

# What Does It Take To Be HIP?



Chiko Chakraverty

Karen Zimmer, Carolyn Hayden, and Chiko Chakraverty

Karen Zimmer is the Director of Corporate Services at the Health Information Solutions Centre at Saskatchewan Health in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan.

Carolyn Hayden, BScN, MBA, is in Vancouver, British Columbia

Chiko Chakraverty is the founding Principal at C&D Strategic Consulting in Toronto, Ontario

*"There is a serious risk that labour shortages and skills shortages will constrain the successful implementation of EHR [Electronic health information system] technologies in Canada.*

*System-based, human resources planning measures should be a priority to ensure that the substantial investments that governments at all levels are making in EHR technologies deliver the promised benefits."*

Health Informatics and Health Information Management  
Human Resource Report  
November, 2009

Co-Sponsored by Canada Health Infoway, CHIMA, ICTC, ITAC and COACH

Industry publications within and outside of Canada are echoing the message delivered in the quote above: the human resource infrastructure necessary to achieve the Electronic Health Record (EHR) is lagging demand, and impeding progress. Employers are in need of information, such as the types of roles required at various stages of an EHR implementation, in order to guide human resource planning, recruitment and retention. Employees and students require information, such as the array of opportunities available to them and the qualifications required of each position, to better plan their education and careers.

In recognition of this pressing need, COACH and its HIP@work Task Force spearheaded the development of the **COACH Health Informatics Professional Role Profiles**. This much anticipated document was recently made available to members in mid-December.

## Bringing Value to the Entire Spectrum of COACH Members

Initiated in July 2008 this group of volunteers, led by Elizabeth Peloso, Practice Manager, Deloitte, came together with the goal of developing and advancing supporting tools required for better Health Informatics career and human resource planning. Our initial contribution was the HIP Career Matrix, completed earlier in 2009. This most recent endeavor, the development of the **COACH Health Informatics Professional Role Profiles**, provides a comprehensive, standardized description of public and private sector roles, key responsibilities, competencies, and qualifications that will be required to deliver and maintain the EHR. Combined with the Career Matrix, aspiring and current Health Informatics professionals and leaders will, for the first time, have a common

reference point and language to assist them in career and human resource planning. The advantages brought to our community are well captured by Karen Zimmer, Director, Corporate Services, Health Information Solutions Centre, Saskatchewan Health, and member of the HIP@Work Taskforce:

*"As an employer responsible for the recruitment and retention of health informatics professionals, the **Role Profiles** allow me the opportunity to now better define, develop and structure the required health informatics roles within our organization to successfully deliver the EHR; to appropriately compensate those roles as the ability to complete inter-provincial and inter-jurisdictional market salary comparisons now exists and to successfully market to future health informatics employees as a common understanding of the requirement of these roles is now available.*

For candidates interested in opportunities within health informatics, the **Role Profiles** provides clarity of expectations aligned with core competencies required to be successful in a role. In addition, individuals with experience from multiple disciplines and across both public and private sector organizations can now share a common understanding of where their experience can be leveraged within the evolving informatics and e-health sector. Finally, the **Role Profiles** also support individuals by providing a clear definition of role requirements which in turn allows for better career planning and expanded opportunities within our growing profession."

