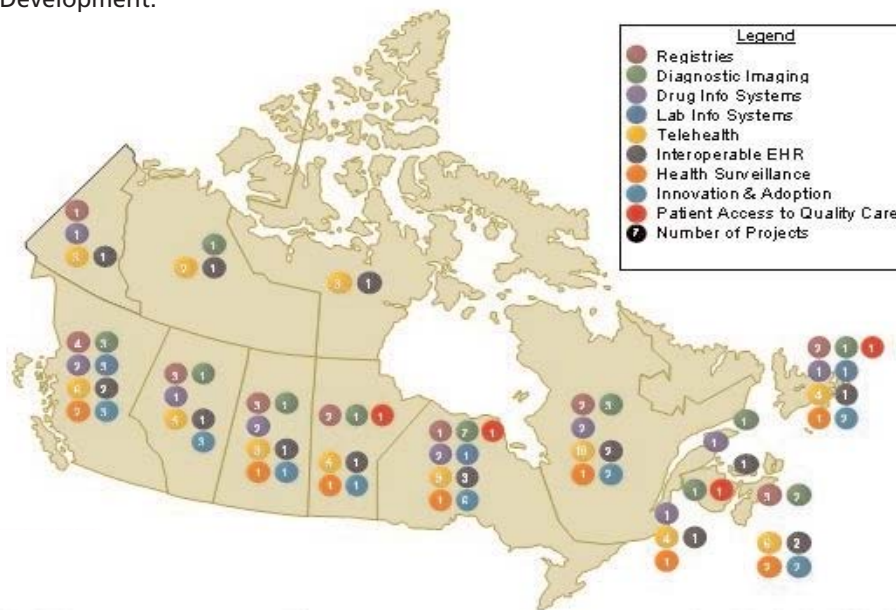
- 28 projects: 18 active, 10 completed.
- A new project phase approval: iEHR Technical Project Phase 1 & 2.

INNOVATION AND ADOPTION

- 38 projects: 28 active, 10 completed.
- Two new project phase approvals: Saskatchewan and Ontario End User Strategy Projects.

PATIENT ACCESS TO QUALITY CARE (PAQC)

- 6 projects: 6 active, 0 completed.
- Four new project phases were approved during the second quarter: Ontario PAQC HEALTH eCONNECTIONS Phase 1, New Brunswick PAQC - Tertiary Telerehabilitation Phase 1, NL PAQC Phase 1, and MB PAQC Project - Phase 1.



In Brief

“Interest in consumer health solutions is growing, and ensuring these solutions are interoperable with the technologies clinicians are using to store Canadians’ health data is central to maximizing their potential.” - Richard Alvarez, Infoway’s president and CEO.

CERTIFICATION PROCESS INTRODUCED FOR CONSUMER HEALTH SOLUTIONS

Health information technology vendors entering the Canadian consumer health solution market can now apply for pre-implementation certification for their consumer health platforms from Canada Health Infoway. The e-Health Certification Services will be broadened in the coming months to include consumer health applications.

“*Infoway’s* new certification service will help health information technology vendors develop solutions that leverage the considerable progress Canada is making in setting standards and deploying interoperable electronic health records throughout the health care system,” said Richard Alvarez, *Infoway’s* president and CEO.

Certification will ensure consumer health solutions comply with *Infoway’s* privacy, security, interoperability and management standards and complement and leverage Canada’s investments in electronic health records. It will also provide vendors with an opportunity to demonstrate compliance with pan-Canadian standards.

Organizations investing in certified solutions can be confident the products they purchase are reliable, interoperable, private and secure. Vendors whose solutions achieve certification will be authorized to apply the “*Infoway Certified*” certification mark to their product and related marketing materials. For more information, visit our website at www.infoway-inforoute.ca



INFOWAY LAUNCHES NEW WEBSITE

Canada Health Infoway recently launched a revamped website featuring a new look and feel, informative online videos and an enhanced interactive experience for the variety of audiences looking for information on electronic health record developments across Canada.

