

# CHE identifying, packaging and disseminating the best health evidence

*Centre for Health Evidence putting latest information at finger tips of front-line health care practitioners*

**K**now what to do...  
Do what is known...  
Understand what is done....

Ideally, that's what health care practitioners would like to be able to do when they care for their patients—day in, day out. But in a world of information overload, a world in which general medicine practitioners couldn't possibly read 19 articles a day to stay current, how can they be certain they're doing those three things?

The key, says Centre for Health Evidence (CHE) Director Robert Hayward, is to provide clinicians with information convenience, discrimination and integration. Convenience is about simplifying and streamlining access to quality information at the right time and place. By focusing on the decision-making needs of busy practitioners and their patients, the CHE makes it easier to provide new evidence that is valid, important and useful. By integrating evidence-access with clinical and productivity software, CHE internet desktops decrease the separation between evidence and practice.

"The Sturgeon Hospital medical staff has been faced with the dilemma that faces many frontline medical practitioners today," explains physician Jim Bell, an advocate for the Centre's services. "How does one get access to up to date, easy to access medical information at the point of contact with the patient whether you are in emergency department, the wards or the office?"

"With the help of the Centre we are developing a resource designed to meet the needs of our hospital," Dr. Bell explains. "This program will not only give access to a variety of sources of medical information but will link physicians at the hospital, together as a medical community linked via the internet." And since the Sturgeon has a strong connection with the community through its general practitioners who practice at the hospital, the new resource will be accessible at doctors' offices and homes.



It will also serve nurse practitioners and clinical nurse specialists who work collaboratively with physicians. There will also be a number of learning tools promoting evidence based medicine and a program of ongoing education in use of computer resources.

The Centre's staff help physicians like Dr. Bell identify, package and disseminate health knowledge using an innovative mix of state-of-the-art internet technologies, many developed at the University of Alberta.

The Centre links its users with electronic databases, textbooks or journals, websites, CD ROM products and other information resources together with communication, discussion, diary and other aids to virtual learning communities. Behind CHE's disarmingly simple Internet "desktops" is a powerful mix of technology, know-how, educational programs and information services.

CHE got off the ground in 1999 with an establishment grant from the Health Infrastructure Support Program of the Canadian Office of Health and the Information Highway. With matched funding from the Alberta Heritage Foundation for Medical Research, the Universities of Alberta and Manitoba, the Capital Health Authority (Edmonton), the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority, BetterHealth Global, and the Multimedia Advanced Computational Infrastructure initiative, a demonstration project was launched to explore the use of the internet for supporting evidence-based deci-

sion-making in clinical practice settings.

Today, the Centre is engaged in leading a shift in the way health care practitioners gather and process the latest and best information about what works in health care. It's involved with a number of training projects.

The Centre's systems also function as a huge point-of-care informatics laboratory. CHE researchers are studying how information is used, and how tools like practice guidelines affect decision-making on the frontlines.

The Centre is engaged in a number of projects and partnerships that promote a clinician-centred approach—practice-based evidence. These have helped to put Edmonton on the map as a centre of excellence in evidence-based medicine and health informatics. For example, the CHE develops and provides the "Users Guides Interactive", a comprehensive online resource published by the American Medical Association, AMA Press and JAMA and Archives Journals ([www.users-guides.org](http://www.users-guides.org)), which is used world-wide by learners, practitioners and teachers of Evidence-Based Medicine. CHE "virtual learning communities" figure in continuing education programs of the Society of General Internal Medicine, Association of Emergency Physicians, the National Association of Inpatient Physicians, Alberta Medical Association, Alberta Health and Wellness, Alberta Chamber of Resources and other professional organizations. Alberta's SEARCH program uses a CHE VLC to deliver information and online training to all the Provinces' regional health authorities. The CHE has also designed a "virtual classroom" used in a number of U of A courses, and by a number of other Canadian universities. CHE Desktops have also been installed in the United States, Hong Kong, New Zealand, Ireland and France in the last year alone.

*For more information: <http://www.cche.net>*