

**National Initiatives to Implement Health Information Technology:  
A Case Study of the Canadian Experience in Contrast to the United States**

## **Interview Instrument**

**Name of Interviewer:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date of Interview:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Interview began at:** \_\_\_\_:\_\_\_\_ (am/pm)

**Interview completed at:** \_\_\_\_:\_\_\_\_ (am/pm)

**Name of Interviewee:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Title or position of Interviewee:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Country:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Region: (Province):** \_\_\_\_\_

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## ***Introduction***

*Dr. / Mr. \_\_\_\_\_, Thank you very much for taking the time to talk to us.*

*My name is Dr. \_\_\_\_\_ from Brigham and Women's Hospital and Harvard Medical School in Boston. I am currently working with Dr. Robyn Tamblyn of McGill University and Dr. David Bates of Brigham and Women's Hospital and Harvard Medical School. We have received a grant from the Commonwealth Fund to study the Canadian and the U.S. approaches to Health Information Technology (HIT) policy. We hope to do so by conducting telephone interviews with key opinion leaders in information technology policy in Canada and the U.S. in an attempt to understand, define and assess the impact of the Canadian and U.S. approaches of HIT policy. Although there are many variations on the definition of HIT we will be using the broader term which includes Electronic Health Records (EHR), Electronic Medical Records (EMR), and other related eHealth solutions. In your answers please feel free to refer to either component as you see fit.*

*We hope to use these findings to inform national HIT policy efforts in both Canada and the U.S. We plan to assess what aspects have worked, which have not and why, from the perspective of multiple stakeholders. Your input will be invaluable in helping us achieve that goal.*

*If it is acceptable to you, I would like to tape our conversation today which will allow us to perform more detailed analysis later. Let me reassure you that your responses will be kept anonymous and confidential. Neither your name nor the name of your organization will be linked to your responses when we present our findings. Please feel free to skip any questions you think are not relevant to your experience.*

*Is it OK if I tape this conversation?*

*As this interview has open-ended questions it could take anywhere from 30 minutes to an hour, how much of your time do we have available?*

*Do you have any questions before we begin?*

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## **Questions for interview**

*Based on the literature review we performed, the questions we will be asking you will focus on the following domains that are related to HIT policy: Technical infrastructure and information standards, HIT vendor engagement, Financing and incentives, Health professional adoption, Public Health, Interoperability and Improving safety and effectiveness in health care delivery. To start, we will ask you to share your opinion on the overall Canadian plan for health information technology.*

### **1. Opening Question**

- As you are aware, Canada Health Infoway has led the national plan for the implementation of the inter-operable electronic health record
  - Can you list up to three biggest Canada Health Infoway successes and what can be learned for the US experience?
  - Can you list up to three of the least successful Infoway endeavors and what can be learned for the US experience?

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## 2. Technical infrastructure and data standards

***Description to Interviewee:** In this section we will ask you several questions regarding technical infrastructure and data standards. By technical infrastructure we mean infrastructure such as high-speed networks, master patient indices, and clinical data repositories. By data standards we mean standards for representation of data, especially clinical data such as HL-7 for technology data and ICD-10 for clinical data.*

- For the following questions, please rate using the scale of 1 to 4, with 1 being very INsignificant, 2 being somewhat INsignificant, 3 being somewhat significant and 4 being very significant.

In your opinion, how would you rate the significance of policy as applied to technical infrastructure in a successful HIT implementation?

1      2      3      4

Can you please elaborate?

- How would you rate the significance of policy as applied to data standards?

1      2      3      4

Please elaborate

- In general, would you say that the Canadian policy and activities on technical infrastructure has been successful? If not, what would you do differently?
- How would you answer the same question for data standards?
- Should the standard for technical infrastructure be set at the national level, the province level and/or the vendor level?
- How would you answer the same question for data standards?

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#### 3. HIT vendor engagement

***Description to Interviewee:** In this section we ask you several questions regarding HIT vendor engagement. By HIT vendor engagement we mean active participation of the vendor community in activities aimed at cross-vendor collaboration, and alignment of interests with regards to improvements on the use of IT.*

- For the following questions, please rate using the scale of 1 to 4, with 1 being very INsignificant, 2 being somewhat INsignificant, 3 being somewhat significant and 4 being very significant?

In your opinion, how would you rate the significance of policy as it applies to vendor engagement in a successful HIT implementation?

1      2      3      4

Can you please elaborate?

- In general would you say that the Canadian HIT policy and activities is encouraging vendors to become more engaged? If yes, in what way?
- Do you think that the government (national or provincial) should take a more or less active role in encouraging and controlling vendor engagement?
- Would you favor a national certification standard for vendors set by a centralized organization?

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#### 4. Financing and incentives

*Description to Interviewee: In this section we will ask you several questions regarding HIT financing and incentives. By financial incentives, we mean the use of incentives to improve the use or uptake of IT among the stakeholders.*

- For the following questions, please rate using the scale of 1 to 4, with 1 being very INsignificant, 2 being somewhat INsignificant, 3 being somewhat significant and 4 being very significant?