Whether you are a health care provider, patient, IT solution provider, information architect, developer, or a member of the public – there’s a wealth of information available to help everyone learn more about electronic health record systems.

The website is organized into four key areas:

- **About EHR** explains what an electronic health record is and showcases success stories from across the country. Visitors can watch one of the many videos or navigate through the interactive eHealth Progress Map to see what’s being done to develop Canada’s EHR systems.
- **Working with EHR** provides information to those working within the converging industries of health care and information technology. That includes health care providers, jurisdictions and IT vendors/solution providers.
- The **About Infoway** section contains information about our vision, approach, and people as well as a media room and events to keep visitors up to date on *Infoway* happenings.
- The **Standards Collaborative** section contains ways to engage and learn more about the standards and architecture needed to build and sustain an interoperable EHR.

Explore www.infoway-inforoute.ca for yourself, and let us know what you think!

Diagnostic Imaging: Report highlights efficiencies, higher productivity, cost savings

The *Diagnostic Imaging Benefits Evaluation Report*, an independent study commissioned by Canada Health Infoway, highlights the various benefits Picture Archiving and Communications Systems (PACS) are providing to Canadians. The report shows that Canada's investments in digital diagnostic imaging technology will generate between \$850 million and \$1 billion in annual radiology efficiencies and cost savings. Productivity has already increased to a level equivalent to adding some 500 radiologists to our health care system. The report also uncovers the potential of electronic health record investments to help stimulate Canada's economy.

"At a time when the global economy is prompting world leaders to focus on economic stimulus, electronic health record projects are emerging as viable investment opportunities," said Richard Alvarez, *Infoway's* president and CEO. "That's because electronic health record systems have the unique ability to stimulate job creation, improve health outcomes and save money, as evidenced by this report on the benefits of Canada's diagnostic imaging investments.

"Equipping our radiologists with electronic tools to increase efficiency while improving patient access, diagnosis and treatment is helping to offset the shortage of doctors in Canada. Cost savings are also being realized thanks to reduced patient transfers, fewer duplicate exams and the elimination of film. Once these systems are fully in place across Canada, the resulting financial benefits to the health care system could reach \$1 billion a year."

PACS digitizes diagnostic exams such as X-rays, MRIs and CT images. The technology enables clinicians to collect, store, manage and access images regardless of where they are located, or where the test was conducted. *Infoway* projects that by March 31, 2009, 79 per cent of Canadians could benefit from the country's \$340 million in PACS investments.

To read the report, click [here](#). To see a video, click [here](#)

"As physician consultants, radiologists are in great demand. PACS is a technological tool which can significantly enhance the management of our increasing caseloads." - Dr. David Vickar, president of the Canadian Association of Radiologists

EHRNEWS@INFOWAY READERSHIP SURVEY

A readership survey replaced our regular fall issue in 2008 and we would like to thank those readers who took the time to participate.

The goal of the survey was to get input about the newsletter's look and feel as well as its content and the way we deliver our news to you.

We got feedback telling us you want to hear more about *Infoway* and our work with the 13 jurisdictions across Canada. We also got plenty of suggestions for upcoming story ideas and better ways to get the message out.

A similar survey has been undertaken with readers of *Interchange*, our standards and architecture group newsletter. Results of both surveys will be used to help us re-evaluate and realign our news delivery to our readers.

Survey says:

- 60% said they read every issue
- 58% found our articles interesting
- 88% said our articles were the right length
- 90% said our content was easy to read.

Here come the awards

INFOWAY'S BLUEPRINT NETS SOA AWARD

Canada Health Infoway's EHR Blueprint has won top recognition in the health care category of the 2008 Service Oriented Architecture (SOA) Case Study Competition sponsored by the SOA Consortium and *CIO Magazine*. *Infoway* is the first not-for-profit organization to win an award in this competition.

The goal of the SOA Case Study Competition was to highlight business success stories and lessons learned to provide proof points and insights to other organizations considering or pursuing SOA adoption. To qualify for the competition, the SOA project had to have been completed with demonstrated business results.

