



P A R T N E R S H I P F O R
HEALTH INFORMATION STANDARDS
SHARING, CONNECTING, MAPPING THE FUTURE

Annual Report
2003-2004

Message from Mike Leavy, Partnership Chair

This has been an interesting and exciting year for me with Partnership. As incoming chair, the major challenge I saw was to carry on the revitalization work started by Kathryn Hannah. I felt that Kathryn might be a tough act to follow because of her extensive knowledge and experience, however she was most helpful in ensuring a smooth transition by continuing to contribute on the Program Committee after her term as chair ended. Thank you, Kathryn. Additionally, there were parallel changes that took place within the CIHI Partnership Secretariat, with Caroline Heick and Julie Richards having new roles, and Grant Gillis being welcomed. Luckily Grant is an experienced Standards player.

One lesson for me is that many, many individuals contribute ideas, organizing ability and resources to make Partnership a continuing success. These include the Partnership Secretariat, Program Committee members drawn from various health information sectors, and Symposium event sponsors. I thank you all.

Personal reminiscences of the year include two very successful and well-attended events including the Spring 2003 Symposium (*Health Information Standards: Think Globally, Implement Locally*) in Toronto, Ontario, and the Fall 2003 Symposium (*Building The Framework For Convergence.*) in Halifax, Nova Scotia.

A Toronto highlight for me was the HL7 workshop following Stan Huff's talk, where it became clear to me that standards are about improving care processes, even when they involve something as apparently arcane as the HL7 Reference Information Model.

In Nova Scotia it was the lobster, I mean the working manifestation of convergence, in particular, convergence of people and processes. We are the standards community in Canada. We are also part of 'the problem'. There is no 'they' that can solve this problem without us. This is particularly apropos regarding the new 'they' on the block, Canada Health Infoway Inc. Thus, I welcome their involvement in Partnership and their use of it at Halifax for a review of their proposed stakeholder engagement model for the development of standards. Bravo!

One item that caused much soul searching was the nature and role of the on-line Special Interest Groups (SIGS). Over a period of time, a number of you in the form of convenors and correspondents have tried to make the SIGS a virtual venue for dialogue, input and convergence on the ISO standards agenda. There has been little active participation, however, despite the valiant efforts of Pat Jeselon and Tim Flewelling in particular, although a number of silent lurkers indicated they were valuable. It was noted that the ISO documents placed burdens on convenors and reviewers alike because of their somewhat forbidding nature. So, reluctantly we decided they were no longer viable in their current form. However, CIHI has invested in better hosting software (Yahoo! I mean, great!), and the forum medium will remain as a place for dialogue. With your participation unconstrained by existing subject boundaries, topics of more immediate and compelling concern may

well emerge. Meantime, ISO documents in development will continue to be circulated to Partnership members at large.

Building on the personalization of the theme of convergence, you told us – those of you who filled in your evaluation forms – that you needed more time to network with your colleagues. Partnership is one of the few venues where there is a good cross-section of the various contributors to health information standards in an intimate enough setting for dialogue and information sharing. We intend to incorporate that lesson in the program for the upcoming Spring Symposium in Calgary, April 22-25. The Program Committee and Secretariat have been busy preparing what promises to be a relevant, lively and engaging symposium furthering the convergence agenda. I invite you all to attend.

Finally, if you have suggestions or ideas on how Partnership could serve you better, please feel free to contact me at Mike.Leavy@gems9.gov.bc.ca or (250) 952-1155.

Sincerely yours,



Mike Leavy
Chair, Partnership for Health Information Standards

Message from the Secretariat

The past year has been another success for the Partnership, although it was not without its challenges. Notwithstanding SARS in Toronto, and a hurricane in Halifax, our Symposiums in both these cities were again resounding successes, and we thank our local members for their support and hospitality.

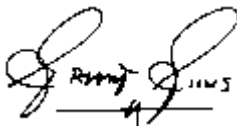
We would also like to recognize the outreach to the health information education community, begun in earnest in Halifax when we welcomed students from the Dalhousie University Health Informatics programme. Special thanks to David Maxwell and David Zitner of the Dalhousie faculty who helped make this possible. The education community is an important key success factor to all the health information initiatives across Canada, and certainly the early exposure and engagement of students to the health information standards processes is a valuable and worthwhile investment.

