



Strategic Directions
2005–2006 to 2007–2008



Canadian Institute
for Health Information

Institut canadien
d'information sur la santé

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Message From
the Board Chair



Message From the Board Chair

It is with great pleasure that I present the strategic directions for the Canadian Institute for Health Information (CIHI) for the next three years.

The landscape of health care in Canada and elsewhere is constantly changing. In recent years, significant new technologies—drugs, diagnostic techniques and methods of treatment—have been introduced. New arrangements for the delivery of care have been developed. New governance and financing arrangements, new expectations for transparency and accountability, as well as clarified standards for the protection of personal privacy, have been implemented.

The ability of providers, administrators and researchers to further improve health and health care and the ability of governors and leaders to fund, manage and report on the system depend on having reliable data and information. Over the past 10 years, CIHI, working in a unique partnership with Statistics Canada, has built an enviable reputation as a source of high-quality, unbiased information.

Over the next three years, we intend to build on our existing strengths so we can give the public, policy-makers, managers and providers within the system improved information about health and health care in Canada. Issues related to health in Canada are both deeply personal and an important focus of public policy and expenditure. As individuals, we want to know the system will provide high-quality and responsive care; as citizens, we want to know the system is providing cost-effective care in a way that is sustainable.

The three-year directional plan described in this document outlines how CIHI, working with Statistics Canada and our partners throughout the country, will focus our efforts to meet current and emerging health information needs. On behalf of the Board of Directors of CIHI, I am proud to present our strategic directions to our stakeholders and all Canadians with an interest in health information.

A handwritten signature in dark green ink, which appears to read "Graham W. S. Scott". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Graham W. S. Scott, Q.C.
Chair of the CIHI Board



Message From the President and CEO



Message From the President and CEO

I am pleased to join our Board Chair in presenting the strategic directions for the Canadian Institute for Health Information.

In formulating these directions, CIHI benefited from the advice of a wide range of stakeholders. During our consultations we heard—and were pleased to hear—that CIHI is playing a unique and valued role in the Canadian health care system. We were also pleased to hear that governments, hospitals and health authorities, health provider and other organizations, and the public rely on CIHI to provide accurate and unbiased information and analyses.

Over the past 10 years, CIHI, in conjunction with Statistics Canada, has developed many important new data holdings and insightful new reports on health and health care in Canada. Our stakeholders encouraged CIHI to further this work by developing more analytical products that creatively use data to highlight important realities in the areas of population and personal health and the workings of the health care system. Accordingly, an increased emphasis on analytical work is a major focus of our strategic directions for the years ahead.

In addition, we heard that the health system increasingly looks to CIHI to provide leadership in the area of health data and information; to identify threats to the availability of health data; and to identify opportunities for future innovations in data collection, analysis and dissemination. Again, this advice has helped inform our strategic directions.

Building on the foundation developed over the past 10 years, we plan to strengthen our data and data holdings, to make data and information more accessible in a privacy-sensitive manner, to improve the quality and timeliness of data, to expand and improve our analytical work and to work with stakeholders to strengthen the health data infrastructure in Canada. We also plan to strengthen CIHI internally so that we are well equipped to undertake the work our stakeholders ask of us.

We are confident this document will help focus the work of the corporation and inform our partners and stakeholders of the directions CIHI will take over the next three years so that together we are better able to *take health information further*.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, which appears to read "Glenda Yeates". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Glenda Yeates
President and CEO



Introduction



Introduction

Over the last few decades, we have witnessed a great deal of change in the health and health information landscape. Working with partners from across the country to improve the health of Canadians and the health care system, the Canadian Institute for Health Information (CIHI) has played a significant role in this evolution. In a short 10 years, CIHI has become one of Canada’s premier sources of high-quality, reliable and timely health information—information that is needed to establish sound health policies, manage the Canadian health system effectively and create public awareness of factors affecting good health.

With new leadership and a decade of experience to draw upon, CIHI is taking a fresh look at its vision, and identifying strategic priorities that will lead the organization’s work over the coming years.

