



- LIEUTENANT COLONEL JIM KIRKLAND -

SERVING CANADIAN FORCES MEMBERS BETTER: IMPLEMENTING THE CANADIAN FORCES HEALTH INFORMATION SYSTEM

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Health Information System (FHIS)

A year ago, the Canadian Forces (CF) initiated the Canadian Forces Health Information System (CFHIS) project that will ultimately enhance the way healthcare services are delivered to its 60,000 members, whether they receive services at in-garrison clinics or while they are operationally deployed. The goal of the CFHIS is to create an electronic health record for each member of the CF. This will be achieved through the transparent integration of a number of software applications that support a variety of functions including: patient registration and scheduling, medical documentation, pharmacy, diagnostic imaging, laboratory and dental treatment.



Edmonton: Pictured at the Edmonton Health Center from left to right are: Cindy Shea, CFHIS Super User, Major Paul Chittick, CFHIS Project team member from NDHQ/CFHS Ottawa and Major Dave Gutscher, 1HSOTU Clinic Manger

The CFHIS will capture up-to-date and legible health information, minimize duplication of information and services, and it will facilitate the sharing of health information among various health services professionals. Overall, the CFHIS aims to enable patient centered and holistic service management and delivery while recognizing the individual CF member's right to the privacy and confidentiality of their personal health information and the requirement for information security demanded by the Department of National Defence (DND).

Arguably the first in Canada to implement a comprehensive electronic health record on a national scale, the CFHIS project is no small undertaking. Project implementation is being lead by the CF Information Management Group, along with a team of over 70 CF, DND and contracted personnel located at the National Defense Medical Center.

Although the project lead remains with the CF, it has contracted Lockheed Martin Canada to act as the prime system integrator with key responsibilities for the provision, integration, and installation of all software and hardware as well as professional services associated with application roll-out, process re-engineering and training. Lockheed Martin has assembled a number of partners, including Dinmar Consulting Inc., Purkinje Inc., the core clinical solution

provider, SCC Softcomputer Consultants Inc., an ancillary applications provider, ADSTRA Systems Inc., the dental application provider as well as advanced infrastructure and security technology companies such as Oracle, IBM, CITRIX and Entrust. Each partner will contribute their best in class expertise to the design, testing, and successful implementation of the CFHIS and will help ensure a smooth transition for both care providers and CF members from a paper based to electronic health record system.

The CFHIS is being implemented in three phases over five years and in accordance with the federal government's enhanced management framework. This framework ensures that user requirements will be met, risk is minimized and that ultimately CF members and their care providers will be satisfied with the system. In fact, various CF health and dental care providers are actively participating throughout the design and implementation of CFHIS.

During the first phase of CFHIS, patient registration, scheduling and immunization tracking functions are being introduced through pilots at the Edmonton (medical), Esquimalt (medical) and Ottawa (dental) centers before they are rolled out nation wide. As of November 2003, all three health and dental centers have successfully implemented these capabilities with positive user feedback to date. This initial implementation of CFHIS represents an important milestone in the overall project. Testing of the remaining applications will also take place during this phase.

Phase two will see the piloting and implementation of the full CFHIS capabilities. Phase 3 will also include the piloting of telemedicine capabilities defined in Phase 2 and the piloting of interfaces to partners in the civilian health care system and with NATO Allies.

In addition to the design and implementation of health applications, the CFHIS project team is pursuing the development and implementation of the Canadian Institute for Health Information's Management Information System (MIS) Guidelines. The MIS Guidelines provide a standardized framework for collecting and reporting financial and statistical data on the day-to-day operations of health service organizations. A privacy officer has also been assigned to conduct a rigorous privacy impact assessment in order to ensure that the system will support the fair information handling practices as required by the federal privacy commissioner.

The Canadian Forces is leading by example through the use of technology tools like CFHIS to enable positive impacts on the health status of its members. Over time and with continued success, CFHIS will represent a best practice model for other jurisdictions to emulate.



Esquimalt Health Center: Pictured from left to right are: Shelly Mossa, Karen Klassen, Tracey Colley, Capt Jonathan Mackey