



- SERGE J. TAILLON, CIHI COLUMNIST -

On the Leading Edge of Health Information Science

Serge Taillon is the Director, Client Relations and Communications for the Canadian Institute for Health Information (CIHI)

Twenty years ago the University of Victoria recognized the importance and value of health informatics. Individuals at U of Vic had the foresight to understand that technology and health information management systems would become critical to the effective management of our health care system. Therefore, training and educating people in this field would be increasingly important.

You will recall that, at that time, computers were just coming on the scene. In an environment such as health care, there was a poor understanding of the technology and, its potential - most could not imagine the integral role they would come to play in our day-to-day decision-making.

The mission of the School of Health Information Science is to improve the health care delivery system by educating people to be effective developers, users and managers of health information resources, advancing knowledge through research and providing a consultative service to the health care community. Students learn to identify the data and information that are required by health care providers, administrators, planners and others and how it should be used to make effective health policy decisions. The program also provides an impressive co-op program to complement the in-class learning with "hands-on" practical learning in the workplace.

Graduates have taken the acquired knowledge and skills and applied them to a variety of areas within the health care system. CIHI is one of many organizations that has benefited from this program. Several graduates from the School are now working for us, both at the staff and management levels. They are making a significant contribution to our data quality, standards development, and analytical activities.

One such CIHI employee is Jill Strachan, our Manager of Health Human Resources. The knowledge

and expertise Jill brings to CIHI has its roots in the University of Victoria's program.

"At CIHI, I am responsible for developing databases and producing policy-relevant analytical reports that support health human resources planning activities in Canada. The Health Information Science Program not only provided me with a broad view of the health care system, but the skills and knowledge to effectively use information technology in developing data and providing information to assist decision makers in the management of health care system," explains Jill.

CIHI congratulates the University of Victoria's School of Health Information Science and its graduates as being leaders in the field of health informatics and for providing a vital service to those who require accurate and up-to-date information. Moreover, we look forward to their further contribution to a shared vision of a more seamless health care system. Finally, we wish them another 20 years of success and innovation!



Since 1988, COACH, Canada's Health Informatics Association has provided leadership and guidance in the areas of security, privacy and confidentiality. The 2001 publication gives health informatics professionals the framework needed to develop and implement security and privacy programs. *Guidelines for the Protection of Health Information* reflects the new realities of health informatics as we enter the third millennium and the dawn of the information age.

COACH is proud to offer for purchase the new *Guidelines for the Protection of Health Information*, a valuable reference that no health informatics professional should be without.

Download the order form for the *Guidelines* from the COACH Web site at www.coachorg.com.

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