

eHealth Ontario

eHealth Ontario's eNewsletter

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AUGUST 2009



Robert Devitt appointed as new interim Chief Executive Officer of eHealth Ontario

eHealth Ontario's board of directors today announced the appointment of Robert Devitt as the new interim President and Chief Executive Officer. The board recommended his appointment to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.



The appointment takes effect August 4, 2009 and will end December 31, 2009. eHealth Ontario's board of directors is currently searching for a permanent CEO.

Mr. Devitt has served as President and Chief Executive Officer of Toronto East General Hospital since January 2004 and will continue in this role one day per week. Previously, Mr. Devitt has served as President and Chief Executive Officer of the Peterborough Regional Health Centre, and the Queensway-Carleton Hospital in Nepean, Ontario.

Mr. Devitt was also appointed as supervisor of the Scarborough Hospital by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care in August 2007 for approximately one year. Over this period, the hospital saw marked improvements in quality and workplace safety and was returned to fiscal health.

"I'm honored to have this opportunity to lead eHealth Ontario, an organization that is so central to the government's transformation of Ontario's health care system," said Mr. Devitt. "I am eager to meet the staff and stakeholders and help the agency deliver on the province's vital ehealth strategy."

"We are delighted to welcome Rob," said Rita Burak, eHealth Ontario board chair. "The board looks forward to working with him on moving the organization's mandate forward while introducing new accountability measures."

"On behalf of the board and the entire organization, I want to thank Ron Sapsford, acting CEO and President, for his leadership during the transition period. During his time with eHealth Ontario, Ron brought

OTHER STORIES

eHealth Ontario board member named General Motors Canadian director

Carol Stephenson, eHealth Ontario board member and dean of the Richard Ivey School of



Business at the University of Western Ontario, has been appointed as the Canadian representative to the board of General Motors Co. (GM). Nominated by the Canadian and Ontario governments to sit on the 13-member board, she is the only Canadian representative.

Carol was appointed to eHealth Ontario's board on May 13, 2009; her tenure runs to June 13, 2010. She is chair of the projects and performance committee.

Another step closer to establishing the province's diabetes registry

Last month, [eHealth Ontario issued a request for qualifications \(RFQ\)](#) to identify qualified companies to develop a chronic disease management system that will be used initially to establish an online Diabetes Registry. As reported in our last update, we partnered with Infrastructure

stability and stronger accountability and reporting processes to the agency," said Ms. Burak.

Mr. Sapsford, who was appointed June 9, will return to his role as deputy minister at the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care.

» [Read Robert's bio](#)

Proposed PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) review cancelled

On July 22, 2009, the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, David Caplan, announced that he had accepted eHealth Ontario's request to forego the proposed PwC review, in favour of the audit by the Auditor General of Ontario.

"I acknowledge the concern of the eHealth Board of Directors and the Auditor General regarding potential duplication and therefore accept your request to forego the external request in favour of the review by the Auditor General," said Minister Caplan in a letter to board chair Rita Burak.

» [Read more](#)

Ontario on this venture to maximize efficiencies by tapping into its expertise and experience with large-scale projects.

As part of the process, we hosted a bidders' conference last week. This conference provided an opportunity for interested vendors to hear details about the RFQ, gain a better understanding of the procurement process and ask questions.

More than 60 people representing 30 companies attended.

"Seeing such strong interest from the vendor community was encouraging," says Janet Lanham, eHealth Ontario's diabetes program director. "Vendors understood the critical nature of establishing the Diabetes Registry and its importance in establishing Ontario's electronic health record."

The Diabetes Registry is an interactive, real-time information system designed to track the care of patients in Ontario with diabetes. It will give care providers reminders, alerts and reports on key tests and other indicators to help improve the care Ontarians with diabetes receive.



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"We are delighted to welcome Rob," said Rita Burak, eHealth Ontario board chair. "The board looks forward to working with him on moving the organization's mandate forward while introducing new accountability measures.

