

## Ottawa Valley hospitals join diagnostic imaging repository as part of region's eHealth strategy

**June 15, 2010 (Pembroke, ON)** - Dr. Thomas Hurley, Chief of Emergency at Pembroke Regional Hospital, is finding benefits in a new information system now available to the hospitals in the upper Ottawa Valley. The system, called a diagnostic imaging repository or DI-r, provides centralized storage for X-rays and other diagnostic images including ultrasounds, CT scans, nuclear medicine scans and MRIs for the hospitals in Northern and Eastern Ontario. The shared imaging archive enables doctors in one hospital to access images and reports acquired at another hospital.

"The DI-r enables me to view a patient's imaging history when they come into our emergency department, which helps me understand what is going on with my patients medically," said Dr. Hurley. "It also allows me to share images with specialists in other hospitals before making a decision to treat a patient locally or transfer them to another hospital."

This month, Pembroke Regional Hospital, Renfrew Victoria Hospital and St. Francis Memorial Hospital in Barry's Bay became the most recent organizations to join the Northern and Eastern Ontario Diagnostic Imaging Network (NEODIN), which hosts the DI-r. Patients and physicians in these hospitals are already seeing the benefits. In one case, a patient who had undergone surgery in Ottawa ended up in emergency in Pembroke several days after her surgery. Dr. Hurley was able to electronically send X-rays to the patient's surgeon in Ottawa and determine the appropriate way to treat her in Pembroke, saving the patient and her parents a trip to Ottawa.

In another case, Dr. Hurley and his team were able to compare a new chest X-ray of a cancer patient with one taken a few weeks prior in Ottawa. The dramatic and positive effects of the chemotherapy the patient was undergoing could be shown to the family. Just as importantly, the patient's oncologist in Ottawa could see the results minutes after the film was taken in Pembroke.

"The NEODIN DI-r will make it easier and faster for our patients to receive the care they need," says Randy Penney, CEO of both Renfrew Victoria Hospital and St. Francis Memorial Hospital. "Our patients often travel between hospitals to see specific physicians involved in their care. By providing electronic access to test results, the DI-r eliminates the need for those patients to transport images between doctors on CDs or films. The DI-r will also allow specialists in Ottawa to review images electronically if a physician in one of the community hospitals requires a consultation."

The NEODIN DI-r currently stores images and reports for 13 imaging departments including eight in the Ottawa Valley, two in the North Bay area and three in and around Sault Ste. Marie. By mid 2011, NEODIN will connect more than 60 medical imaging

departments in Ontario servicing almost two million people across 840,000 square kilometers.

Canada Health Infoway (*Infoway*), an independent, not-for-profit organization funded by the federal government, has provided \$21.7 million and eHealth Ontario has provided \$20 million in funding for the project which is to support the transfer of images and reports between the diagnostic imaging departments in Northern and Eastern Ontario. The project is part of the Ontario government’s ehealth agenda and supports *Infoway’s* vision for a pan-Canadian electronic health record system.

“We are proud to provide the network and be a funding partner of an initiative which advances health care delivery and benefits Ontarians,” said Greg Reed, President and CEO, eHealth Ontario. “This project illustrates how collaboration within the health care system can deliver improved patient care.”

“The ability to share images and reports through a diagnostic imaging network provides significant benefits to doctors and their patients,” said Richard Alvarez, President and CEO of Canada Health Infoway. “With a DI-r, health care professionals can access image results sooner and they can see their patients’ image history, meaning that patients will be treated faster and can avoid unnecessary transfers.”

The NEODIN DI-r is one of several eHealth projects being undertaken by the hospitals in the Ottawa area. A great deal of effort has been taken to ensure patient privacy is being maintained while enabling physicians and other care givers to access the information they need to provide exemplary care to their patients.

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