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# Anhix Dispatch

- DON NEWSHAM, PRESIDENT

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- DON NEWSHAM -

The Alberta health care scene, never quiet or lacking in controversy, has recently been taken up with “reports”. While our neighboring provinces work over their health region boundaries and all such related issues, Alberta and the “Mazankowski” report are focusing on sustainability from a variety of directions. Now we may agree or disagree with any of those 44 recommendations, but surely we in health informatics are positive and supportive of the focus on Electronic Health Records, information standards and better funding for information technology. What that focus really means is still being determined, but we know the emphasis on using information technology in support of current and new health initiatives should help our region CIO's. This focus, combined with the recent supportive report on Alberta Wellnet provides a solid basis for continuing to address real needs with real progress. Real progress means visible and valued results for our public, patients and health care providers in Alberta.

Such positive news, at least in Alberta, is accompanied however, by a distressing and ongoing challenge in stabilizing and sustaining our software products. With various vendors either merging, partnering, re-organizing, gaining new owners, or restructuring the credibility gap is going in the wrong direction on too many occasions. That said, distressing news is not only found at the feet of the product industry. RFI's, EOI's, and RFP's without funds all appear regularly, are ignored at the peril of being ignored, take major time and dollars in response, but often are seen as 'tire kicking'. The purveyors of such requests are only trying to make some level of progress during times of reduced funding, delayed funding announcements, complex decision processes or lack of commitment to their information initiative. Challenges... for sure!! Churn and swirl... today...yes!! What is the best path to take as we lead, acquire, market or operate our health information systems in 2002?

The March 7th ANHIX Forum focused on the above issues. From the “Maz” report, to the future direction for Alberta Wellnet, to visible and valued results and to the swirl in our product industry, ANHIX brings the current and real issues to the table for all to comment, discuss, pontificate, or harangue. To those of you who thought I was going to answer the above issues in this dispatch, I hope you made it to the March 7th meeting where all of us came out much the wiser, I'm sure! ANHIX provides fall and spring education and networking sessions where the 'topics of the day' are on the table for all of us - consultants, CIO's, vendors, government, academics, analysts and technical types - in health informatics to address.

Also for the ANHIX world, keep in touch as we approach the summer and enjoy our first inaugural ANHIX golf event, complete with new traditions and old styles!! Feel free to contact our ANHIX Secretariat, [Kelly.McGallan@health.gov.ab.ca](mailto:Kelly.McGallan@health.gov.ab.ca) for further information and regular updates on ANHIX, your network for health information exchange in Alberta.