We were certainly pleased to have Canada Health Infoway at both Symposiums, as well as the provincial standards councils, and presenters on local, regional, provincial and pan-Canadian projects. The information that is so freely shared, along with the discussions and networking, are truly remarkable – several of our international guests during the year shared this observation, and offered encouragement to sustain and advance the Partnership.

We close our year, however, on a sad note as we say goodbye to Nishma Kanji. Nishma has been with the Partnership Secretariat for 3 years, contributing to the organization of our Spring and Fall Symposia and also coordinating membership feedback on various standards documents and projects. We are sure all members join us in thanking Nishma for her dedicated service and wish her well in her future endeavours at Smart Systems for Health Agency.

As for the year ahead, the events and services we have planned once again are intended to push the envelope of engagement for health information standards dialogue, deliberation and development. Our thanks again to our Program Committee volunteers who contribute in so many ways to the success of our Symposia. While we think you will appreciate the offerings that we have in store for 2004-2005, we are always pleased to hear from you, our members, with respect to any opportunities for the organization. You can reach us at partnership@cihi.ca or call us at 416-481-2002 and ask for "The Partnership" or contact me directly at [ggillis@cihi.ca](mailto:gillis@cihi.ca)

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Grant Gillis', with a horizontal line underneath.

Grant Gillis
Manager, Standards Liaison, CIHI

About the Partnership for Health Information Standards

Health information standards are necessary to overcome incompatibilities among data, communications and technology structures. Without standards, for example, data collected in multiple service encounters, at different times and by different practitioners or organizations, are frequently difficult to interpret and compare.

In 1996, the Canadian Institute for Health Information (CIHI) formed the Partnership for Health Information Standards initiative to respond to the need for standards in health information systems. The Partnership aims to bring together key players from the public and private sectors, from local and regional projects to those provincial, pan-Canadian and even international in scale, to discuss and promote universal and efficient standards for managing and exchanging health data and information.

For healthcare professionals, data and architecture modelers, students and educators, indeed the entire health information community, the Partnership for Health Information Standards provides the pan-Canadian forum to learn about, influence and develop consensus standards for health information for our country.

Our Membership

We once again thank all of our Partnership members for their support this year, with a special acknowledgment to our Corporate Members, several of whom have also been ongoing sponsors of our Spring and Fall Symposia. The ongoing contribution by members of their time and resources certainly reflects the need for and value of health information standards in Canada.