To this end, under the direction of its Board of Directors, CIHI undertook a strategic planning exercise, a process informed by consultations with governments, regional health authorities, health system managers, health care providers, researchers and various organizations across the health sector and beyond.



About CIHI

The Canadian Institute for Health Information (CIHI) is an independent, pan-Canadian, not-for-profit organization governed by a strong and active 16-member Board of Directors whose membership strikes a balance among the health sectors and regions of Canada. CIHI works to improve the health of Canadians and the health care system by providing quality health information.

What We Heard

The pan-Canadian consultation process clearly reaffirmed CIHI's overall vision and mandate, while identifying a number of common messages and emerging themes for future directions and priorities.

We heard about the value of CIHI's diverse data holdings and analytical expertise—and that stakeholders expect CIHI to continue developing increasingly insightful and innovative analyses and reports. They regard CIHI as an objective, unbiased and trusted source of health information, one that presents the facts—"what is"—rather than policy recommendations about "what should be."

Stakeholders asked CIHI to focus, in the coming years, on action-oriented information that our partners can use to help all Canadians live longer, healthier lives and to improve health policy and health services. We also heard that policy-makers and managers look to CIHI to help them better understand and use our products—and that increased access to data and other relevant tools were key elements to this strategy.

Finally, stakeholders emphasized the importance of data quality and supported CIHI's data quality efforts. They also reaffirmed CIHI's continued role in addressing information gaps, and urged CIHI to take a strong leadership role in developing and maintaining comparable data content standards and data definitions that are key to producing nationally and internationally comparable health information, both today and in the future.

How We Will Respond

This document is the result of a year-long process that has served to reaffirm CIHI's role in the health information arena and to provide further insights into the expectations of our priority audiences: those who create and influence health policy, including governments; health sector planners and managers; and the Canadian public. Like many other organizations, we anticipate that demand for health information will far exceed our capacity to respond. Consequently, this planning exercise has helped us focus on priorities that are of strategic importance to the organization—and our stakeholders—over the coming three years.

The strategic directions identified in this document respond to what we heard during our cross-Canada dialogue and position CIHI as a leader in health information.

We hope that they will also help our various stakeholders and partners across the country to better understand CIHI's priorities and directions, and, where appropriate, to use this information to influence their own planning efforts. In this way, CIHI will contribute to . . . *taking health information further.*

Canadian Institute for Health Information

Vision

- To improve the health of Canadians and strengthen their health system
- by developing, integrating and disseminating timely and relevant health and health services information; and
 - by facilitating informed discussion and evidence-based decision-making.

Mandate

- Established jointly by federal, provincial and territorial ministers of health, CIHI's mandate is
- to coordinate the development and maintenance of a comprehensive and integrated approach to health information for Canada; and
 - to provide and coordinate the provision of accurate and timely data and information required for
 - establishing sound health policy,
 - effectively managing the Canadian health system and
 - generating public awareness about factors affecting good health.

- Through the work carried out by the Canadian Population Health Initiative (CPHI), CIHI aims to:
- foster a better understanding of factors that affect the health of individuals and communities and
 - contribute to developing policies that reduce inequities and improve the health and well-being of Canadians.