## Development and Content of the Role Profiles

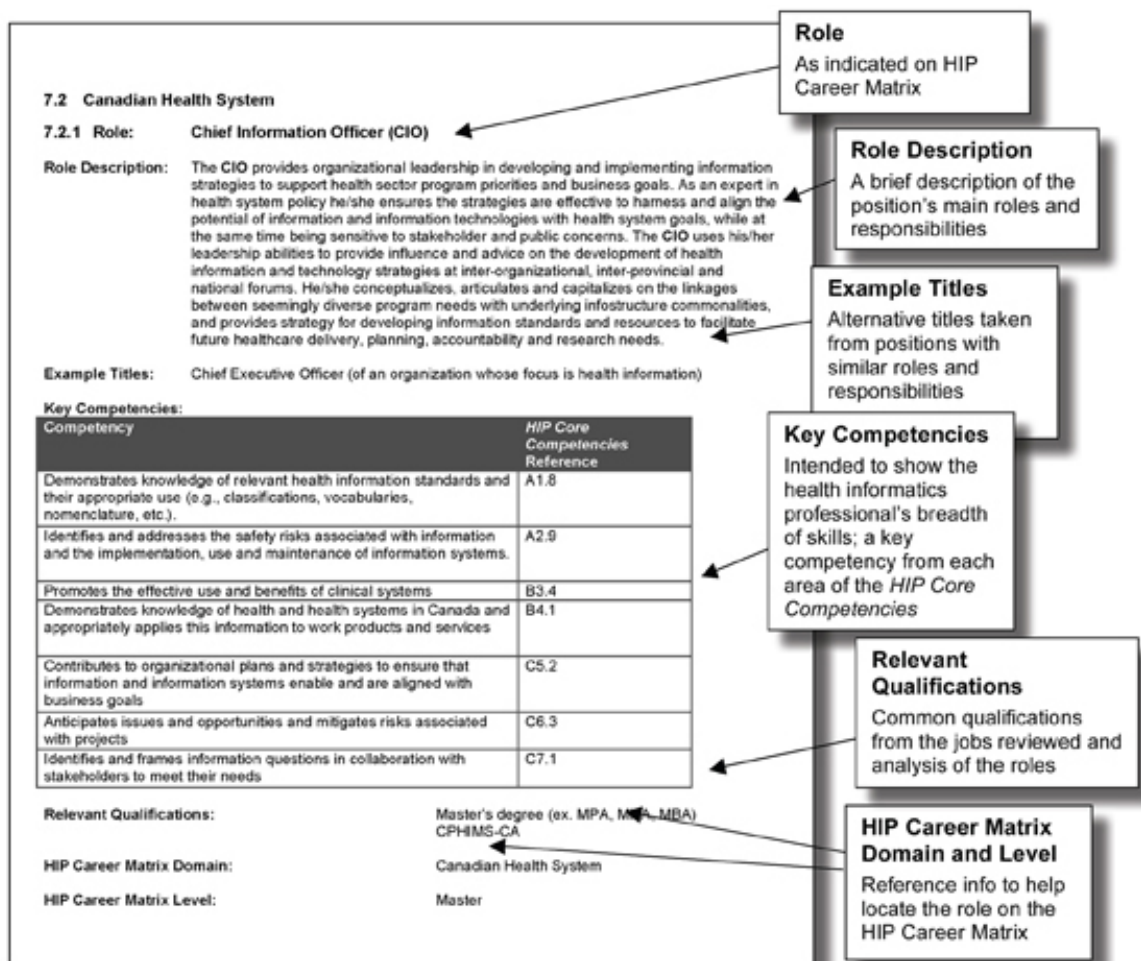
Arriving at a truly comprehensive document required that our task force membership include a good representative sampling of human resource and health informatics experts from both the public and private sectors. Members from the vendor and consulting community, health regions and the Canadian health system brought forward greater than 500 job descriptions as a starting point. These spawned the initial Role Profile drafts, completed by COACH, that were then assigned to individuals for their critique and edit. Updated drafts were circulated throughout the committee to ensure cross-jurisdiction and public/private comparisons were complete.

A working draft of the *Role Profiles* was field

tested in the survey associated with the *HI & HIM Human Resources Report*. The HIP@work Task Force incorporated feedback received through this initial application of the *Role Profiles*, along with other feedback received from the COACH Board and other stakeholders.

This first version of the COACH *Health Informatics Professional Role Profiles* includes role descriptions for each of the roles listed in the seven categories of the HIP Career Matrix: Clinical and Health Sciences, Canadian Health System, Project Management, Organizational and Behavioural Management, Analysis and Evaluation, Information Management and Information Technology. The following excerpt from the document demonstrates the detail provided for each of the 65 Role Profiles:

The Sample Role Profile diagram explains the various elements of a profile.



## What is next for the Role Profiles and the Task Force?

The HIP@work Taskforce will use the recent release of the first Health Informatics and *Health Information Management Human Resources Report* and the *Role Profiles* as a springboard to develop career planning tools that will assist employers, current and future employees. These tools will support organizations efforts to identify gaps in competency and skill development, the ability to self assess and to address HR planning as it relates to vacancy rates and future demands.

COACH and the HIP@work Taskforce are pleased to be introducing the *Role Profiles* to members. We expect and want the *Role Profiles* to be a dynamic document, which will be updated based upon the evolving roles associated with EHR development, implementation and ongoing management. We also recognize that input from members will result in a more robust tool for all and as such, ask that you direct your feedback and suggestions to COACH Director, Programs Alison Gardner (agardner@coachorg.com). Alison will ensure that all feedback is shared with the task force – we look forward to hearing from you! ●