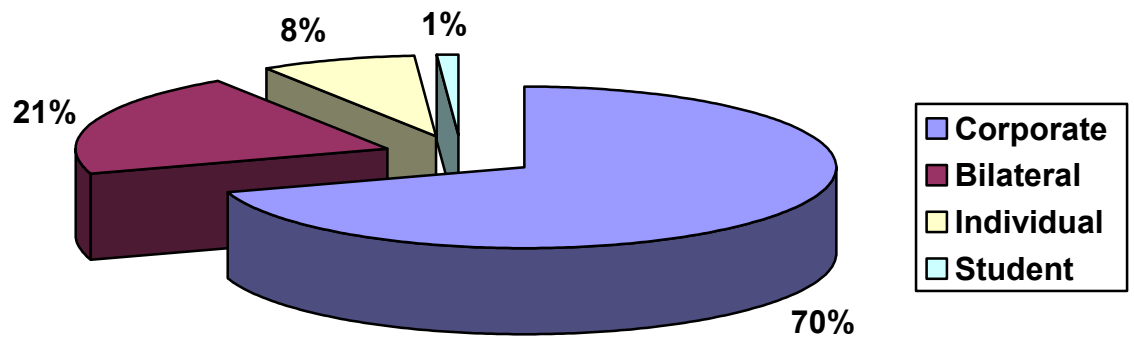
2003/2004

Corporate Members

- ❑ Alberta Blue Cross
- ❑ Alberta Health and Wellness
- ❑ B.C.H.I.M.P.S.
- ❑ British Columbia Ministry of Health
- ❑ Calgary Health Region (RHA #3)
- ❑ Canada Health Infoway Inc.
- ❑ Canada's Research Based Pharmaceutical Companies
- ❑ Canadian Health Information Management Association
- ❑ Canadian Institute for Health Information
- ❑ Canadian Medical Association
- ❑ Canadian Standards Association
- ❑ Cancer Care Ontario
- ❑ Capital District Health Authority (DHA #9)
- ❑ Capital Health, Regional Pharmacy Service
- ❑ CGI Information Systems & Management
- ❑ Clinicare Corporation
- ❑ College of Licensed Practical Nurses of British Columbia
- ❑ Dalhousie University - Main Campus
- ❑ Deloitte & Touche LLP
- ❑ Department of Health and Social Services – Government of Northwest Territories
- ❑ Dinmar Consulting Inc.
- ❑ EDS Canada Inc.
- ❑ Government of Nunavut Territory
- ❑ Health Canada
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- ❑ McKesson Corp
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- ❑ Misys Healthcare System
- ❑ Momentum Healthware Inc.
- ❑ New Brunswick Health and Wellness
- ❑ Newfoundland and Labrador Centre for Health Information
- ❑ Nova Scotia Department of Health
- ❑ Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care
- ❑ Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) (International Affiliate)
- ❑ Per-Sé Technologies
- ❑ Prince Edward Island Health and Social Services
- ❑ Saskatchewan Health
- ❑ Sierra Systems Consultants Inc.

- ❑ Smart Systems for Health Agency
- ❑ Statistics Canada
- ❑ TNT Global Systems Services Inc.
- ❑ University Health Network - Princess Margaret Hospital
- ❑ Vancouver Island Health Authority
- ❑ Yukon Department of Health and Social Services
- ❑ ZixCorp Canada

