



CANADA'S HEALTH
INFORMATICS ASSOCIATION



Shelagh Maloney

Shelagh Maloney is the President of COACH: Canada's Health Informatics Association and the Executive Director, External Liaison for Canada Health Infoway.

Community

The Canadian Health Informatics Awards (CHIA) Gala held November 15, 2007, represents a wonderful opportunity to recognize our industry leaders. The whole awards process, from the call for nominations, through the adjudication process to the spontaneous and heartfelt applause as the winners are announced, provide us with an opportunity to reflect on the strides that we have made as individuals, as organizations and as a community.

While we appreciate them every day, it is important to designate one night of the year to acknowledge and applaud the innovation, dedication and vision of those in our community who are making a difference. The Gala provides a forum for us to come together as a community with all the wonderful connotations of comfort, support and camaraderie that the word community implies. We have the tremendous good fortune to have a community – a health informatics community that is young, energetic, and thriving.

There is no question that a highlight of the evening was the awarding of the first Canadian Health Informatics Lifetime Achievement Award to Mr. Steven Huesing. Steven has dedicated over 40 years of his life to health informatics. He founded COACH and was its inaugural President and Board Chair. He founded CHITTA, the Canadian Health IT Trade Association and has been the Executive Director of the International Medical Informatics Association (IMIA) for a number of years, to name but a few accomplishments. As Richard Alvarez, CEO of Canada Health Infoway, led the tribute to Steven, it struck me that Steve is the perfect example of the difference that a single individual with fortitude and passion can make to an entire industry. The heartfelt standing ovations for Steve speak volumes not only

about his incredible contribution but to the man's character. He is a passionate advocate, a true statesman and a good friend to many who were in the room and many more who were not. This is the stuff upon which communities are built.

It takes a strong foundation to build a community and when the foundation of your community is built by such talented and generous people like Steven Huesing there is no limit to our potential.

Lessons learned

It would not be fair to speak about the 2007 Gala without acknowledging the "entertainment" and logistical challenges that we encountered. This year's event was certainly not what the organizing committee envisioned and certainly not up to the level of professionalism that had been established at our two previous CHIA events. The 2005 and 2006 Galas were very successful and in an attempt to raise the bar even higher, we tried a number of new approaches this year. Clearly, we did not achieve our goal. In fact, some would argue that, not only did the bar not go higher, but it hit the ground! Rest assured that the Gala Steering Committee understands that "you are only as good as your last gig" and planning for the 2008 Canadian Health Informatics Awards has already begun with a promise to restore professionalism to the evening that our award winners, our sponsors and our participants expect and deserve.

Let me close by taking this opportunity to extend my personal thanks and congratulations to Steven and all of the winners, nominees, nominators, adjudicators and participants of the 2007 Canadian Health Informatics Awards. Well done! ●





2007-2008  Board of Directors www.coachorg.com

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