

SECURE E-MAIL FOR HEALTH PROJECT

Under the auspice of the Renfrew County Health Care Forum which was established in 1999, all health care organizations in Renfrew County meet through representation per sector on a regular basis to discuss common issues and gaps in the health care system in the area.

In the spring of 2004, a Renfrew County stakeholders' symposium was held for the purpose of exploring information technology infrastructure to improve accessibility and/or smooth transfer of confidential information in a secure way between health care providers. Criteria set for the capability of the system to be retained include the following:

- All health care providers have the capacity to make health care seamless for the client. Independent of the entry point the client would be guided to the most appropriate provider to answer their need (“no door is the wrong door”);
- Information captured from the client at the point of entry be transferred to the referred provider (“the client should not have to repeat his/her story”);
- The information system is most beneficial if it taps in on the home-care volunteers through the Community Support Organizations (Provide guidance to the client about the health care system as early as possible in their home setting);
- Technology needs to be affordable to all health care providers, particularly the Community Support Organizations.

A Task Force was struck to carry forward this initiative. After exploring various options, a partnership was established between the following organizations:

- Renfrew County Community Futures Development Corporation to provide the funding to upgrade the technology of health care providers to the required high speed connectivity level of performance;
- Smart Systems for Health to provide the connectivity and security infrastructure;
- Renfrew County CCAC to become the lead agency and provide project management support.

Currently this project is in its implementation phase. Renfrew County is a very large rural area and one of its greatest challenges is the lack of infrastructure to support high speed connectivity, a minimum requirement to ensure the efficiency of Secure E-mail. In addition to developing the secure e-mail solution, Smart Systems for Health is working to provide connectivity for health care providers throughout the county.

To capitalize on the Secure E-mail technology to move client information across the system, the health care providers are developing health care networks based on client conditions and comprehensive client focused programs. Many Community Support Organizations now have the benefit of the performance of high speed connectivity for their regular business, an asset that would not have been possible at this time without this project.

The project is all about building community capacity, and the Renfrew County Community Development Corporation has recognized this potential. We were very pleased to receive the “2006 Innovation Project of the Year Award” for the project. The video of the project can be accessed at: <http://www.ccacrenfrew.org/SecureEmailProject/SecureEmail.wmv>

We believe that connecting and making the volunteers in the community an integral part of the health care system delivery through enabling secure e-mail technology is essential to an integrated health care system and a seamless experience for the client.

Renfrew County Community Care Information Network
Remy Beaudoin, Project Business Lead
Bernie Roosen, Project IT Lead