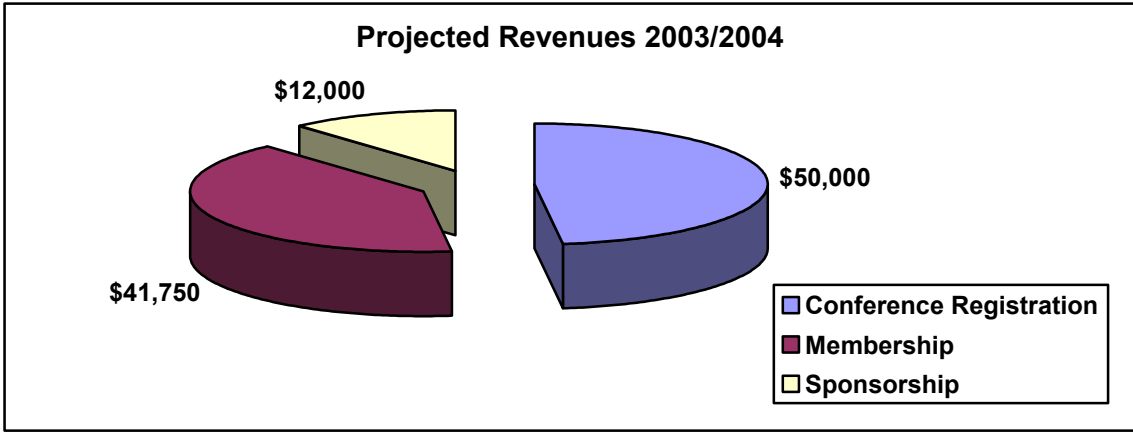
2003/2004 Membership Breakdown



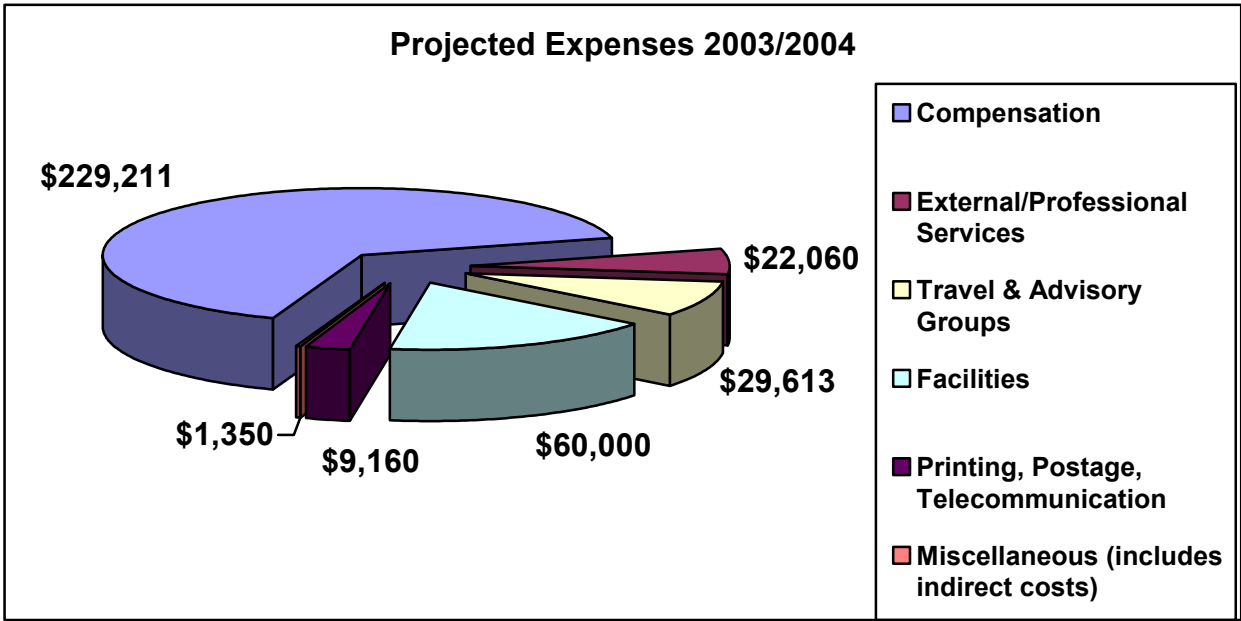
Who are our Members

Our membership base continues to be a diverse mix that represents the interests of a variety of business sectors, governments, and academic institutions from across Canada. We are particularly pleased to note that our members come from every province and territory in Canada. Most provincial and territorial health departments/ministries participate in the Partnership. Members also include federal representation from Health Canada and Statistics Canada. In addition, many of our members represent national, provincial, or regional health associations and authorities. The Partnership has also continued to attract interest from the international health information standards field.

The Financial Picture



Total Projected Revenues: \$103,750



Total Projected Expenses: \$351,394

Members-Only Website

This year, in response to member demand and to assist in the delivery of additional exclusive, value-added services such as the Membership On-Line Directory, the Member Services area of the Partnership website was password protected. A communications package outlining the details of the registration process (including members' access code) was distributed to all members and is available on the Partnership website. Those members who have not yet logged into the Partnership

Member Services area at www.cihi.ca/partnership are encouraged to do so. To facilitate communications, please review the contact information listed in the Membership On-Line Directory for accuracy, and contact the Secretariat at partnership@cihi.ca with any revisions.

Transformation of the SIGs

For several years now, the Partnership for Health Information Standards has engaged members in two principal ways, the first being the semi-annual (Spring and Fall) Symposia, and the second being the regular circulation of information. The latter engagement involves bi-monthly bulletins which provide the latest health information news and developments both domestically as well as internationally, as well as the circulation for comment of a number of draft standards from ISO, DICOM, IEEE and other standards development organizations.

To focus these draft standard comment opportunities, the Partnership created a number of subject-specific Special Interest Groups (SIGS), which worked between as well as met at the Partnership Symposia. Starting in early 2002, these SIGS were provided with dedicated on-line discussion sites via Yahoo Forums to supplement their e-mail communications. While initially quite active and productive, these SIGs, which covered such domains as electronic health records, telehealth, and security to name a few, have waned significantly in participation and activity; this is certainly true of each of their respective on-line forums.

This decline in activity led to discussions about the functioning and focus of the groups at both of this year's Partnership Symposia, supplemented by a survey of the membership by the Secretariat. The results of the survey were shared with the membership just prior to the Halifax Symposium, and discussed at that meeting. The results of the survey, along with the feedback received at Halifax and afterwards highlighted several issues and opportunities to improve the mandate served by the SIGs, and the Secretariat has since been planning and acting to implement positive changes.

