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BCHIMPS: An Introduction

- ELAINE SAWATSKY, PRESIDENT



- ELAINE SAWATSKY -

Elaine Sawatsky is a Health Information Management Consultant with Sawatsky and Associates

The BC Health Information Management Professionals Society (BCHIMPS) affectionately known as “Bee Chimps” has its roots in a group of health IS directors who began meeting regularly in 1986. Today, BCHIMPS has grown to a membership of approximately 100 health information professionals from around the province and has provided a model for similar associations in other provinces.

Members are drawn from a variety of health organizations including health authorities, provincial agencies, provincial government, and the private sector. The society’s members contribute to the development, delivery and promotion of information management solutions that enhance health services delivery and administration.

Mission: BCHIMPS will contribute to improved health information management in British Columbia by creating opportunities for education, collaboration, and contribution to related initiatives at the local, provincial and federal level. BCHIMPS will achieve this by partnering with other health informatics organizations and by organizing regular educational and networking events for members and other interested individuals.

The Role of BCHIMPS

- To inform and communicate, educate and promote Health Information Management in an environment of innovation and emerging technologies.
- To provide a forum for member participation in relevant healthcare initiatives.
- To influence healthcare policy, with respect to Information Management
- To enable the sharing of experience and expertise, and to enable networking.
- To enter into partnerships with provincial, national and international Health Information Management Associations and/or Groups with a view to enable active member participation in issues related to health information.
- To foster professional development in Information Management in B.C. healthcare.
- To represent B.C. Information Management Professionals in a professional manner.
- Promote understanding for the exchange and effective and efficient utilization of information and information technologies within BC’s healthcare environment
- Provide a forum for the exchange of ideas, concepts, and developments in BC’s health informatics field.

A key focus of BCHIMPS is member education. The Society organizes regular symposia and educational events which, with the sponsorship of vendors and other organizations, feature nationally recognized speakers while highlighting local and provincial initiatives. BCHIMPS members help to shape health informatics in BC through affiliations and networking with

fellow professionals. BCHIMPS has enjoyed relationships with the Health Information Standards Council, and with HealthNet/BC and this continues. The current Ministries of Health through BCHIMPS have a forum by which it is possible to reach a broad spectrum of health stakeholders.

BCHIMPS provides the opportunity for its members to network with one another, and to benefit from educational sessions that provide professional relevance. In 2001 we held two such gatherings: one in March entitled "*Perspectives on The Electronic Health Record: National, Provincial & Confidential*" which featured David Loukidelis, Information and Privacy Commissioner for BC, Shelley Lipon, CEO of the Saskatchewan Health Information Network and Paul Tier from HealthNet/BC. The second session in November, "*The Physician, the Patient, the Record: Enabling the Relationship*" featured Mr. Lee Denny BC CIO, Dr. Mel Petreman, a local physician and Dr. Tom Jones, Senior Director, Oracle Health Care Applications.

Our upcoming Spring Session planned for March 15, 2002 and sponsored by the BC Ministry of Health Services and Ministry of Health Planning concentrates on the subject of Security Standards and their use internationally, nationally and in BC.

Members enjoy benefits such as reduced registration fees at Society-sponsored events and access to "members only" resources and

information on the BCHIMPS website. We continue to attract individuals from both the public and private sides of health care, and our membership continues to flourish. With the reconstruction of our website, and our regular education sessions we have succeeded in raising the profile of the Society. This past year has seen significant work in a set of reworked and more professional by-laws yet BCHIMPS maintains its friendly and casual atmosphere.

BCHIMPS recently entered into a relationship with CIHI's Partnership for Health Informatics/Telematics to allow BCHIMPS members to participate in Partnership SIGs and to have access to the Partnership Website and its contents. BCHIMPS continues to maintain close working ties with COACH and supports the e-Health conference program in a variety of ways.

We are entering an era wherein the health care system will undergo significant change. The Health Informatics sector, together with its professionals, must respond constructively to the new challenges - a response which can be measured by the evident interest in maintaining professional links and in new learning.



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