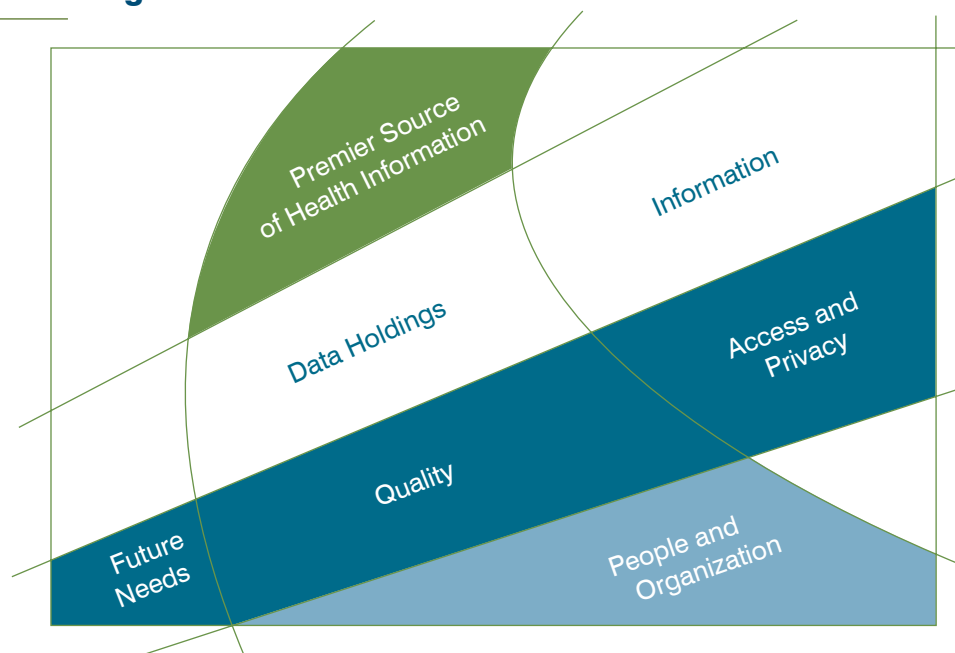
From Vision to Action

From Vision to Action

Over the last 10 years, CIHI has covered much ground, providing better data, more insightful analyses and more comprehensive information. Yet, our sights are always on the horizon, where we see ourselves providing our stakeholders with increased knowledge—that is, the ability to use health information for effective decision-making and management so as to improve the health of Canadians and their health system.

As CIHI takes new strides towards achieving its vision, we will be guided and driven forward by our strategic directions. Each direction provides us with a focus for our efforts and investments. Collectively, these directions instill in us commitment, momentum and clarity of purpose.

Strategic Directions



- 1 CIHI will be a **premier** Canadian **source of** unbiased, credible and comparable **health information**.
- 2 CIHI will enhance its **data holdings**.
- 3 CIHI will produce vital **information** to improve the health of Canadians and of their health systems.
- 4 CIHI will enhance information **quality**.
- 5 CIHI will improve **access** to data, **and** will do so in a **privacy**-sensitive manner.
- 6 CIHI will provide leadership to ensure that **future** data and information **needs** are met.
- 7 CIHI will continue to be a dynamic **organization** with a highly motivated workforce.

1

Strategic direction 1 sets the vision for “who we are” as an organization—one that is a world leader in producing and disseminating unbiased, credible and comparable information on the health of our population and our health systems.

Strategic directions 2 and 3 are all about “what we do” as an organization—collecting and processing more and better data and transforming it into information that can be used to effect positive changes to improve the health of Canadians and their health systems.

2
3

Strategic directions 4 through 6 describe “how” we will go about reaching our vision—outlining the work that needs to be done to strengthen the quality of our information products and to improve access to data, as well as ensuring that the organization provides leadership to meet future information needs and to ensure the ongoing availability of high-quality, comparable data.

4
5
6

7

Strategic direction 7 reflects that at the heart of our efforts is a dynamic organization composed of dedicated and skilled staff—without which nothing else is possible.

CIHI is committed to being a premier Canadian source of health information, playing an essential role in helping to improve the health of Canadians and strengthening the health system. Guided by our strategic directions, we will advance towards our vision—**taking health information further.**





Strategic
Direction 1



Strategic Direction 1

**CIHI will be a premier
Canadian source of
unbiased, credible and
comparable health information**

Over the past decade, the Canadian Institute for Health Information (CIHI), working with Statistics Canada in a unique and synergistic partnership, has come to play a key role in health decision-making across Canada. We evolved from a relatively small organization that had a limited number of data holdings when we began our work in 1994, into a national source of information on health and health care in Canada—with a reputation we have worked hard to foster, maintain and enhance. CIHI has achieved this reputation because major stakeholders—governments, health system managers and professionals, the media, researchers and many others both within and outside the health system—have come to trust that our work is accurate, objective and rigorous. As a result, we are considered an authoritative source of unbiased and credible information for those seeking answers to critical questions about the performance of the Canadian health system, the delivery of health care and factors that affect Canadians’ health.