A few highlights of these coming changes. First, you shared that the Yahoo Forums were a less-than-appealing approach to hosting on-line discussions, specifically there were concerns about security, spam, and archiving to name a few. These concerns were shared by CIHI, and as per the commitment made in Halifax, a new, more exclusive and secure on-line discussion application is in the final stages of development and will be rolled out in the new fiscal year. Second, the proposal to host teleconferences to review draft standard document was very well received. We are taking action on this immediately, with the Partnership being offered access to participate in the Web-Ex teleconferences on the HL7 Electronic Health Record Draft Standard for Technical Use (DSTU) document in March and April. If these are successful, then more will be offered. Third, with respect to specific standards document comment opportunities, you expressed a strong desire to receive executive summaries of the draft standards, ie non-technical 'cameos', along with the documents themselves, and you asked for more explicit information as to how

these documents 'fit' into the current and future plans for health information standards here in Canada. We have been experimenting with the format of the summaries with several standards development leads and will have an initial series out for your consideration shortly.

Finally, notwithstanding the investment made by several of the SIG Convenors and the Secretariat, there did not seem a strong desire to sustain the SIGs in their current manifestation. The SIGs will therefore be retired, however in their place, the bi-monthly bulletins will feature news and information of note for each of the subject domains previously covered by the SIGs.

In closing, it is hoped that these changes will refresh and revitalize the ongoing discussion and deliberation of health information standards by the members of Partnership. These changes are not intended to be the 'be-all-and-end-all' and certainly, as signal opportunities (such as the HL7 EHRR DSTU) come along, we will work to provide enhanced input and feedback opportunities. As always, your comments and suggestions are welcome. Try out these new offerings, let us know what you think!

The Spring 2003 Symposium

The Spring 2003 Symposium was held in Toronto on May 22-24, 2003. The theme of the Symposium was "Health Information Standards: Think Globally, Implement Locally". Approximately 145 individuals participated in this Symposium, which was designed to offer participants an update on the current status of the Electronic Health Record (EHR) and to provide opportunities to help further the development of common standards and data definitions for the EHR in Canada. Participants were amongst the first to be informed by leading Canadian delegates on the latest developments in the ISO/TC215 workplan. Participants were able to provide comments and input to formulate the Canadian response on a number of ISO/TC215 work items including Transborder Flows of Personal Health Information, EHR – Scope, Definition and Context, Telehealth Standards, Reference Terminology Model for Nursing, Framework for Emergency Data Set and the Health Informatics Profiling Framework. In addition participants learned about the HL7 V3 RIM and how to use it in their own projects through various case scenarios.

The format of the Symposium included, for each session: updates from internationally recognized experts; followed by hands-on working meetings in break out groups. Each session closed with a summarizing plenary. The following consecutive sessions were organized:

- Pan-Canadian Electronic Health Record Data Definitions and Standards Requirements
- Adopting/Implementing International Standards in Canada: An Update on ISO/TC215 Activities
- HL7 V3 RIM: Using a Global Health Information Model in Your Local Project

Speakers for the three sessions included: Ron Parker, Director of Architecture from Canada Health Infoway Inc.; Richard Alvarez, President and CEO of CIHI; Andrew Grant, Director of CRED; Marion Lyver, Expert Physician Advisor and Healthcare Lead for Ontario Smart Systems for Health; Don Newsham, Senior Sierra Systems Health Care Partner; Grant Gillis, Manager of Standards Liaison at CIHI; and Stanley Huff, Senior Medical Informaticist at Intermountain Health Care and Clinical Professor in the Department of Medical Informatics at the University of Utah. The closing keynote address was provided by David Martin, Chairman, Co-CEO and Co-Founder of SMART Technologies Inc.

Symposium materials, including presentations and summary report, have been posted on our website at: www.cihi.ca/partnership (click on "Conference Materials" then "Partnership Spring 2003 Symposium").

