

# Health Informatics Awards

## AWARD RECIPIENTS *Gala*



Linda Miller  
presenting  
to Valerie  
Hagerman and  
Janice Wilson

### **Innovation in the Adoption of Health Informatics**

EMPCare@home Implementation Team,  
led by River Valley Health

Our winning project was defined as a disease management approach to the care of patients with a chronic disease, enabled by tele-homecare. The project focused specifically on patients with a primary diagnosis of congestive heart failure and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, who have a history of frequent hospital admissions.

The tele-homecare approach included a formal process for technology selection and development/adoption of patient educational materials. A store and forward, Plain Old Telephone Service (POTS) home-based monitoring system was selected. It collects a patient's weight, temperature, blood pressure, pulse, oxygen levels, and is equipped with customizable, pre-recorded messages that ask the patient a series of subjective questions about their condition. Vital signs are received and stored for clinical review, on a central base station computer located at the EMP office. The software color codes and triages all data collected so that professionals can identify whether patients are doing fine or if they require a phone follow-up or immediate home visit.

This system of monitoring on a daily basis helped health professionals identify warning signs or changes in a patient's condition. This increased opportunities for early intervention and ultimately prevented complications. After receiving this tele-homecare service, patients became more knowledgeable about their disease and learned how to better manage their condition on a daily basis.

Given the growing interest in tele-homecare and in new approaches to the care of patients with a chronic disease nation wide, the work successfully completed by the implementation team from 2004 -2006 is nationally significant in its contribution to health informatics.

The Project has effectively demonstrated the important role that health informatics plays within the health care system by providing evidence that daily monitoring enabled by tele-homecare, combined with a consistent education program aimed at self-management can effectively reduce hospital admissions and ER visits and improve the client's ability to self-manage his/her chronic illness.

The project team has provided leadership and commitment to the advancement of health care informatics in Canada by developing a comprehensive tool kit, and making the entire product, a culmination of two years work, available on their web site. This will allow this important work to be shared and replicated in other jurisdictions.



Charles  
LaFleche  
presenting to  
Stewart Gray

### **Project Implementation Team of the Year**

Sierra Systems for the Nova Scotia  
PACS Project, Victoria, B.C.

Picture Archiving and Communications System technology - or PACS - has replaced nearly all film-based medical imaging with faster, safer and more integrated processes. Following an 18 month implementation, 41 health care sites in Nova Scotia are now active with PACS - making this the largest provincial jurisdiction with a fully digital imaging environment.

The project team developed a plan that maximized use of existing avenues of communication and informal sessions. They approached various inherent challenges by creating separate support teams for each implementation. Diagnostic imaging staff were recruited from various sites from around the province and temporarily re-assigned. This ensured that the needs of small, medium and large sites were supported and fostered by a truly provincial team approach.

In addition to the complexities of a multi-organizational environment, various discipline areas needed to work effectively together to support a successful transition. District implementation teams were formed comprised of staff representing diagnostic imaging, communications/public relations, IT and facilities management. Weekly meetings with status reports and assigned priorities provided the basis for tracking and resolution of issues with a lessons learned approach. As a result, each implementation built on the experience of the previous and knowledge was shared across the province.

Key to the success of the Project was the extensive and rigorous project planning and estimating process. A rolling wave site plan template was created in the planning phase and was continuously updated and improved after each phase of the implementation. The implementation phase involved regular status monitoring and detailed financial tracking throughout.

The PACS Project was completed on time and within budget. Radiologists and referring physicians reported improved turnaround time, improved ability to make decisions regarding patient care and improved efficiency.