Infoway's Blueprint was honoured for demonstrating business success and lessons learned in SOA adoption.

Dennis Giokas, *Infoway's* chief technology officer, received the award on behalf of *Infoway* when he participated in a panel discussion at the SOA Consortium meeting in Santa Clara, California, last December.



Dennis Giokas, Infoway's chief technology officer, taking part in a panel presentation at the SOA Consortium meeting in California.

INFOWAY RECEIVES IPAC LEADERSHIP RECOGNITION

Canada Health Infoway was also recognized for its work towards "achieving an integrated pan-Canadian e-health record system" by the inaugural Institute of Public Administration of Canada (IPAC)/Deloitte Public Sector Leadership Awards.

This prestigious national award was founded by IPAC and leaders of Deloitte's public sector practice as a way to encourage and acknowledge outstanding leadership within federal, provincial and municipal levels of government, as well as in health care, educational and not-for-profit organizations across the country.

Infoway received a bronze award in the Broader Public Sector category (health, education and not-for-profit) which was presented to Richard Alvarez, *Infoway's* president and CEO at a gala reception held to honor the winners.



Infoway's Mike Horner, project manager, DI and Registries, (at left, second row) and representatives of the HDIRS receive the Showcase Merit Award.

HDIRS NETWORK RECEIVES ONTARIO SHOWCASE AWARD

The Hospital Diagnostic Imaging and Repository Services (HDIRS), a partnership of 35 hospitals, the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care and Canada Health Infoway, won a 2008 Merit Award in the Working Together category at the Showcase Ontario conference.

The HDIRS partnership was set up to establish a shared Picture Archiving and Communications System (PACS) that would enable diagnostic images (such as X-rays and ultrasounds) and reports to be shared across 35 hospital sites. Recently, this unique collaboration enabled eight hospitals to move from film to digital technology.

Merit award recipients are chosen based on the project's demonstration of excellence in business practices, teamwork, and the use of technology to deliver services.

The Showcase Ontario conference is the largest Canadian public sector information technology (IT) education event focusing on improving the quality of patient care through the use of health care IT.

Clinicians' Corner



*Dr. Jim MacLean
senior vice-president, clinical adoption
Canada Health Infoway*

It has been almost a year since I joined *Infoway* and what a transition it's been for me.

It has been a time of changing perspectives: from the front lines of health care in a semi-rural family practice to the senior team of a preeminent national organization; and from the management of complex chronic disease and wondering how to help people feel better, to the complex world of health care information technology (IT) and wondering how to help clinicians feel better about adopting Information and Communication Technology (ICT) tools.

For my first contribution to *Infoway's* newsletter, I would like to take a look at the "state of the nation" as it relates to physicians and electronic medical records (EMRs).

To achieve successful implementation and adoption amongst physicians in Canada, four key elements need to exist:

1. High quality products supported by reputable vendors;
2. Physician support channels;
3. A positive business case for physicians; and
4. A critical mass of electronic information exchange including e-prescribing.

There are several excellent EMR

products available in Canada. And support channels are available to physicians considering EMRs or implementing them. These support services can be found at the jurisdictional level through physician IT programs, within the vendor community and through *Infoway's* Clinician e-Health Support Network. Several jurisdictions currently have EMR-funding programs and others are considering moving in this direction. There is also a growing number of patient care incentives, best achieved with EMRs, becoming available to physicians.

It is, however, the fourth key element – providing a critical mass of electronic information exchange – that there is a challenge for physicians. Specifically, they are faced with the burden of manually scanning documents because of the lack of free flowing information from hospitals, diagnostic facilities and other providers must be overcome. Printing and faxing prescriptions are also a hindrance to physicians, especially when they know they can easily execute this action electronically.

I am pleased to be part of the *Infoway* team and I believe that, in collaboration with physician organizations, we can accelerate EMR adoption across Canada by creating a compelling value proposition for physicians.

