



Canada Inforoute
Health Santé
Infoway du Canada



EHRnews@Infoway

A NEWSLETTER FROM CANADA HEALTH INFOWAY

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Welcome to the latest issue of EHRnews@Infoway.

We hope you enjoy reading about the work 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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From the President's Desk



Richard C. Alvarez
President & CEO,
Canada Health Infoway

The Office of the Auditor General of Canada (OAG) has issued its report on our organization, Canada Health Infoway (*Infoway*), and we welcome their insights and helpful suggestions.

We're very pleased that the Auditor General found that *Infoway*, in her words, has accomplished much in the eight years since we were established. While we still have a lot of work ahead of us to achieve our ambitious goals, this audit tells us we are on the right track. It acknowledges that we have been working with "due regard" for taxpayers' money, and that we have sound systems in place for managing projects efficiently.

The Auditor General provided us with important recommendations for making *Infoway* even more efficient and effective. We accept all of her recommendations wholeheartedly and will implement initiatives to address every recommendation by March 31, 2010. In fact, we had already started doing a number of the things the OAG refers to in its report – because we recognized they made sense and felt they were appropriate to implement as soon as possible.

Of course, the Auditor General's report has drawn extra attention because of the concerns over the provincial e-health initiative in Ontario. While our organization is also involved in helping create electronic health records (EHRs) for Canadians, it is important to understand that *Infoway* has not had any contracts with eHealth Ontario nor its predecessor, the Smart Systems for Health Agency (SSHA).

That said, we have funded some key projects in Ontario – for example, putting a viewer in emergency rooms throughout the province to provide medication histories for seniors, contributing to a system to help reduce wait times, funding the expansion of telemedicine initiatives. Our primary role is to set the national strategy and standards for EHR systems, aid capable organizations that are developing them, and ensure that all of these systems being implemented across the country will be able to link to one another in the future.

Infoway has to operate under strict funding requirements set by the federal government. We fund projects once deliverables have been completed and the standards have been met. Generally, we assign half the funding to the development of a system; the remaining half would be paid only when the system has been developed and demonstrated use levels have been achieved. We believe there is no point investing in technology that is not being used.

Working under these clear policies, to date we have spent just over half of the money allocated to us. The other half of the funds, while earmarked for jurisdictions, will remain unspent until projects are delivered and health care providers begin using the system.

Infoway has worked with every province and territory, supporting almost 300 EHR projects nation-wide. The results are improving the quality of health care, reducing wait times, avoiding costly and dangerous errors, improving access in remote and rural communities, and cutting costs for taxpayers.

As a taxpayer, you deserve to know that we have been using public funds wisely. At *Infoway*, we are proud of our efforts and achievements to date and are completely committed to our goal of better health care for you and your family.

Related to this story:

- [Read the OAG's Recommendations and Infoway's Response](#)
- [Learn more about our Success Stories and view our videos](#)
- [Read about Canada's EHR progress](#)

A National Showcase of EHR Success

Canada's investments in nearly 300 health information projects are paying off in improved quality, access, and productivity across the country's health system. And that means better care and better outcomes.

Visitors to the Canada Health Infoway (*Infoway*) Showcase of Success, held during *Infoway's* Fall 2009 Partnership Conference, had the opportunity to see for themselves examples of how that's happening thanks to showcase presentations of the latest developments in electronic health records (EHRs).

The 10 featured projects on display at the November event offered visitors a look at some of the projects in which *Infoway* has invested, along with new technological advances from across the country.

"Unless you have a checkpoint like this, you don't really get a perspective on just how much is being accomplished," said Ed Brown, chief executive officer of the Ontario Telemedicine Network. He added that most clinicians are comfortable with technology, and have been waiting for applications that will support them in their work. "I think we're there now," Brown concluded.

Electronic record-keeping "is the way of the future," agreed Dr. John Campbell, family physician of Killick Health Services in Newfoundland. "It's a matter of evolution. It's important for physicians to make the switch now, or the technology will be shaped without our input."

Sandra Cascadden, chief information officer of the Nova Scotia Department of Health described the event as a rare opportunity for diverse groups, including jurisdictions, solution providers, and clinicians, to celebrate the achievements being realized with EHRs.