The Fall 2003 Symposium

The Fall 2003 Partnership Symposium, "Health Information Standards: Building the Framework for Convergence", took place in Halifax from October 27-29, 2003. Approximately 100 stakeholders from across Canada met to discuss the convergence of national and international health information standards and learn more about international EHR implementations. Through informative presentations, participants received updates on *Infoway's* EHR solution architecture and standards work, projects from the ISO/TC215 working groups, and from the HL7 EHR SIG. Presentations on the EHR development and implementation in Australia, the UK and the United States raised many questions regarding the benefits and barriers to the EHR. These questions were further explored in break out groups. Participants discussed project-driven standards work, how to achieve greater EHR uptake in Canada, and how to integrate information and functional EHR models. Participants also had the opportunity to provide input into the HL7 Functional Specification ballot.

The format of the Fall Symposium was similar to the Spring event, allowing participants the opportunity to participate in focused discussions during the break out groups. The consecutive sessions organized for this event included:

- Convergence of National and International Health Information Standards Development
- EHR Implementation – Cameos of the Real Thing
- EHRs North and South of the 49th – Convergence or Not?

Symposium speakers included: Mark Shafarman, Incoming Chair of HL7 Inc.; Dennis Giokas, Chief Technology Officer, and Nancy Desormeau, Interim Vice-President, Corporate Affairs from *Infoway*; a panel of distinguished Canadian ISO/TC215 delegates; as well as Dr. Nikki Shaw, Research Scientist at the BC Research Institute for Children's & Women's Health and Julie Richards, Manager of Standards Development and Coordination at CIHI. The featured lunch time speaker was Myrna Francis, Interim President and CEO from *Infoway*, who highlighted *Infoway's* approach for building momentum in accelerating EHR development

Canada-wide, and outlined the directional changes in *Infoway's* 2003/2004 Business Plan. The Symposium concluded with a closing address from Linda Kloss, CEO of the American Health Information Management Association.

Visit the Partnership website at www.cihi.ca/partnership to obtain copies of the Fall 2003 Symposium presentation materials and summary report.

Partnership Peer Recognition Award

The Partnership Peer Recognition Award was established to honour a Canadian individual or group who has demonstrated significant achievement in the advancement of health information standards in Canada. The recipient of this year's award was Don Newsham of Sierra Systems.

Here are a few words from the award recipient:

"It was certainly a surprise and huge honor to receive the recent Partnership Peer Recognition Award. Some years ago, not mentioning how many, I thought we needed some standards work in my home province and indicated that there must be some 'no-brainer' standards that we could just get on with, so I started chairing a standards committee. The rest is history some say and today I am indeed fortunate to connect with the many like-minded and passionate people that want to see our health care system be sustained and improved through the use of standardized information and systems. With the likes of Jane Curry and others as mentors, I've learned a huge amount about health information standards and also learned what I don't know. With CIHI, the Partnership and my peers all recognizing the efforts of myself, Jane and others to come, I know we can make further real progress. And that is my passion - making, doing, enabling and getting standards in place for Canada and our health care system. It's one thing I personally can do to make a difference. With the support from my consulting company, the leadership of CIHI and Richard Alvarez, and the connections within the standards community, I have been very fortunate to be a part of our Canadian standards development. And the recognition from my peers is indeed a surprise and a much appreciated acknowledgement of something I passionately believe in. Who ever thought one could be passionate about health information standards, then again, who ever thought we would have a billion dollars for health information and the EHR. Thank you all for your recognition and the Partnership Peer award."



Don Newsham Peer
Award Winner....

Projects of Interest to the Partnership

The following are updates on some particular health information standards engagements which are of particular interest to our members:

ISO/TC215 Health informatics

ISO/TC 215, the (International Organisation for Standardisation's technical committee with the mandate to develop health informatics standards, is comprised principally of six (6) working groups, as follows:

- WG 1 Health Records & Modeling Coordination
- WG 2 Messaging & Communication
- WG 3 Health Concept Representation
- WG 4 Security
- WG 5 Health Cards
- WG 6 e-Pharmacy and Medication Business

CIHI provides the Secretariat for WG 1, with Mr. Don Newsham is the Convenor.

