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# **IHE Canada**

## **Activity Report 2020-21**

**May 2021**

**Derek Ritz: IHE Canada Liaison**



Canada Health **Infoway**  
**Inforoute** Santé du Canada



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## 1. Mission of the National/Regional IHE Initiative

Canada Health Infoway acts as the Member Organization for IHE in Canada. IHE Canada's mission mirrors Infoway's mission: "to improve the health of Canadians by working with partners to accelerate the development, adoption and effective use of digital health solutions across Canada."

## 2. Sponsoring Organization: Canada Health Infoway

Key role of the sponsor: IHE Canada is integrated into Infoway, a national organization responsible for the co-ordination of digital healthcare initiatives across Canada. In support of this mandate, Infoway also co-ordinates Canada's digital health standards activities for, HL7 International, ISO/TC 215, SNOMED International, Regenstrief (LOINC and UCUM) and DICOM.

Infoway helps to improve the health of Canadians by working with partners to accelerate the development, adoption and effective use of digital health across Canada. Through our investments, we help deliver better quality and access to care and more efficient delivery of health services for patients and clinicians. Infoway is an independent, not-for-profit organization funded by the federal government.

### 2.1 IHE International Board Representative

Name of Representative: Derek Ritz, IHE Canada Liaison  
Phone: +1 (905) 515-0045  
Email: [derek.ritz@ecgroupinc.com](mailto:derek.ritz@ecgroupinc.com)

### 2.2 National / Regional IHE Initiative Secretariat

Name: Andrea MacLean, Director, Interoperability Standards, Canada Health Infoway  
Phone: 416-595-3449 Ext. 3064  
Email: [amaclean@infoway-inforoute.ca](mailto:amaclean@infoway-inforoute.ca)

### 2.3 Date Deployment Committee was first recognized by IHE International Board

- 2004 IHE Canada created with Infoway as a founding member
- 2008 IHE International accepts Canada as a member organization



- 2011 IHE Canada integrates with Canada Health Infoway

### 3. Organization of IHE national/regional committee

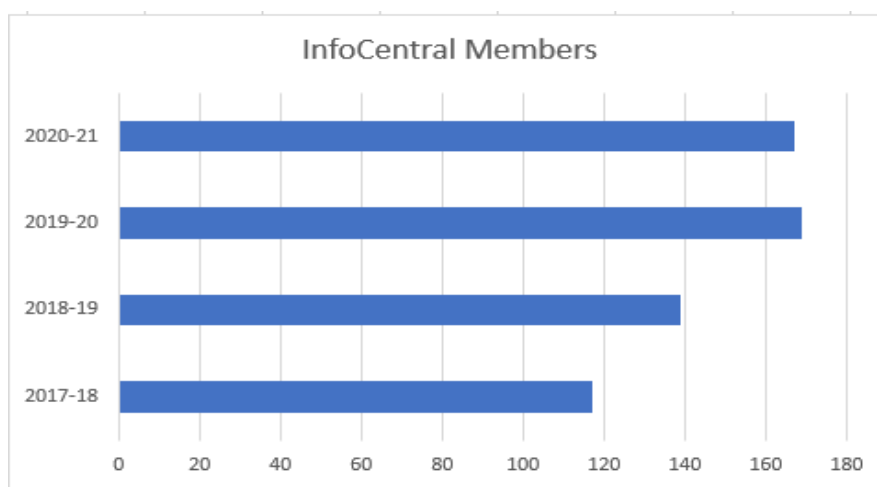
Infoway's [InfoCentral](#) platform is home to IHE Canada. Via this platform, the [IHE Canada community](#) can access IHE profiles, host webinars, engage in discussion forum conversations and engage with other domain specific communities, such as the Enterprise Imaging community (many of whom are active participants in IHE's radiology-focused technical committees).