"On behalf of the board and the entire organization, I want to thank Ron Sapsford, acting CEO and President, for his leadership during the transition period. During his time with eHealth Ontario, Ron brought stability and stronger accountability and reporting processes to the agency," said Ms. Burak.

Mr. Sapsford, who was appointed June 9, will return to his role as deputy minister at the Ministry of

Health and Long-Term Care.

eHealth Ontario is a new organization that plays the leading role in harnessing technology and innovation to improve patient care, safety, and access in support of the Ontario government's health strategy. eHealth Ontario published the first ehealth strategy for Ontario in March 2009, which is focused on providing a comprehensive, patient-focused, secure and private electronic system. eHealth Ontario will drive the transformation of Ontario's health care system, building toward an electronic health record for all Ontarians by 2015.

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BIO - Robert Devitt

Interim President and CEO, eHealth Ontario

Robert Devitt has served as President and Chief Executive Officer of Toronto East General Hospital (TEGH) since January 2004. This large community hospital, with a total of 470 beds, provides an extensive range of ambulatory, inpatient and community programs and services with a budget of \$240 million. The hospital has maintained a balanced budget during Mr. Devitt's tenure.



In 2008 the hospital was named a gold recipient of the quality and workplace wellness Canada Award for Excellence by the National Quality Institute, which presents awards annually to organizations that have displayed outstanding performance. It was the first hospital in Canada to receive such an award. More recently, TEGH received full accreditation from Accreditation Canada with the survey report identifying no recommendations for change or improvement, an achievement attained by about only 20 per cent of hospitals.

Mr. Devitt was appointed Supervisor of the Scarborough Hospital in 2007 completing this assignment in the fall of 2008. At the time, the hospital had been experiencing conflict with the community, a long history of financial troubles and issues related to patient services and workplace safety. By October 2008, under Mr. Devitt's leadership, the hospital had made a dramatic turn around. It had new bylaws, a new administration and a stricter medical staff credentialing process.

Prior to joining TEGH, he was President and Chief Executive Officer of the Peterborough Regional Health Centre. This hospital operated on two sites and serviced a population of more than 300,000 in four counties. It is the region's largest employer with a staff of approximately 2,000 and more

than 600 volunteers.

Mr. Devitt has also served as the President and Chief Executive Officer of the Queensway-Carleton Hospital, a community hospital serving western Ottawa and the Upper Ottawa Valley.

He has a Bachelors degree from Queen's University and a Masters degree from the University of Ottawa.

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Here's a chronology of events:

- In early June, the board of eHealth Ontario began to plan a review of the agency by PwC. Minister Caplan had asked the board to "undertake a third-party review to ensure that best management practices are being followed."
- While discussions with PwC were ongoing, the Auditor General was completing an audit of Ontario's electronic health records initiative, including eHealth Ontario. The Minister asked the Auditor General to expedite his report to make it available as soon as possible.
- As the board was establishing terms of reference with PwC, the agency and ministry liaised with staff of the Auditor General's office to ensure that the audit and proposed PwC review were not overlapping.
- The Auditor General, in a letter to the board, advised that "the scope of our work includes most of the key areas that are being contemplated for PwC to review".
- Given the potential for duplication and the estimated cost of close to \$200,000 for the PwC review, the board asked the Minister to adjust his request for an external review in favour of the Auditor General's work.

"I want to assure you that the board is not waiting for the results of the Auditor General's review before instituting changes in the operation of eHealth Ontario," said Rita Burak, in a letter to the Minister. "While these discussions have been going on, the board and management have been aggressive in making changes to the procurement and approvals process of eHealth Ontario."

Links:

[Letter to board chair Rita Burak
from the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, July 17, 2009](#)

[Letter to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care
from Rita Burak, July 7, 2009](#)

[Letter to Rita Burak from Jim McCarter, Auditor General](#)