Over the coming years, it will be important for CIHI to work closely with key stakeholder groups in furthering its reputation as an important and trusted source of health information.

Over the next three years, CIHI will:

- **Identify where health information is needed**—Working in partnership with Statistics Canada and our key stakeholder groups, we will identify areas where pan-Canadian comparable data or information are needed, or improvements are required.
- **Improve the scope of our knowledge**
 - We will increase the comprehensiveness of CIHI data holdings by ensuring the success of Quebec's recent entry into CIHI.
 - We will improve our understanding of, and be responsive to, national, provincial/territorial and regional health information needs.
 - We will improve our understanding and coverage of the continuum of health determinants and services.
 - We will develop new indicators in areas such as quality of care, patient safety, primary health care and wait times.
- **Promote objective understanding and analysis of population health and health services delivery issues**—We will increase the number and depth of our reports and work with partners from across the country to improve understanding of population health and health care.
- **Support stakeholder information needs**—We will support the information needs of our major stakeholders—governments, regional health authorities, health system managers, various organizations within and outside the health sector and researchers. In addition, we will work with existing and newly created entities—provincial health/quality councils, the Public Health Agency of Canada, the Health Council of Canada, the Canadian Patient Safety Institute and the Canadian Council on Health Services Accreditation—to provide the information they need to fulfill their mandates, thereby avoiding unnecessary duplication in the area of data collection.





Strategic Direction 2



Strategic Direction 2

CIHI will enhance its data holdings

Answering fundamental questions about Canadians' health and the health system requires a systematic and thoughtful approach to data collection, sharing and analysis. In addressing our stakeholders' information needs, it will be important for CIHI to maintain a balance between augmenting existing data holdings (both of health and health care), creating new data holdings and using the data we currently have. In meeting this objective, CIHI will work closely with Statistics Canada—one of our key partners in the development of health information—and others in achieving efficiencies in data collection and in maximizing the usefulness of data.

Expanding Production of High-Quality, Comparable Data

CIHI is well positioned to collect data that allows Canada to compare itself internationally and allows jurisdictions within Canada to compare patterns of care and utilization. A major part of CIHI's work is developing and maintaining clear definitions, so data from one institution or province is nationally and, where possible, internationally comparable. CIHI will continue to work with key stakeholders and partners to promote and facilitate the adoption and implementation of consistent data content standards and definitions. We will also provide leadership in resolving questions relating to such standards and definitions.

Filling Important Data Gaps

While CIHI already maintains many large data holdings, complemented by major data holdings at Statistics Canada, there remain important areas of health and health care where additional information or improvements to existing data are needed and where there are important gaps in national comparability. For example, while some provinces have excellent data on home care, community mental health or prescription drug utilization, there is little pan-Canadian comparable information on these important areas. In addition, gaps exist in our ability to answer questions about the long-term impact of care, including patient outcomes. Understanding how care is provided over time is the only way we can understand how well we are treating significant chronic diseases, such as diabetes, asthma or congestive heart failure. Many key questions regarding patient outcomes can be answered only by looking at large data sets over long periods of time and across the continuum of care, or by directly surveying patients. This requires linking data sets in ways that respect privacy and confidentiality.

Over the coming years, we will continue to work with our key stakeholders in identifying areas where new databases or reporting systems are required to address critical data gaps, and we will work collaboratively with Statistics Canada and others to make sure that existing and new data can be used more effectively to answer important questions about the health of the population, patient outcomes and the long-term impacts of care.

