



# COACH Evolving: Taking Health Informatics Mainstream

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The upcoming 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of COACH constitutes a generation, as Steve Huesing so aptly noted in the October issue in this, the official journal of COACH. Now I know there are those who would say it's out with the old and in with the new, but I believe that COACH is the best of both old and new - tradition and change.

There will be more about the traditions, history and special events that will celebrate COACH's 30th anniversary in future editions, but I want to concentrate current thoughts on the new and the evolution underway for COACH. The well-known adage, 'the only constant is change' has all too much familiarity for all of us in the health informatics community. Your COACH association is no exception and your board members are great advocates of beneficial and purposeful change.

As soon as the new Board was in place this year, COACH embarked on a strategic plan development to guide us into the next generation. Under Gil Sampson's leadership in 2003-04, we adopted a planning framework that focused our efforts on a three year planning cycle. This framework includes an annual environmental scan, a strategic plan developed every 3 years with updated strategies every year, and annual operational and budget plans. This puts structure and commitment to planning that is part of expected best practice for any association or organization.

So where is COACH going? COACH is all about realizing the **vision: taking Health Informatics mainstream**. And what does that mean? Mainstream means the 'prevailing current of thought, influence or activity', or 'representing the prevalent attitudes, values and practices of a society or group'. Thus taking health informatics mainstream means making it part of what we do and how we do it - every day, all the time, everywhere. It's that simple... and that huge.

What we do... is Health Informatics! Health informatics is the application and adoption of information management and technology to the business of health care, with the goal of improving health outcomes.

Who we are... all the individuals interested in advancing the practice of health informatics in Canada. That includes you, and I, and several thousands of our closest friends!

Coach's **role and mission** in mainstreaming health informatics is *to promote the understanding and adoption of health informatics within the Canadian health system through professional development, advocacy and a strong and diverse membership*. We can and must do that with you our members, our health informatics community and within our broader health care system.

We must succeed together in bringing information management and technology to the mainstream of our health care system - to aid in the reform and sustainability of the system and most of all - for the improvement of patient and health care outcomes.

Over the next three years COACH will focus on four strategic goals. Each of these goals (with its associated objectives) contributes to achieving the vision and mission of COACH. In addition, all objectives are closely aligned with the values of COACH, **values** that represent **leadership, collaboration, continuous learning, professionalism and responsiveness**.

The four strategic goals of COACH encompass the essence of where we are going:

#### ◆ Strengthen the membership of COACH

- ◆ Through solid value for members, growth in numbers, and member loyalty and commitment.

#### ◆ Enhance the practice of Health Informatics as a profession

- ◆ Through minimum standards of professional practice, greater relationships with like-minded organizations, enhanced products and services, and recognized achievements in the field of Health Informatics.

#### ◆ Advocate for Health Informatics

- ◆ By advocating for Health Informatics as a profession and advocating for Health

## COACH PATRONS



Informatics as an essential component of the health care system

◆ **Ensure COACH has the resource capacity to meet future challenges and seize opportunities**

- ◇ By diversifying revenue streams, seeking supplemental resources and enhancing organizational effectiveness.

So what does this mean for you, as members, friends, and partners in the Health Informatics community? COACH is focused: COACH is committed to helping advance the professional capacity and visibility of Health Informatics professionals. COACH will position the profession and garner acceptance of our value and contribution to the health system. And, COACH will be here - as we have been for a generation thus far.

With this strategic plan set to take COACH into 2008, we are better positioned to do our part in realizing the vision: taking Health Informatics mainstream.

Then you too will be telling the stories; "Back in "my generation", we had to use \_\_\_\_\_ (fill in the blank according to your years on the health informatics bus! - Punch cards? dumb terminals?, keyboards?, PDA's, blackberries?, memory sticks? Bipods? tablets?, fingertip readers?, designer mouse?, frog?, .... )

Happy holidays and a healthy 2005!



**e-Health Conference 2005:  
Realizing the Vision**

**April 30 - May 3, 2005  
Westin Harbour Castle  
Toronto, Ontario, Canada**

## Jaws - Monty Python and the Holy Grail - One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest...

Depending on your age, you may recognize the titles above as classic films of 1975. Do you remember the theme music to Jaws? Were you encouraging brave Sir Robin not to run away in the Holy Grail? Were you cheering for Jack Nicholson in his role as McMurphy in Cuckoo's Nest? 1975 - what was going on in your life (assuming that you were already born, that is).

1975 was the year that COACH was founded.

That means that in 2005 COACH will be celebrating its 30th anniversary. Plans are well underway to mark this occasion by celebrating our past, reviewing where we are now and the progress we've made, and contemplating what lies ahead.

The official launch of our celebrations will be at the time of the 2005 e-Health Conference - but we're planning activities

to take place all year. In fact, we are planning a special fall 2005 event to recognize outstanding contributions to the health informatics community (more on that later). Be sure to watch for more information here in the Journal, in the COACH newsletter Interface and the COACH web site over the coming months!

This is where you - the members of the health informatics community - come in. We are interested in your ideas, stories, photos, and suggestions. Please forward them directly to the COACH office at [info@coachorg.com](mailto:info@coachorg.com) or contact any member of the 30th Anniversary Task Force . .

We look forward to hearing from you!

*Shelagh Maloney*

Chair

### COACH 30TH ANNIVERSARY TASK FORCE

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