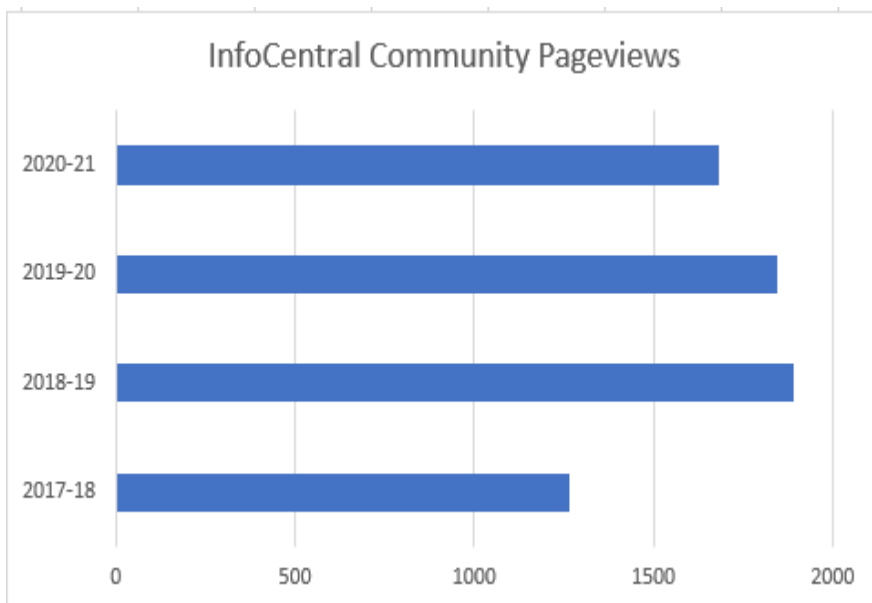
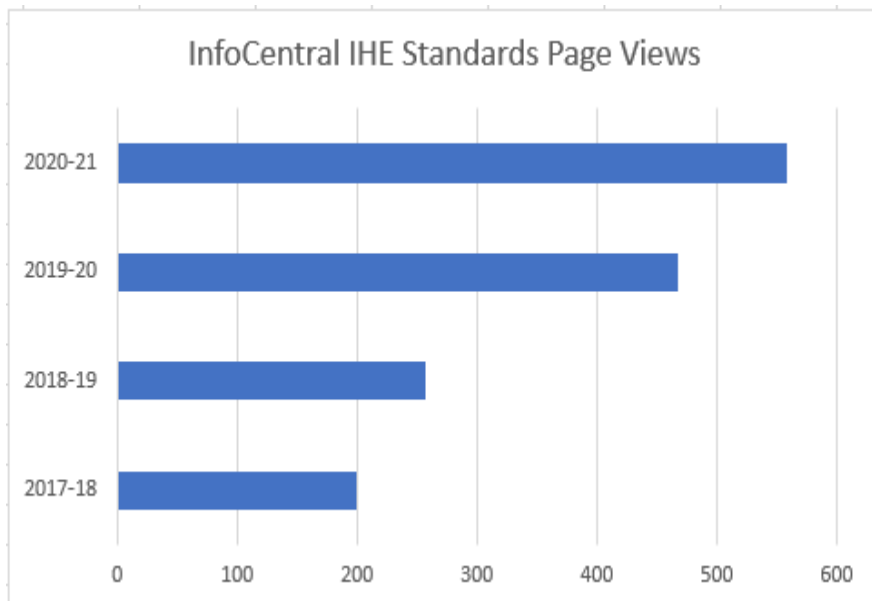
There is not a separate fee for membership in the IHE Canada community; joining the InfoCentral community is the only necessary criteria. InfoCentral engages stakeholder organizations representing clinicians, industry and governments, to accelerate interoperability progress in Canada. Together we are addressing interoperability challenges and:

- working with other communities such as HL7 Canada to leverage IHE profiles of FHIR
- working to promote synoptic cancer reporting leveraging the IHE Structured Data Capture (SDC) profile
- promoting IHE, Society for Imaging Informatics in Medicine (SIIM) and other podcasts and
- leveraging blogs and social media to raise awareness of the value of IHE in Canada.

### 4. Activities and Achievements in the Preceding 12 Months

- The IHE Canada community membership decreased from the 169 members reported in 2019-20 to 167 this year (-1.2%).
- The IHE Canada Standards page on InfoCentral has been a consistent “to go” resource for all things IHE. First launched in 2017-18, the page views increased from 468 visits in 2019-20 to 559, this year. (19.4% increase)
- The IHE community pageviews has decreased this year to 1680 this year vs 1843 last year (8.9% decrease).





Notwithstanding the effects of COVID-19, this has been an impactful year for IHE Canada. Activities included:

**FHIR North.**

Established in 2014 by [Mohawk MEDIC](#), [Gevity](#), [Smile CDR](#) and [Canada Health Infoway](#), FHIR North is the only Canadian conference focused on building awareness, knowledge and experience around HL7® FHIR healthcare interoperability standards in Canada.



