

Chapter 22

eHealth Saskatchewan – Implementing Electronic Health Records

1.0 MAIN POINTS

eHealth Saskatchewan (eHealth) is responsible for creating a system for comprehensive electronic health records (EHR) for patients and providing healthcare professionals access to those records. Patient health information in electronic form is more likely to be legible, and is easily and quickly accessible no matter where an individual seeks medical attention. An EHR system improves the delivery of health care by making the right data available at the right time to the right healthcare professionals.

By March 2016, eHealth had implemented three of the four recommendations we initially made in 2009 related to guiding, monitoring, and reporting on the implementation of the EHR system. eHealth needs to extend its budgeting process for EHR systems to cover more than one year.

2.0 INTRODUCTION

In our *2009 Report – Volume 3*, Chapter 10C, we assessed the Ministry of Health's processes to guide, monitor, and report on the implementation of the electronic health record system. We made four recommendations.

In 2010-11, eHealth became responsible for leading the planning and implementation of a provincial EHR system. We followed up on the status of the four recommendations with eHealth as of September 30, 2012, and found that that eHealth had not yet fully implemented them.

This chapter describes our second follow-up on the four outstanding recommendations.

To conduct this review engagement, we followed the standards for assurance engagements published in the *CPA Canada Handbook – Assurance*. To evaluate eHealth's progress towards meeting our recommendations, we used the relevant criteria from the 2009 audit. The Ministry of Health's management agreed with the criteria in the 2009 audit.

3.0 STATUS OF RECOMMENDATIONS

This section sets out each recommendation including the date on which the Standing Committee on Public Accounts agreed to the recommendation, the status of the recommendation at March 29, 2016, and eHealth's actions up to that date. We found that eHealth had implemented three of the four recommendations and has made progress on the last recommendation.



3.1 Strategy and Operational Plan for Electronic Health Records Developed

We recommended that eHealth Saskatchewan strategic plan include its strategy for the electronic health record system. (2009 Report – Volume 3; Public Accounts Committee agreement June 18, 2010)

Status – Implemented

We recommended that eHealth Saskatchewan develop an operational plan to guide the development and implementation of electronic health records. (2009 Report – Volume 3; Public Accounts Committee agreement June 18, 2010)

Status – Implemented

eHealth's Board approved a five-year strategic plan (2012-2017) in November 2012. The strategic plan includes initiatives regarding the provincial EHR system.

eHealth completed the last of the core components of the EHR system, as set by Canada Health Infoway,¹ in October 2014. EHR system core components included information technology (IT) systems for lab results, drug information, immunization information, diagnostic imaging/reports, discharge summaries, chronic disease information, as well as the integration services (the services that will connect these systems together to present a single view of patient information anywhere in the province) including the shared client index/client registry and eHR Viewer. At March 2016, eHealth is working on connecting the various health care providers to these IT systems.

Also in 2014, eHealth developed a five-year priority roadmap (2014-2019). The priority roadmap is designed to guide future investments on IT systems within the provincial EHR system, and on new initiatives, such as the Citizen Health Information Portal (Citizen portal).² The priority roadmap outlines when eHealth plans to connect each IT system to various health care providers (e.g., regional health authorities), and when it expects new initiatives to occur. eHealth updates the status³ of initiatives each quarter, and revisits the priority roadmap annually.

¹ Canada Health Infoway is an independent, federally-funded, not-for-profit organization tasked with accelerating the adoption of electronic health records across Canada.

² In February 2016, eHealth announced a new citizen initiative to enhance use of the EHR system. This initiative expects to allow residents to view their personal health information online through a secure website.

³ eHealth classifies each initiative as completed, in progress, in queue, in planning, dependent on other initiatives, or delayed.

3.2 Long-Term Timelines Monitored but not Estimating Related Costs

We recommended that eHealth Saskatchewan monitor its overall costs and timelines, compared to its plans, for development and implementation of electronic health records. (2009 Report – Volume 3; Public Accounts Committee agreement June 18, 2010)

Status – Partially Implemented

As noted in **Section 3.1**, eHealth uses the priority roadmap to monitor EHR system implementation timelines. We expected eHealth to have estimated the costs of major IT system initiatives set out in its priority roadmap. As of March 2016, it had not estimated costs of its planned initiatives other than those to be completed in the upcoming year; eHealth includes those costs in its annual budget. Estimating costs of major IT system initiatives set out in its priority roadmap would allow eHealth and its Board to better understand the impact of planned work on its future resource needs, provide useful information to help prioritize resource allocation decisions, and facilitate future comparisons of planned and actual costs.

3.3 Board Receiving Regular Progress Reports

We recommended that eHealth Saskatchewan develop performance measures to allow it to assess and report its progress in achieving electronic health record benefits. (2009 Report – Volume 3; Public Accounts Committee agreement June 18, 2010)

Status – Implemented

Senior management has developed an array of measures to assess and report on its progress in achieving EHR usage. It gives eHealth's Board:

- › Quarterly dashboard reports on four categories of measures: quality (e.g., client satisfaction, patient and provider participation), safety (e.g., total transactions and failed transactions by month for a key system, year-to-date incidents by triage type), delivery (e.g., tracking the use of certain information by providers, number and percentage of service requests not meeting target levels), and staff morale. Many of the measures are compared to targets
- › A mid-year report on priorities that sets out progress on board priorities (such as number of active eHR Viewer⁴ users, number of patients treated using the chronic disease management template, percentage of customers who indicate good or very good satisfaction with eHealth's services)

⁴ eHR Viewer is eHealth's website that allows authorized users to view EHR data (e.g. lab results, drug information) over the Internet.

