



“Informed decision-making requires reliable, timely information – and our goal is to continue to improve our ability to provide Canadians with the quality information they need.”

Glenda Yeates

Glenda Yeates joined the Canadian Institute for Health Information (CIHI) as the President and CEO in August 2004. Formerly the Deputy Minister of Health in Saskatchewan, Glenda has worked at both the provincial and federal levels to develop consensus around important health issues. Glenda also served as Deputy Minister of Social Services in Saskatchewan. In 2003, she was one of the recipients of Canada’s Most Powerful Women: Top 100 designation.

We asked Glenda to share with us her three greatest achievements and what she is hoping to accomplish at CIHI.

Public policy questions – and in particular, social policy questions - have always interested me as the most intellectually fascinating and important challenges to ponder and work to resolve. The choices are never easy, the questions usually complex and multi-faceted, and the paths taken often have long-range impact on the lives of individuals and societies. Perhaps that explains why I have a background in political studies and history, and a Masters degree in public administration, and why I have spent the last 23 years in public service in the areas of finance (the money always matters), social services, and most particularly health.

For the past five years, I had the great privilege of serving as Saskatchewan’s Deputy Minister of Health. And taking into consideration the fact that in government it is difficult to pinpoint one’s own contributions – every significant achievement is the result of the work of so many individuals – in retrospect, I can say that there are a number of milestones I look back on with pride. Perhaps foremost is the creation of *The Action Plan for Saskatchewan Healthcare*,

released publicly in December 2001. We laid the groundwork with the commissioning of a major review of the health system (“the Fyke report”), and then worked with stakeholders from across the province to determine where we needed to focus our energies, and to create and commit to a plan for the delivery of health services that had wide support throughout the province.

The Action Plan for Saskatchewan Healthcare resulted in some innovative – and sometimes challenging – initiatives. We created the first province-wide surgical care registry (the Saskatchewan Surgical Care Network) to improve the prioritization and delivery of surgical services in the province. This program is now widely regarded as groundbreaking because it tackled the

complex issue of access to surgery by systematically building the definitions, priority scoring systems, and information systems needed to understand and improve what was happening province-wide. We also implemented Canada’s first Health Quality Council. In addition, we ensured a smooth transition from 32 health districts to 12 regional health authorities, and asked these authorities to take on responsibility for a wide range of health services, including the development of primary care plans and population health strategies.

I’m also very proud of the team I was able to support at Saskatchewan Health. Managing healthcare is a complex endeavour and it requires a dedicated, knowledgeable team of managers, analysts and health professionals. I couldn’t have asked for a better team to lead those groundbreaking initiatives.

Much as I enjoyed my time in Saskatchewan, I’m very keen to be taking on new challenges at a pan-Canadian level. As the new President and CEO of CIHI, I’m amazed at the work that has already been accomplished by such a young organization. We are currently engaged in a strategic planning process that, we hope, will make us even more responsive to our clients and stakeholders. The process will provide us with guideposts for determining how best to meet emerging health information needs – what information is needed and what products are best able to deliver health information so decision makers, front-line workers and the public can maximize its use. I’m personally committed to taking the next steps in transforming CIHI’s wealth of data into information and getting it used to the greatest extent possible. Informed decision-making requires reliable, timely information – and our goal is to continue to improve our ability to provide Canadians with the quality information they need.