

NEWS AND NOTES / NOUVELLES ET NOTES

Canadian Virtual Health Library / Bibliothèque virtuelle canadienne de la santé (CVHL / BVCS)

The Canadian Virtual Health Library / Bibliothèque virtuelle canadienne de la santé (CVHL / BVCS) is pleased to share its progress to date in the development of the groundbreaking Canadian Virtual Health Library.

The highly anticipated CVHL / BVCS underscores a well-known need for reliable health information amongst Canadian health practitioners. Dr. Gordon Guyatt, Professor, Department of Clinical Epidemiology & Biostatistics at McMaster University, captures this need by stating:

For over 20 years I have encouraged and trained health-care providers to integrate the best published research evidence to inform their practice. Essential components of evidence-based practice are ready and timely access to the health literature and to the training and support offered by health libraries. This has been a major challenge given the Canadian mosaic of healthcare jurisdictions and funding sources; the implementation of a pan-Canadian CVHL will be a remarkable achievement to meet this challenge.

Background

The purpose of the CVHL / BVCS, initiated by a Task Force of the Canadian Health Libraries Association / Association des bibliothèques de la santé du Canada (CHLA / ABSC), is to improve the health of Canadians by leveraging existing resources and services through a coordinated network of libraries. Canada's health practitioners, wherever they are in Canada, will have access to the information and services they need through a national licensing program that coordinates and administers Canada-wide licenses to core health information resources.

The CVHL is currently funded by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) to a total of \$800 000 over three years. Funding is directed towards the development of the CVHL but does not provide for the cost of content or infrastructure.

The model

The CVHL is a library-based network of networks that operates on a subscriber-based, opt in/out structure. Subscribers are referred to as "Network Subscribers" and consist of provincial, national, or territorial consortia, or professional associations that license health information resources on behalf of their members. Network subscribers "partner" with the CVHL to participate in the collective purchasing of content and services. Subscriptions through the CVHL extend to consortia members via their local consortia, thereby allowing the consortia to maintain their existing business models. Subscribers also have the flexibility to decide whether they wish to purchase all or some of the collections or packages.

Subscriber fees consist of the cost of the content plus an administrative fee to cover operating costs but do not exceed current fees for existing content. Costs are determined by a principle-based pricing metric that fairly reflects subscribers' potential use and size. As more subscribers participate, deeper discounts can be earned. As cost savings are realized, subscribers will be able to reinvest their funds into additional content.

Current activities

The CVHL is subdivided into three streams of work activity: Stakeholder Engagement & Network Formation, Content Strategy, and IT Strategy. Project team members are Jennifer Bayne, Project Lead; Vivian Stieda, Project Manager Content Strategy; Wendy Stark, Project Manager IT Strategy; Lisa Nguyen, Project Coordinator; and Jay O'Neill, contracted to develop the business and financial plan.

The CVHL is currently governed by a Task Force consisting of Patrick Ellis, Principal Investigator and Jim Henderson and Jessie McGowan, Co-Investigators. Other Task Force members are Liz Bayley, Orvie Dingwall, Donna Meighan, Judy Inglis, and Susan Powelson. In the upcoming months, the Task Force will transition their responsibilities to a Board of Directors. Recruitment of the Board is well underway and will be established by spring 2011.

Under the leadership of Vivian Stieda, the initial year of the CVHL will see a staged rollout in which initial Network Subscribers (with representation from across Canada) will be invited to engage in the early developmental stage. As implementation continues, additional Network Subscribers will be added incrementally. Meetings with pre-selected content vendors have already taken place, with additional content to be added as time and cost savings allow.

Under the leadership of Wendy Stark, the Portal Strategy has been developed and will be implemented in two stages. The first stage consists of a "Day 1 website" that will be launched in the spring of 2011. The second stage is a "Vision Portal" that will be developed incrementally as funding allows.

Additional information and future announcements on the progress of the CVHL will be available on <http://chla-absc.ca/nnlh/cvhl/index.htm>.

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