Over the next three years, CIHI will:

- **Develop new databases and reporting systems in key areas**
 - **Pharmaceuticals**—We will continue to develop the National Prescription Drug Utilization and Information System (NPDUIS) and the Canadian Medication Incident Reporting and Prevention System (CMIRPS).
 - **Health Human Resources**—We will develop databases to track human resource information about pharmacists, occupational therapists, physiotherapists, medical laboratory technologists and medical radiation technologists. We will also work with Statistics Canada and its census and labour force survey data to produce comparable information on the supply of various health personnel.
- **Implement existing databases and reporting systems in more jurisdictions**—We will do so by actively promoting the adoption, and facilitating the implementation, of recently developed databases and reporting systems, such as the Home Care Reporting System, the Continuing Care Reporting System, the Rehabilitation Reporting System and the Ambulatory Care Reporting System. Our focus will be on working with jurisdictions, organizations and clinicians that are especially keen to move forward in key areas, rather than attempting to immediately achieve full pan-Canadian coverage.





Strategic Direction 3

3 Strategic Direction 3

CIHI will produce vital information to improve the health of Canadians and of their health systems

During our recent consultations, we heard important messages about stakeholder expectations of CIHI.

- We heard about the value of CIHI's diverse data holdings and analytical expertise. Stakeholders expect to work with CIHI to develop insightful analysis and to pioneer new approaches that showcase how the results can be applied effectively. Stakeholders also encouraged CIHI to use its unique expertise to identify what we know and don't know about health and health care, both nationally and internationally, and to call attention to areas where more work is required.
- We also heard that stakeholders increasingly look to CIHI not simply as a source of data, but as a source of value-added reports and analyses. From studies on patient care and outcomes, to summaries of what strategies are effective in reducing obesity rates, policy- and decision-makers at all levels look to CIHI for useful and objective information.
- Finally, we heard that policy-makers and managers look to CIHI to help them improve their ability to use data to understand what is happening in their areas of responsibility.

To meet this broad set of expectations, CIHI must concentrate its efforts on its priority target audiences, namely

- health and health care policy actors, including senior leaders in government and the health sector, as well as health/quality councils and others involved in health policy;
- health sector leaders, planners and managers, including leaders of regional health authorities, hospitals and health agencies; and
- members of the public in their role as citizens.

Other important audiences for CIHI include

- those conducting applied research to inform the policy debate and efforts to improve health services;
- members/sectors of the academic community instrumental in training future leaders in the health sector; and
- those involved in the collection, processing and transmission of data (for example, clinicians, health records and finance staff and vendors).

The fact that stakeholders are interested in seeing a further emphasis on in-depth analysis is a welcome message for CIHI. Over the past few years, CIHI and Statistics Canada have developed more data on different areas of health and health care than existed even five years ago. However, the importance of data lies in its innovative and effective use.

For example, large pan-Canadian data sets and relevant policy analysis allow us to examine why some communities are healthy and others not, important aspects of Aboriginal peoples' health, to what extent Canada's major policies and programs affect Canadians' health and many other important questions about population health.

In the area of health services, we have explored issues as diverse as the distribution and quality of health services, what patients think about their care and how we use resources within the health system. For example, we are able to identify important differences in patient outcomes between regions and to develop indicators that can assist in identifying opportunities to improve patient outcomes.

As well, we will continue to develop new approaches to knowledge exchange, educational programs, templates, analytic techniques and other tools that will assist health and health care policy-makers and managers in using CIHI's products more effectively. The more these products are used, the more we are able to gather fresh insights into productive ways of supporting our partners' efforts to improve health and health care. And we welcome the opportunity to enhance our research and analysis, and to work closely with others in their efforts in this area.