FHIR North is more than just a developer's conference: our sessions can help build understanding and knowledge for anyone in your organization that wants to understand how this standard can improve patient care and the clinical experience.

FHIR North was virtual this year. An **IHE Canada Introduction** video was created and included as part of Canada Health Infoway's online conference presence as a FHIR North sponsor. The video is permanently hosted on IHE Canada's InfoCentral "Standards" page: <https://infocentral.infoway-inforoute.ca/en/standards/canadian/ihe>. IHE community members contributed to the continued success of this important conference:

- At the invitation of Infoway and IHE Canada, Didi Davis provided the opening keynote address to FHIR North. She focused on the nontrivial aspects of going to national scale with digital health data sharing networks.
- Mike Nusbaum presented on the International Patient Summary and the cross-SDO success story it represents (including the publication by IHE's Patient Care Coordination (PCC) technical committee of an implementable and conformance-testable IHE IPS Profile.
- Two presentations were made related to the IHE Quality, Research and Public Health (QRPH) technical committee's Computable Care Guidelines (CCG) initiative. The first, led by WHO's Natschja Ratanaprayul and the HL7 FHIR team's Bryn Rhodes, focused on that organizations leadership in the area of "Smart Guidelines" (<https://www.who.int/teams/digital-health-and-innovation/smart-guidelines>). The second, led by Derek Ritz, outlined the progress of IHE's CCG Profile and detailed some of its inner workings (<https://infocentral.infoway-inforoute.ca/en/resources/docs/ihe/3650-2020-fhir-north-presentation-ihe-qrph-ccg-update>).

**IHE SDC on FHIR.** This important work item continued to progress through IHE's QRPH committee and culminated in the publication of white paper and the launch of a joint IHE-HL7 work item to operationalize this important "bridge" between the IHE and HL7 FHIR Structured Data Capture (SDC) specifications. IHE community members Alex Goel and Joel Francis continue to drive this work forward.

**IHE North American Connectathon (NA CAT 21).** For the first time, the IHE NA CAT was hosted as an online event. At the second annual Testing and Tools Summit, important progress was made related to IHE's ongoing efforts to strengthen FHIR-based IHE Profile testing and, particularly, in the incorporation of the open source Inferno (<https://inferno.healthit.gov/>) test platform capabilities into IHE's Gazelle tool. Infoway has followed up this progress; the effort is of particular importance to Canada as work progresses to operationalize a national development and conformance testing strategy specifically related to Virtual Care. In addition, IHE Canada community members played a key role in the successful launch of the Global Health Track at NA CAT 21. At this parallel demonstration event, over 50 attendees – including many participants from low and middle income countries (LMIC). This important digital health initiative is supported by the Global eHealth Consortium GeC which is comprised of IHE, HL7 and HIMSS. The Global Health Track demonstration included a FHIR-based version of the OpenHIE architecture ([www.ohie.org](http://www.ohie.org)) which is, itself, based on the Infoway Blueprint v2 architecture. The reference implementation will be maintained as a collaboration and testing platform through the May-2021 HL7 FHIR Connectathon and the subsequent IHE EU CAT 21.

**Community Engagement.** Via InfoCentral, IHE achievements, announcements and opportunities were promoted, including:



- IHE Canada participation in the Canadian Sex & Gender working group
- IHE North American Connectathon; including Global Health Track
- IHE Canada participation at the FHIR Governance working group
- IHE Canada participation at FHIR North
- IHE ADX-COVID profile related to COVID-19 aggregate reporting (QRPH work item)
- IHE community feedback to WHO's Smart Vaccination Certificate (SVC) specification. [NOTE: regarding this work item in particular – as IHE Canada Liaison, I would like to thank all of the Team Canada members who contributed such thoughtful and helpful feedback on this important global work item. The WHO core team commented on the excellent quality of feedback received from Canucks... well done!]
- Governance conversations
- IHE Board Member: Member at Large nominations and elections

**Cross-SDO Collaboration.** Under the able leadership of Mike Nusbaum, the IHE IPS Profile's cross-SDO governance team has continued to meet as the joint custodians of the important IPS standard. The group is presently hosted by HL7 as the secretariat. Of particular note – the IPS has been leveraged by the WHO as the core of its SVC specification (see above) and by the Global Digital Health Partnership (GDHP) as a key interoperability enabler.