PARTICIPATING EXHIBITORS AT THE SHOWCASE OF SUCCESS INCLUDED:

- Alberta WebSMR
- Canadian Health Outcomes for Better Information and Care (C-HOBIC)
- Cancer Care Ontario: Systemic Treatment Information Program (STIP)
- EMRxtra Adding Community Pharmacists to the Primary Care Team
- Improving patient care with MyChart and TELUS Health Space
- Killick Health Services (EMR)
- Ontario Telemedicine Network
- PACS: Nova Scotia Department of Health
- Panorama Public Health Surveillance and Management System
- RUIS Laval Telepathology Project



Electronic Medical Records Deliver Better Front-line Care

An EHR Success Story



Patients will be the big winners as electronic information tools become more common in the practice of medicine, says Dr. John Campbell of Newfoundland's Killick Health Services.

"Without **electronic medical records** [EMRs], we cannot practice the way we are supposed to nowadays, which is patient-centered, evidence-based, and with measurable outcomes," he added. "You can only do that with an EMR."

Dr. Campbell and his fellow clinicians at Killick were quick to adopt the technology. They found the process of migrating to an EMR-based system relatively painless, and "I don't think any of us would ever go back to the way it was."

"It seemed to happen naturally," he says. "We met with all our possible partners and explored different possibilities for funding. Eventually, we spread the cost of putting the system into place equally among us."

Doctors and other front-line caregivers hold critical medical information, and their practice is limited when they can't share that information with other health providers, easily and effectively.

For example, an EMR could make it easier to transfer each patient's individual health information when a physician retires. "When I took over another doctor's practice, he had records covering 30 years of practice," Dr. Campbell says. "Instead of having to go through a garage full of paper files, those records could now be securely stored on, and transferred to, a memory stick."

Steps are also being taken to remove the paper barrier dividing clinicians across disciplines. In Spring 2005, for example, the **Newfoundland and Labrador Centre for Health Information** (the Centre) launched a trial EMR project that integrated patient health records in four clinics.

"Our patients are involved with technology in so many aspects of their lives, and they were excited to see it now as part of their health care," says Dr. Percy Crocker, one of the family physicians involved with the project. "The result has been more streamlined and collaborative care that brings different medical specialties together, particularly around chronic disease management."

An initial review found that the Centre trial improved the legibility of doctors' instructions, the efficiency of clinical practice, and the overall quality of health care. The system included a **Health Level 7 (HL7)** interface that communicated lab results more quickly, added them to patients' files automatically, and improved patient safety by triggering alerts for abnormal results.

An evaluation team is evaluating the interfacing phase of the project.

Related to this story:

- [Read more stories from the 2009 Showcase of Success](#)
- [Clinician eHealth Support Network](#)
- [EHRs for Physicians](#)
- [Read about Canada's EHR progress](#)

Infoway Program Update Summary

As of the end of the second quarter of its 2009-10 fiscal year, *Infoway* had 291 active or completed investment projects. Of these, 185 were jointly developed with the provinces and territories. The other 106 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 September 2009.

For more information, please visit our website at www.infoway-inforoute.ca.

INFOSTRUCTURE

- 26 pan-Canadian projects: 2 active, 24 completed
- New project phase approval during the quarter: Clinical System Integration (CSI) Tools RFP Project Phase 1.

DIAGNOSTIC IMAGING SYSTEMS

- 31 projects: 16 active, 15 completed.

REGISTRIES

- 31 projects: 9 active, 22 completed.
- New project phase approval during the quarter: British Columbia Assembly of First Nations Client Registry Systems Solution Assessment Project Phase 1.

DRUG INFORMATION SYSTEMS

- 22 projects: 11 active, 11 completed.

LABORATORY INFORMATION SYSTEMS

- 9 projects: 4 active, 5 completed.

TÉLÉSHEALTH

- 74 projects: 28 active, 46 completed.

PUBLIC HEALTH SURVEILLANCE

- 15 projects: 10 active, 5 completed.

INTEROPERABLE EHR

- 33 projects: 20 active, 13 completed.
- Three new project phases were approved during the second quarter: pan-Canadian CSI Tools Project Part 1, pan-Canadian Electronic Medical Record Survey Project and pan-Canadian Physician Office System Program Toolkit Project.

INNOVATION AND ADOPTION

- 40 projects: 20 active, 20 completed.

PATIENT ACCESS TO QUALITY CARE (PAQC)

- 10 projects: 9 active, 1 completed.

Q2 project approvals totaled \$8.9 million, bringing life-to-date net investment approvals to \$1,601.1M, or 97 per cent of *Infoway's* capitalization of \$1,651.8M.



For more information:

- Read about Canada's EHR progress
- View the project map

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 health care system. *Infoway* is a federally funded, 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 private and secure 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.

CANADA HEALTH INFOWAY:

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