

## Digital Health Tools Support Nursing Practice and Patient Care: Survey

**May 12, 2017 (Toronto)** – A survey conducted by Canada Health Infoway (Infoway), Canadian Nurses Association (CNA) and Canadian Nursing Informatics Association (CNIA), reveals that by using digital health technologies in their practice, 50 per cent of Canadian nurses are experiencing improved productivity, while 56 per cent report better quality of care, notable improvements since the 2014 nurses survey.

As reported in the [2017 National Survey of Canadian Nurses: Use of Digital Health Technology in Practice](#), nurses are also experiencing more access to electronic record functionalities such as communication and clinical documentation tools than they did three years ago.

### Survey highlights:

- Canadian nurses report that by using digital health technologies in their practice, they are improving patient and clinician experience, including:
  - Improved quality of patient care (56 per cent versus 46 per cent in 2014)
  - Improved practice productivity (50 per cent versus 38 per cent in 2014)
  - Improved continuity of patient care (71 per cent)
- Nearly two thirds (63 per cent) of nurses report using six or more electronic functionalities to support patient care in their main practice setting. Nurses use of specific functionalities has advanced since 2014 with regard to:
  - Electronic clinical documentation (74 per cent versus 63 per cent in 2014)
  - Electronic list of all medications taken by an individual patient (66 per cent versus 53 per cent in 2014)
  - Electronic ordering/order entry of laboratory tests (65 per cent versus 53 per cent in 2014)
  - Electronic access to provincial/territorial patient electronic health record systems (e.g. encounters, drug, laboratory, diagnostic images, discharge summaries) has advanced substantially (60 per cent versus 43 per cent in 2014)
- There has been improvement since 2014, but nurses report that the top two barriers that prevent accessing or realizing the full value from electronic systems continue to be the need to use a combination of paper and electronic records to support patient care (46 per cent versus 61 per cent in 2014) and multiple logins (36 per cent versus 54 per cent in 2014).
  - Three-quarters of respondents (76 per cent) report using systems that require more than one login
  - Forty per cent report requiring more than three logins
  - Fifty-five per cent of nurses providing direct patient care state that they work with a combination of paper and electronic records

More survey findings, including results by specific care settings, are available in the [2017 Nurses Survey Report](#).

### Quotations:

“It is encouraging to see that since 2014, Canadian nurses are reporting that the longer they are using digital health technologies in their practice, the more they are realizing the benefits,” said Susan Sepa, Group Director, Clinical and Change Leadership, Canada Health Infoway. “This demonstrates that as the largest community of

frontline workers, nurses continue to be leaders in advancing digital health in Canada, resulting in improvements in the delivery of patient safety and quality care.”

“The Canadian Nurses Association welcomes the news that nurses are increasingly using digital health tools, and finding them to be useful in patient care,” said Barb Shellian, President, Canadian Nurses Association. “However, the survey also highlights the fact that a lot more work remains to ensure nurses are meaningfully consulted through the implementation of technology changes. In order to improve patient care further, we will continue to push for greater nursing input in the design and roll-out of digital health systems as a standard practice for coordinated team-based care. As the backbone of our health-care system, nurses are integral in ensuring timely, efficient and quality care for all Canadians. Their uptake of technology through effective supports is a critical success factor.”

“The Canadian Nursing Informatics Association is pleased to see that nurses who participated in the survey feel that there are improvements in the quality of care and productivity related to the introduction of digital health technologies,” said Peggy White, President, Canadian Nursing Informatics Association. “However, we are concerned that many nurses report that they are using a combination of paper and electronic tools as their main record keeping system. We know from our members that this approach is a significant barrier in terms of accessing and using information to support quality patient care.”

#### **About the Canadian Nurses Association**

The Canadian Nurses Association is the national professional voice representing over 139,000 registered nurses and nurse practitioners in Canada. CNA advances the practice and profession of nursing to improve health outcomes and strengthen Canada’s publicly funded, not-for-profit health system.

#### **About Canadian Nursing Informatics Association**

As the voice for Nursing Informatics in Canada, the Canadian Nursing Informatics Association partners with jurisdictions, nursing and health informaticians and health informatics organizations across Canada to ensure that nursing informatics informs clinical practice, education, research, administration and policy.

#### **About Canada Health Infoway**

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.

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