**Strategic Engagement.** IHE Canada has supported Infoway's ongoing strategic initiatives to progress Canada's national Virtual Care agenda. This has included facilitating demonstrations and meetings with IHE International related to the Gazelle platform and its ability to support reference architecture "Projectathon" events.

**IHE International Governance.** IHE Canada has been an active participant in IHE governance activities including regular board meetings, Global Deployment Coordination committee meetings, marcomm meetings, and ad hoc meetings related to strategic initiatives such as the establishment of the HIMSS HL7-IHE Consortium and the licensing of IHE International IP to the new IHE Services organization.

**IHE Uptake in Canada.** IHE Canada is aware of significant government supported XDS based implementations in Ontario, Quebec, Alberta and British Columbia. IHE's DICOM-based profiles are the pervasive DI standard across Canada. The PIX and PDQ profile families (v2, v3 and FHIR) are supported as the predominant patient ID interfaces by electronic medical records solutions and jurisdictional client registry solutions Canada-wide. There is also significant activity related to the ways IHE's IPS Profile may be leveraged to support patient health summaries as part of Virtual Care, and other workflows. Writ large – there is renewed interest in the overall IHE Methodology as a way to frame inter-jurisdictional engagement related to ecosystem-wide interoperability.

## 5. Notable Challenges

Awareness of and appreciation of the breadth and value of IHE Profiles is growing. This has been helped by the work of Infoway's FHIR Governance working group as it has started to strategize about the practical aspects of broadly adopting a Canadian FHIR "baseline" and the important role conformance testing will play as an instrument of *governance*. That said, there are still




communications and messaging challenges in articulating the role IHE Profiles play in connecting FHIR specifications to implementable and conformance-testable artefacts. Important work is progressing in this area – but the general awareness of IHE and its Methodology is still not strong.

Advocacy work continues for IHE Canada **community** members to become **IHE International members** (and pay their membership dues to that organization). Multiple webinars have been held, over the last 2 years, related to IHE's **value proposition**, and how that value accrues to various stakeholders in the ecosystem. This “messaging” work continues.

## 6. Status Against Planned Activities for -2020-2021

Continue to grow and engage the **IHE Canada** Community via the InfoCentral collaboration platform and the following activities:

|   |  |
|---|--|
|    | Promote participation in IHE International domain (technical) committees   |
|   | Promote the use of IHE profiles in local/regional/provincial implementations   |
|  | Enable the IHE Canada community to leverage a new Canadian initiative to develop Standards Selection Guides to feature IHE profiles as applicable  |
|  | Represent IHE Canada and promote the work of the community at the Infoway Partnership Conference and at the Canadian eHealth Conference  |
|  | Continue participation in the IHE International Board of Directors   |
|  | Continue to support IHE initiatives via the Enterprise Imaging, IHE Canada and other InfoCentral communities   |
|  | IHE Canada will host 3-5 webinars in 2020 to review IHE activities (current and future) with a particular focus on how these can serve our domestic mission to broadly leverage digital health for the benefit of all Canadians. |

## 7. Planned Activities for 2021-22

The agenda for 2020-21 will focus on **strategic** activities related to the broad adoption of FHIR in Canada and the governance challenges that accompany this alongside the **tactical** activities needed



to address the present pandemic. It is expected that the activities of the upcoming year will include:

- contributing to and helping inform Canada's FHIR adoption strategy, including (particularly) in the sociotechnical supports needed to foster broad uptake by the vendor community of a common CA Core and the conformance testing of digital health solutions against this pan Canadian specification
- continuing evaluation, in Canada, of the potential value of CCGs and the IPS and the implications of developing and adopting these in support of a learning health system strategy (generally) and Virtual Care (specifically)
- fostering adoption of the EBIW Profile within the enterprise imaging community in Canada
- advocating for stronger participation by Canadian stakeholders in the work of IHE technical committees and for stronger support, generally, of IHE International membership
- representing Canada's interests at the IHE International Board and related committees
- continuing to leverage InfoCentral webinars and in-person opportunities (where and when available) as a way to engage with and educate the digital health community in Canada – with a preference for cross-hosted sessions that draw in members from complementary communities (e.g. HL7 Canada, Enterprise Imaging, Analytics, etc.)
- fostering stronger collaboration with the national digital health vendor association (Technation Health)
- contributing, alongside others in the Canadian healthcare ecosystem, to the rapid implementation of digital health interventions that can mitigate and overcome the COVID-19 pandemic, at home and globally.