

## Information Management and Information Technology

August 2016

### Background

There continue to be challenges facing Information Management and Information Technology (IM/IT) within the context of healthcare in B.C. In 2015, the Ministry of Health published its policy paper *Enabling effective equality population and patient centred care: A provincial strategy for health information management and technology*, which outlined current challenges with IM/IT in the healthcare sector, as well as the Ministry's strategic priorities for advancing IM/IT in the future. This includes addressing how fragmented funding and delivery of health services across public and private sector organizations has resulted in multiple IM/IT systems developing across British Columbia, leading to greater complexities when working towards a more centralized system.

Current gaps and challenges, as indicated by the Ministry of Health include:

- A lack of a common sector-wide vision and approach for IM/IT.
- Distributed governance and lack of business representation and leadership.
- Fragmented funding sources and lack of long term investment strategy.
- Lack of clinical information standards coupled with loosely connected clinical information systems.
- Lack of a comprehensive change management strategy.

Issues within IM/IT currently affect all areas of healthcare, from primary and community care, to rural health services and surgical services. Among the many areas that must be advanced to improve the efficiency of healthcare services and patient care, current IM/IT priorities include establishing integrated clinical systems, a single health record, shared care planning, expanding telehealth, managing surgical booking and waitlists and improving data analytics.

Patients experience the negative effects of poor IM/IT in healthcare on a daily basis. Specifically, ARNBC's patient advisory group has identified the need to move towards a single electronic health record as a key policy priority area that nursing should focus on. The lived experiences of patients illustrate the current inefficiencies that exist in the absence of a single electronic health record. These include the lack of accessibility of patient information between healthcare providers, patients feeling as if they must answer the same questions continuously and repetitive paperwork for patients and healthcare providers. Nurses understand that the current challenges within IM/IT not only lead to inefficiencies within their practice environments, but also result in significant barriers to providing patient-centred care.

In September 2015, the BC Coalition of Nursing Associations (BCCNA) responded to the Ministry of Health's policy papers. While the Ministry has outlined strategic priorities to improve IM/IT across the province, there continues to be a lack of a nursing voice within IM/IT leadership and the decision making/consultation process. Not only are nurses well positioned to contribute to this leadership because they are the end users of these systems, they will also carry the responsibility of teaching patients and others how to use it.



# Issues Brief

## Key Messages:

- B.C. needs a single, universal electronic health record.
- As both the primary user and lead educator with respect to how patients use and access their health records, nurses must be part of the scoping, development and implementation of a new electronic health record for B.C.

## Questions for Nurses:

1. What issues related to IM/IT are you facing in your day to day work?
2. What are some solutions that have been successfully implemented in other jurisdictions?
3. What changes within IM/IT would you like to see in order to improve your ability to provide patient-centred care?

## Further Reading

- B.C. Ministry of Health. (2015). *Enabling effective equality population and patient centred care: A provincial strategy for health information management and technology.*
- B.C. Coalition of Nursing Associations. (2015). *BCCNA response: A provincial strategy health information management and technology.*

