



David Watling

Dave Watling is the Chair of CHITTA and Managing Partner of Courtyard Group in Toronto

CHITTA – On the Journey to Progress

With fall rapidly upon us, more so in some provinces than others admitted, I wonder where the summer went. It seemed to fly by, and I wondered if we had actually accomplished anything. It was in this frame of mind that I sat to write my status report on CHITTA's activities for presentation to the recent ITAC board meeting. I had been warned that I only had 10 minutes, yet I wondered how I would fill the time! I stopped writing after 3 pages, and presenting after 20 minutes.

Yes, we like so many nowadays did not notice much of a slowdown in the summer. It seems like we were busy on all fronts: standards, advocacy, trade development, physician automation, and the continued streamlining and tightening of our governance and operations.

In this report, I will touch on just three of our most significant, and time consuming, initiatives: advocacy; member communications; and our governance review.

Advocacy ~ our newly formed committee is in full operation under the leadership of Barry Rivelis, VP Healthcare for TELUS. Barry and team have developed a focus for our advocacy efforts over the coming year that involves a series of press releases, lobby efforts with various governments, and clear measures of our success. Our message is clear and simple – **the judicious application of ICTs in the healthcare sector is proven to deliver substantial benefits in terms of health outcomes (quality/safety), process efficiency and system sustainability. Yet to deliver on this requires a sustained investment beyond the initial capital from the likes of Canada Health Infoway, acknowledged at 4% of operating expenses annually.**

We have the case to support this premise, but we need member stories to provide the evidence to support it. You will see a call for said “proof points” shortly. I would urge you to take the time to document specific examples of where you have witnessed a defined improvement in healthcare process or outcome as a result of enabling technology. These are the stories that will provide the compelling evidence to convince funders to allocate the requisite funds for eHealth.

Member Communications ~ in the “busyness” of our day-to-day activities, we have not been as diligent in keeping our members informed of what we are doing, nor seeking

their input, nor validated that we are doing the things most important to them. We are committed to putting more energy here in the coming year. We will be routinely placing articles in ITAC's Netflash as well as our own e'zine. We will use our website for dissemination of current content, and we will hold an annual general meeting of members in conjunction with the eHealth conference in Vancouver next May. In the meantime we would love to hear from you, and would welcome any and all feedback.

Governance Review ~ another substantial priority for the year is to review and tighten up our governance processes. It seems like we just “got started” as an association and while we have solid processes for board and committee administration, such as meetings, minutes and action item follow-up, we have not implemented good governance practices. By this we mean everything associated with nominating and electing board members, selecting the officers, committee chairs and vice-chairs, and the transparency and communications of same. Our goal is to define processes for these by the beginning of next year, and run a formal nomination/election process for board positions to be effective on May 1st, 2008 for the 08/09 year.

In closing I would note the prominence that healthcare and eHealth specifically garnered in the recent Ontario election. As normal, both leading parties put healthcare in the front window of their campaigns. What was different this time was that the eHealth agenda was specifically singled out for attention. Both pledged significant funds (>\$250m) for electronic health records for all Ontarians. Admitted the parties had a different approach to spending this money, but regardless the value of ICTs as a way to meet healthcare promises is well recognized and publicized as such.

I do believe we have the attention of governments and the public now. There has never been a better time for our industry to be able to show what we can accomplish! ●

*It's our pleasure to invite
you to join your peers to honour our best.*

November 15, 2007

6:00 pm – 10:00 pm

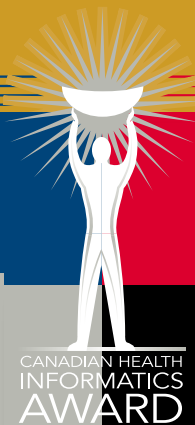
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