The past year for ISO/TC 215 was once again very active. The Working Groups met three times in FY 2003-2004, with each substantially advancing their respective work programmes. ISO/TC 215, with over 70 standards in its work programme, is beginning to realize these as final publications, many of which are led by Canadians. A few of these include the following:

- ISO/TS 18308 - Requirements for an EHR architecture
- ISO/TS 21667 – Health indicators conceptual framework
- ISO 18104 – Integration of a reference terminology model for nursing
- ISO 22857 – Guidelines on data protection to facilitate trans-border flow of personal health information

Several important standards are also approaching publication at the time of this report, including the Canadian led items on the health informatics profiling framework, country identifier standards, the telehealth standards (dealing with interoperability of systems and networks, and also telelearning). A host of other projects are also well into their development.

As for its leadership, FY 2003-2004 was a signal year for ISO/TC 215. At the plenary in May 2003 in Oslo, Norway ISO/TC 215 formally welcomed new leadership to the mandate, including Dr. Yun Sik Kwak of Korea to the position of Chair. At the Oslo meeting, Dr. Kwak formally initiated an important review of the technical committee's mission and mandate.

Being a technical committee of ISO, and thus part of a community of over 140 participating nations, ISO/TC 215 endeavours to have a work programme that achieves the following:

- identifies those business areas which are regarded by the international community as a priority for the application of information communication technology;
- establishes what requires to be standardised within those business areas;
- determines which of these matters should best be standardised through ISO/TC 215; and
- 'produces' those standards to the satisfaction of the international community for which they were produced.

Canada played a prominent role in the first phase of the review, leading one of four groups of national member bodies involved in an assessment of ISO/TC 215's objectives, its success criteria, and organizational recommendations of how best the technical committee can achieve those success criteria. The assessment report will be formally considered at the upcoming Washington plenary in May.

For more information about ISO/TC 215 and in particular, Working Group 1, you can visit the CIHI website (look under Infostructure Standards) or contact Grant Gillis at CIHI (ggillis@cihi.ca).

NeCST

The National e-Claims Standard (NeCST) Project, a CIHI initiative, was initiated in April 2000 as a collaborative effort between the public and private sectors as well as national provider associations. This pan-Canadian collaborative effort represents thousands of participants and billions of dollars in healthcare spending. CIHI, a neutral, national organization with relevant standards development experience in consensus building, was asked to facilitate and manage the project. This project is funded in part by Canada Health Infoway Inc., an independent corporation working to accelerate the development of compatible electronic health record systems in Canada.

During 2003/04, the NeCST project has enjoyed many successes, made significant progress and achieved several milestones. As a result of significant effort and sponsor support, the **NeCST HL7 generic claims, pharmacy and preferred accommodation messages** has passed the HL7 v3 membership ballot and is now a normative HL7 ANSI-approved standard. NeCST is one of the first projects in the world to receive official recognition as an HL7 v3 ANSI approved standard. This is a significant milestone for the NeCST project and for Canada. As of November 2003, Chiropractic & Physiotherapy Special Interest Group (SIG) submitted their messages forward to HL7 for Committee Level review.

NeCST's success as an accepted standard is highlighted by the work of BCE Emergis. Working in conjunction with chiropractic and physiotherapy health care providers, BCE Emergis is the initial implementer of a sub-set of NeCST messages for chiropractic and physiotherapy claims for the Workplace Safety & Insurance Board of Ontario. This represents the first HL7 v3 implementation in Canada. BCE Emergis designed a reusable methodology for HL7 v3 messages implementation through the development of an API for use by provider side software vendors.

In November 2003 the Ontario Health Information Standards Council supported putting the NeCST standard through the OHISC approval process to have NeCST recognized as an Ontario standard. This is an important first step in positioning NeCST for adoption in Ontario for Ontario Drug Benefit and potentially other areas.

NeCST will continue to work on completing and submitting the messages HL7 v3 ballot for the areas of:

- Chiropractic and Physiotherapy
- Vision Care
- Oral Health
- Physician

The NeCST project is very fortunate to have the support of a diverse group of stakeholders who work diligently and have made great progress in standards development. The NeCST project demonstrates that pan-Canadian standards can be developed through a collaborative and consensus building process.

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Who's Who in the Partnership Secretariat

Chair:	Mike Leavy
Executive Sponsor:	Scott Murray
Manager:	Grant Gillis
Membership Assistant:	June Seepersad

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