In your opinion, how would you rate the significance of financial incentives in a successful HIT?

1      2      3      4

Can you please elaborate?

- In your opinion, should financial incentives be provided for healthcare institutions implementing HIT? Please elaborate.
- Are you aware of financial incentives for HIT adoption that are in place today in your jurisdiction? If yes, were they effective?

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#### 5. Health professional adoption

*Description to Interviewee:* In this section we ask you several questions regarding health professional adoption. By health professional adoption, we mean the use of IT by health professionals.

- For the following question, please rate using the scale of 1 to 4, with 1 being very INsignificant, 2 being somewhat INsignificant, 3 being somewhat significant and 4 being very significant?

In your opinion, how would you rate the significance of this component in a successful HIT?

1      2      3      4

Can you please elaborate?

- In general, would you say that the Canadian approach to HIT policy and activities has affected the willingness of health professionals to adopt EMRs? If yes, in what way?
- Do you think that the government (national/provincial) should take a more or less active role in dealing with health professional resistance towards implementing EMR?
- In your experience, what Canadian initiative (national/provincial) has had the most impact in improving health professional adoption levels?

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#### 6. Interoperability

*Description to Interviewee:* In this section we ask you several questions regarding interoperability. By interoperability, we mean the use of technological applications that provide the ability to exchange clinical data across providers, institutions, regions, or jurisdictions.

- For the following question, please rate using the scale of 1 to 4, with 1 being very INsignificant, 2 being somewhat INsignificant, 3 being somewhat significant and 4 being very significant?

In your opinion, how would you rate the significance of interoperability in a successful HIT implementation?

1      2      3      4

Can you please elaborate?

- In general, would you say that Canadian policies and activities on interoperability have contributed towards a successful implementation of HIT? If not, what would you do differently?
- Are you aware of any national or provincial policies regarding interoperability? If yes, elaborate.
- Should the interoperability policy be set at the national or the provincial level?
- Should a national or provincial policy for interoperability address all healthcare settings within its jurisdiction? Both in-patient and out-patient?



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#### 7. Public Health

***Description to Interviewee:** In this section we ask you several questions regarding public health. By public health, we mean activities directed at improving the health of populations and conducted by Federal, Provincial, or Local public health agencies. For example, these activities include disease surveillance and control, monitoring of immunization, environmental health tracking, and health promotion.*

- For the following question, please rate using the scale of 1 to 4, with 1 being very INsignificant, 2 being somewhat INsignificant, 3 being somewhat significant and 4 being very significant?

In your opinion, how would you rate the significance of HIT policy on Public Health practice and outcomes?

1      2      3      4

Can you please elaborate?

- In general, would you say that the Canadian HIT policy contributed to the promotion of public health practices and outcomes? If not, what would you change?
- Are you aware of HIT initiatives related to public health that are in place today in your jurisdiction? If yes, which ones?
- Do you believe HIT can have a crucial impact on public health issues? (for example, managing disease outbreaks, supporting smoking cessation programs, improving vaccination rates, etc)

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#### **8. Improving safety and effectiveness in health care delivery**

*Note: If time is running short you may skip this section.*

*Description to Interviewee: In this section we ask you several questions regarding the improvement of safety and effectiveness in health care delivery.*

- For the following question, please rate using the scale of 1 to 4, with 1 being very INsignificant, 2 being somewhat INsignificant, 3 being somewhat significant and 4 being very significant?

In your opinion, how would you rate the significance of HIT towards improving patient safety and effectiveness in health care delivery?

1      2      3      4

Can you please elaborate?

- In general, do you believe that HIT implementation in Canada has led to an improvement in patient safety? If yes, how so?
- Which components of HIT do you believe make most of the difference towards improvements in patient safety and effectiveness in health care delivery?
- Should the use EMRs become a safety requirement for health organizations seeking accreditation?

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#### **9. General Questions**

- Is there a common national vision and policy concerning implementing HIT?
- Should there be a provincial policy, separate from the national one, concerning the implementation of HIT?
- EMR adoption rates have been low in both the US and Canada when compared to other OECD countries. Why do you think this is so? What would you do differently in Canada to secure the success of EMR adoption?
- Is there anything else you think we should know to provide useful feedback on future policy for HIT and/or the adoption of electronic medical records?
- As you know we are trying to reach different stakeholder groups. Please select the group that you identify yourself with the most.

\_\_\_\_\_ National/Regional agencies responsible for Health IT  
\_\_\_\_\_ Quality/Safety Institutes  
\_\_\_\_\_ Health professional groups  
\_\_\_\_\_ HIT vendors  
\_\_\_\_\_ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Wrap-Up**

*Thank you very much for participating in our study. Your perspective will be very important in the identification of which aspects of the Canadian approach have been most successful and why. If you are interested in receiving a copy of our findings, we would be happy to send you our final reports (Interested: Yes/No)?*