# ITAC health

# ITAC Health ISC Partners with the School of Health Information Science at the University of Victoria to Develop the Canadian Digital Health Interoperability Scorecard

**Last year the ITAC Health Interoperability and Standards Committee (ISC) undertook a survey of the ITAC membership. Based on that survey, ISC released a Position Paper which was formally adopted by the ITAC Health board. The 2016 Position Paper makes four key recommendations:**

Standards should be the same across Canada. There will be different standards used in different domains (e.g. DICOM in DI and HL7v2 in Lab), however every effort should be made to minimize variation between jurisdictions in how these standards are implemented.

Canadian jurisdictions should prefer standards that are commercially established internationally, particularly those established in the U.S.

Canadian jurisdictions should phase out the use of HL7v3, and promote the adoption of IHE/XDS and FHIR. The FHIR standard is currently under development; as such the FHIR profiles promoted within Canada should be prioritized according to the stability and commercial adoption of those profiles.

Canadian public healthcare Requests for Proposals (RFPs) should mandate compliance with interoperability standards on procured software systems. Specifically, ITAC Health supports mandating demonstrable interoperability through conformance testing.

The Position Paper's recommendations are sensible and uncontroversial. There is the appearance of complete agreement, across all stakeholders in all jurisdictions, regarding the importance of interoperability. Indeed, evidence indicates interoperable exchange of health information positively impacts continuity of patient care, health outcomes, and patient safety. This is especially true when it comes to chronic disease management (which represents Canada's largest burden of disease). From a cost standpoint, results show both efficiency and effectiveness are improved. The jury is in: digital health solutions should be interoperable; it's a no-brainer.

In the face of such a compelling case, one would think that the significant jurisdictional investments in digital health over these last number of years would have yielded interoperable systems… right? In fact, this is exactly the question the ITAC Health ISC

has set out to answer. In its 2017 work plan, ITAC Health's Interoperability and Standards Committee is partnering with researchers at the School of Health Information Science at the University of Victoria to develop the Canadian digital health Interoperability Scorecard.

Work on developing the Interoperability Scorecard has just started. Look for a progress update in the next issue of the HIM&CC. In May, 2018 there will be a reporting of interim results at the eHealth Conference in Vancouver. Every jurisdiction in Canada is committed to digital health interoperability. It'll be interesting – and no doubt illuminating – to see how each of us is doing!

---

**For more information about ITAC Health contact:**

**Brendan Seaton, President**
bseaton@itac.ca

**Elaine Huesing, Executive Director**
ehuesing@itac.ca