Over the next three years, CIHI will:

- **Develop a long-range analytical plan** that provides a framework for CIHI's efforts to build knowledge that will help advance Canada's health policies, improve the health of the population, strengthen our health system and assist leaders within and outside the health sector to make informed decisions. Based on what we heard in consultations across the country, our health services activities will focus on access to care (including wait times), patient pathways and continuity of care, costs/expenditures, health human resources and the quality and outcomes of health services. Our population health activities will focus on three themes: healthy weights, healthy transitions to adulthood and place and health.
- **Produce analysis** of interest to our key stakeholders. Our focus will be on topical analytical reports with the depth necessary to inform the public/policy debate or key management questions. These reports, whose development will be embedded in collaborative strategies and networks that engage relevant partners from across the country, should serve to highlight emerging issues, inform decision-makers' actions and raise awareness of the value of health information.
- **Assist stakeholders to improve their analytic capacity**—We will provide CIHI clients with various tools and strategies (for example, educational offerings and new grouping methodologies) that will help them make better use of CIHI's data, indicators and reports.
- **Strengthen CIHI's relationship with applied researchers**—We will do this by raising awareness of our role as a partner in research, by streamlining access to data that we hold and by strengthening collaborative activities with researchers and research organizations.

Target Audiences

Policy-Makers

Those who create or influence health policy

Health System Managers

Those who lead, plan and manage the delivery of health services

Members of the Public

Those who, as citizens, wish to be informed about health and health care



Strategic
Direction 4



Strategic Direction 4

CIHI will enhance information quality

CIHI aims to improve the health of Canadians and of their health system by providing reliable and timely information. There are two important and related aspects to this objective—high-quality analysis and high-quality data. Successfully meeting this objective will obviously require strong support, collaboration and input from our data suppliers, those who use our data and analysis, researchers and other key “influencers” of the quality of health information.

Quality Analysis

High-quality analysis starts with identifying the right question, applying rigorous approaches and methodologies (for example, how best can we answer this question?) and validating the results. Over the last several years, CIHI and its partners have produced an increasing number of reports and have expanded the scope and depth of our analysis. Whether reporting on recent trends, identifying factors that contribute to regional variations, or synthesizing what we know and don't know about policy and practice options for addressing key health and health care challenges, we strive to produce objective, action-oriented analysis that meets the needs of our primary audiences. To this end, CIHI has developed—and will continue to strengthen—quality assurance processes that will ensure that its reports and other analytical products are sound and compelling. Among these processes are the use of expert advisory panels and internal reviews supported by project management methodologies. We also foster creative approaches to analysis and gain fresh insights by engaging stakeholders and experts across the country; by undertaking external peer review; by hiring excellent staff; and by supporting staff through education, training and professional development.



Data Quality

CIHI's ability to continuously enhance data quality and timeliness and to identify and respond to specific data quality issues is critical to our credibility and long-term success. As the scope and magnitude of decisions informed by health information grows, data quality requirements and challenges also increase. New and evolving uses of data raise the profile and importance of data quality assurance, along with the need to assess the "fitness" of the data for these new uses. CIHI must play a leadership role in motivating and helping bring about improvements in data quality. As a secondary collector of health information, we depend on strong collaboration with data providers, users of health information, and standards-setting bodies. CIHI has undertaken many initiatives in support of improved data quality, and this will continue to be an area of focus in the future.

Over the next three years, CIHI will:

- **Continue to enhance the quality of its analysis**

- We will strengthen quality assurance processes for reports produced and commissioned by CIHI.
- We will develop a long-term analytic plan and use this opportunity to concentrate on developing innovative and insightful analyses that shed light on important issues of health policy and delivery.
- We will continue to ensure staff have access to education and knowledge exchange opportunities that foster new and insightful approaches to analysis.

- **Improve data quality**

- We will produce, in conjunction with Statistics Canada, more comprehensive data quality reports that will be used to highlight data quality issues.
- We will support provinces and territories in developing and carrying out data quality programs, including provincial data quality strategies, provincial data quality committees and clinical data blitzes.
- We will develop a repository to collect information from data users on data quality strengths and weaknesses to help us improve quality.
- We will further enhance/expand our data quality documentation for users.

