



Don Newsham

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# e-Health 2006 – Continuing Canada's Olympic Winning Ways

**O**k, so I'm an un-abashed and heart-on-the-sleeve Canadian. Whether you simply felt good or had the lump in the throat or even the tear in the eye when our Canadian Olympians were on the podium with flag and national anthem voices raised high, it was awesome to see our Winter Olympic team setting a new standard with 24 medals. Way to go Canadians!

And I would add "way to go" e-Health 2006. Our e-Health Conference this year, e... for Everyone! continues to raise the standard in quality, opportunity and participation. I am truly excited about this Conference, co-hosted by CIHI and COACH, situated in the warm friendly Victoria environs and led by Rick Roger our affable and capable e-Health 2006 Program Committee Chair. With Canada Health Infoway, Inc, continuing as our Platinum Sponsor and the great participation of our health informatics professional, speaker, vendor, sponsor, and academic communities we are indeed set for a winning event.


Now we sometimes do compare conference attendance to Olympic events. First, there is the preparation and planning. Months of hard work, diligent attention to details, visioning all the elements of a successful race (I mean conference) and getting all the team working together, are all necessary. Through our excellent professional conference organization team from Parr and Associates and with a Program Committee of 14 experienced and enthusiastic health informatics experts all supported by CIHI and COACH leaders, the months of detail work are almost done. Again we were very pleased with over 200 papers and proposals

submitted for the 76 concurrent session slots and we are ensured of a top quality program.

Second, there is the opening and special events to organize and attend. We may only be missing the fireworks in e-Health 2006. With opening keynote speaker and futurist Joe Flower providing a launch to the future role of every individual in the e-health world we will then focus on the experiences of a patients journey through the health care system noting what does and doesn't yet work. Richard Alvarez will update us on his continued journey leading Canada Health Infoway and the great debate will bring other views on the success and challenges of EHR and e-health adoption. A town hall session will feature e... It's all about me! Truly anyone with a stake in reforming and sustaining the health care system will enjoy e... for Everyone!

Next in the event are the many exhibits to view. While we may not be wandering the Italian streets and piazza's, there will be a solid trade show that provides great views of the innovations, advancements and solutions needed to enable e-health for everyone. Join the over 65 companies that will be in Victoria providing their support and knowledge to enhance your e-Health 2006 program.

The event itself – plan each part, go hard, enjoy the entire time and think success in all you want to achieve. We have moved e-Health 2006 to start on Sunday with six excellent pre-conference workshop choices and an opening reception to kick off the Conference on Sunday early evening. The full event then runs from Monday morning to Wednesday



afternoon. The preliminary program is out - please peruse that program to target the sessions and meetings you want to attend. With the growth of e-Health annually, there will be more to see than what can be accomplished by any one individual, so plan on sharing the load with your peers. After all, e-Health is a team event!

Have fun with your teammates and new friends at e-Health 2006. Any observance of Olympic events that I've watched on TV seems to show a very fun time had by all - some perhaps a little more than others! We've got an excellent social program lined up, with a Tuesday evening dinner and CHITTA's ever-entertaining Blues Night. The opening reception and a trade show reception are included in our program and no doubt much other networking and socialization among all e-Health attendees will take place. On the fun side we also have Rex Murphy to close out the Conference taking his usual lighthearted, creative and entertaining look at our Canadian landscape.

Finally - a note for all of us - let's pace ourselves for the long haul both within this event and more importantly within our entire health informatics work life. We may feel like we're in one continuous Olympic race - every day and all day. We need to re-charge occasionally, spend some time gathering new ideas and options for doing things differently, learn from and listen to leaders

and simply "chill out" with your peers. e-Health 2006 provides both the opportunity and the practice to take a measured, planned and balanced approach to your working lifestyle.

While the Olympic metaphor can be stretched in various ways, I want to emphasize the value and contribution of our annual e-Health conference to our health informatics community. This Conference is THE event that brings together our entire health informatics community at one time with one focus - connecting and building the health informatics community.

It is the event that brings together all the different members of the community for learning, relating, acquiring, benefiting and enjoying. It is all about supporting all members of the health care system in understanding and adopting the tools of e-health for the betterment of health outcomes. It is all about health information, information management and information technology. And, it is all about building the capacity to deliver on the promises of e-health - both in the quantity and quality of professionals working in the community.

See you in Victoria, April 30th to May 3rd.

Warm regards,

Don ●