- **Continue to enhance the data supply chain**

- We will identify and address data quality issues as early as possible. For example, enhancing existing data quality edits and doing more analysis of current-year data will allow CIHI to identify and address data quality issues much earlier in the process.
- We will develop and implement a systematic re-abstraction program for the Discharge Abstract Database (DAD).
- We will undertake a reabstraction study of the National Ambulatory Care Reporting System (NACRS).
- We will develop and monitor a compliance process for the MIS Guidelines.



Strategic
Direction 5



Strategic Direction 5

CIHI will improve access to data, and will do so in a privacy-sensitive manner

Given its potential to help identify problems, point to solutions and monitor progress, health information is an important tool for improving health. Over the past 40 years, Canada’s health system has made enormous strides in its ability to collect, organize, transmit and analyze large and varied data sets. The system has also dramatically improved its technical ability to protect confidentiality, in addition to establishing new and powerful legal and policy safeguards regarding privacy and confidentiality.

Access to data is vital to maximizing its value. Many of the important health lessons of recent decades have been learned by studying large data sets. Prominent examples include the relationship between social status and health, risk factors for chronic disease and rare drug interactions. In addition, much of our understanding of how to improve the organization and delivery of care has come from identifying best practices through comparison of data from a variety of organizations.

Because health data inform many different types of decisions—financial, planning, policy, clinical and personal choices—people with various roles within and outside the health system use CIHI data. We want to make data available to all our key stakeholders in easily accessible ways. In doing so, we remain strongly committed to ensuring privacy and the confidentiality of the data entrusted to CIHI. To this end, we maintain an active privacy and confidentiality program, seeking out and incorporating emerging best practices where appropriate.

Over the next three years, CIHI will:

- **Improve access to data**

- We will develop new tools and improve existing tools to assist users in obtaining and analyzing data. A key initiative will be the introduction of the CIHI Portal—a secure and confidential online tool that provides authorized users with a unique ability to view and analyse large amounts of anonymized administrative and clinical data. The Portal will be released to selected hospitals, health authorities and government ministries in 2005–2006, with further releases to follow in subsequent years.

- **Improve the timeliness of our data**

- We will work with provinces and territories, health facilities and others to reduce the time involved in submitting and processing data.
- We will improve the timeliness of *Quick Stats*—our online Web tool that allows users to access and view aggregate-level statistics on health conditions, health services, health outcomes, health expenditures and health human resources.

- **Further strengthen our approach to privacy**

- We will keep current with technical and legal developments in ensuring privacy and confidentiality.
- We will continue to explore security initiatives and opportunities to incorporate privacy-enhancing technologies in our data collection, storage, use and disclosure practices.
- As a designated entity under Ontario's *Personal Health Information Protection Act* (PHIPA), we will secure approval of our privacy program, including its privacy and security policies and practices, from the Ontario Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner.





Strategic Direction 6



Strategic Direction 6

CIHI will provide leadership to ensure that future data and information needs are met

Producing comparable and consistent health data in Canada is a task that involves ever-changing challenges and opportunities. This is particularly true today, due to:

- structural changes to the health system;
- dynamic changes in our understanding of factors that affect health; and
- ongoing changes in the health information environment.

Over the past 10 years, a number of structural changes have affected our health system, presenting new challenges to the collection of health data. Some of these changes include primary health care reform, regionalization of health services, increased use of ambulatory or day surgery settings and use of private service providers who deliver many of their services outside hospital walls.

These and other structural changes often affect if, when and how data are collected, therefore impacting our ability to answer specific analytical questions. For example, the move to reimburse primary care physicians through salaries or contracts rather than fee-for-service billings can result in the loss of data previously available. Similarly, the provision of services via contracted service providers can result in a loss of data related to these services. The challenge for governments, health care organizations and CIHI is to ensure that our ability to collect needed data keeps pace with structural changes that may affect data acquisition.

Likewise, our understanding of population health continues to grow. As we learn more about the determinants of health and health inequalities (as well as about strategies that are effective for sharing and acting on this information), our programs need to evolve. Together with our partners from across Canada and around the world, we intend to take up this challenge, with the ultimate goal of helping Canadians stay healthy and live longer.

In the health information environment, we are seeing substantial changes in the way information is collected. Over the past five years, governments, providers and health care facilities have increased their investment in information technology solutions in a wide variety of areas. Across the country, electronic health record (EHR) initiatives are being supported by investments from Canada Health Infoway. Given the importance of health information, and Infoway's strong mandate with regards to the EHR, we expect this trend to continue. Although many CIHI systems will continue to rely on well-trained health information management professionals abstracting files after-the-fact, we recognize that significant changes are coming, and CIHI must be positioned to keep pace with the evolving technical realities and opportunities of data capture and collection.

To meet these challenges and take advantage of these opportunities, we will need to:

- Work with our key stakeholders to ensure that we continue to capture important information in the face of structural or other changes in the system.
- Engage with our partners to establish collaborative strategies and networks to bring a focus to understanding the determinants of health (knowledge exchange).
- Develop approaches that will capture data in more efficient ways.
- Ensure that the information content of systems is organized in ways that will allow for efficient and accurate analysis, where appropriate.

Over the next three years, CIHI will:

- **Identify and take a leadership role in addressing emerging trends**

- We will identify potential threats related to data availability, including “data flight”—loss of data caused by structural changes in the health system—and examine opportunities to incorporate new data that may result from the creation of new programs.
- We will develop systematic processes to gather information on important emerging information technology trends, and we will anticipate and respond to these trends.
- We will identify other issues that affect the availability of health information, including the availability of well-trained information management professionals.

- **Collaborate on the development of electronic health records**

- We will work with Canada Health Infoway and other partners to develop electronic health record solutions that will enhance and support priority data collection.

- **Take a leadership role in developing content standards** that fit with CIHI’s mandate and role.





Strategic
Direction 7



Strategic Direction 7

CIHI will continue to be a dynamic organization with a highly motivated workforce

Working with its partner, Statistics Canada, CIHI has taken great strides to strengthen its efforts in responding to the health information needs of Canadians. In 1999, having secured significant federal funding, CIHI and Statistics Canada launched the Health Information Roadmap Initiative, which was aimed at addressing data gaps, developing data standards, advancing population health efforts and developing health reports and indicators. Since this time, CIHI has experienced significant growth—capturing and reporting on more areas of health through new and enhanced databases, strengthening analytical capacity and, most recently, expanding its regional presence.

As with all successful knowledge-based organizations, our accomplishments have been the result of the shared efforts of innovative, engaged and highly skilled employees. The quality of this team, and of the environment within which we work, has been reflected in CIHI being named by *Maclean's* magazine as one of Canada's top 100 employers.

The challenges we face over the coming years will be met by current employees and new employees who are equally engaged and skilled. To sustain and build upon our success, we need to attract and retain staff with leading-edge analytical skills and creativity, health sector knowledge and expertise and credibility in the system. To continue as a strong and respected organization, CIHI must also evolve and develop the infrastructure that a mature mid-sized corporation needs to function successfully. The right corporate infrastructure is essential if staff are going to be able to work efficiently, communicate with clients effectively and maintain the organization's responsiveness.



Over the next three years, CIHI will:

- **Enhance recruitment**—We will use regional offices and teleworking arrangements as opportunities to attract excellent candidates throughout the country.
- **Enhance retention and succession planning approaches**—We will continue to provide fair and competitive employee compensation programs and development programs that reflect the interests and aspirations of employees.
- **Increase our capacity to provide services in both official languages**—We will develop a multi-year plan, including identification of service requirements, selective hiring approaches and training strategies.
- **Respond appropriately to growth in the organization**
 - We will review internal processes to ensure they are effective and efficient for an organization of CIHI's current state of maturity.
 - We will relocate and consolidate the Ottawa office into a single new location.
 - We will establish a regional office in the province of Quebec.

