A C T I O N for **health**

Applied Communication Technology: Information . Organizations . Networks

Technology in the Romanow Report and Canadian Communication Thought

October 4, 2006

ACTION for Health

Document Status:

☐ Published Paper   ☐ Practitioner's Pointers

☐ Working Paper   ☐ Briefing Note

☐ Report   ☐ Research Tool

☐ Draft   ☐ Overview

☒ Presentation   ☐ Other

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Technology in the Romanow Report and Canadian Communication Thought

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The Romanow Report

Commissioner Roy Romanow

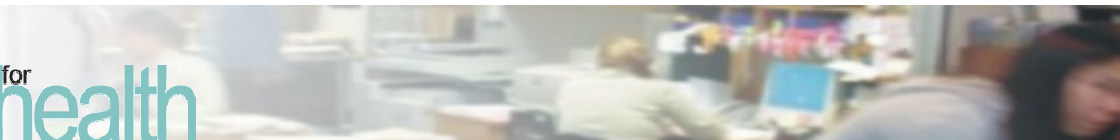**"Building on Values: The Future of Health Care in Canada – Final Report"**

(2002)

The Romanow Report

- **Policy Document on the future Public Health system in Canada**

- **Appointed by Prime Minister Jean Chrétien in April 2001**

- **Finished November 2002**

Mandate of the the Romanow Report:

"inquire into and undertake dialogue with Canadians on the future of Canada's public health care system, and to recommend policies and measures respectful of the jurisdictions and powers in Canada required to ensure over the long term the sustainability of a universally accessible, publicly funded health system, that offers quality services to Canadians and strikes an appropriate balance between investments in prevention and health maintenance and those directed to care and treatment"

(p. xi)

Our purpose:

- **Analyse the coverage of technology in the Romanow Report**

- **Discuss how the coverage of technology in the Romanow Report does or does not reflect Canadian communication thought on technology**
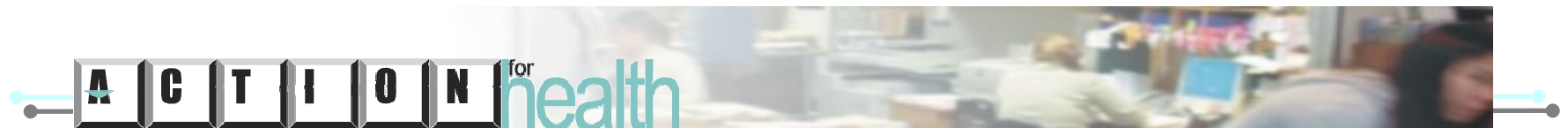
Content analysis of the Romanow Report

- **Locating statements concerning technology**
- **Types of statements**
- **Role of Technology / Drivers**
- **Requirements / Preconditions**
- **Actors**

The Romanow Report: Focus areas

Focus on public health agencies at several different administrative levels, from the federal level down to individual hospitals or health programs.

Special emphasis on rural and remote provinces and territories, and linkages among territories.

Technology in the Romanow Report

General communication technologies (Internet, broadband, IT)

Medical information and communication technologies (electronic health records, telehealth)

Technologies applied in medical services (technologies for treatment, diagnostics [e.g., imaging], testing, scanning)

Advanced scientific technologies (biotechnology, genetics, reproductive technologies, cloning technologies)

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Overall potential of technology in the health care sector:

"improve health outcomes and enable a more effective deployment of scarce financial and human resources"

(p. xvi-xvii)

Benefits of new technologies

Effectiveness and efficiency

Better health care and improved health outcomes

Meet competition (nationally and internationally)

Patient safety

Data gathering (research, health surveillance)

Compression of time and space (shorter hospital stays, more efficient services, telehealth, services provided across distances)

Reach out to minorities and local communities

Empowering patients

Problems and challenges with new technologies

Rising costs and need for investments

Demand for resources (human, financial, infrastructure)

The health care system needs to change and adapt

Access to new technologies

Uneven distribution

Inflationary pressures (increased needs and demands, private competition)

Security and privacy

Ethics

Health Technology Assessments (HTAs):

"a comprehensive and systematic assessment of the conditions for and the consequences of using health care technology." (p. 83)

HTAs should:

- Provide relevant information to managers, decision makers, and health care providers on the safety, economic efficiency, clinical effectiveness, as well as the social, legal and ethical implications of using new and existing technologies.

- Focus on what is best for the patient – medically and economically – not about technology for technology's sake

- Help health policymakers, providers, and especially, health organization managers make decisions about whether to purchase and use new technologies, whether to replace old technologies with new ones, and what benefits they can expect to see
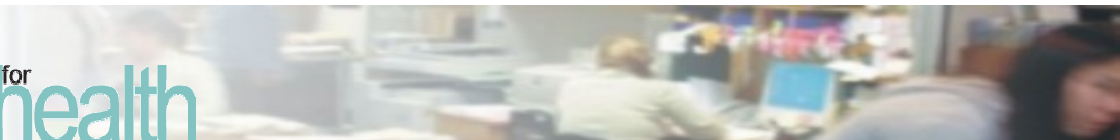
HTAs and decision making

Close the gap between assessments and decision makers.

"In making decisions about whether to purchase and use these new technologies, health care managers and decision makers must rely on the best available assessment of the impact, benefits and effectiveness of new technologies on health care and health outcomes" (p. 83)

Better HTAs → Better decisions → Better health outcomes

Discussion

Does the report adequately address the wider (social, financial, and cultural) effects of new technologies on the health care sector, as well as local communities and society in general?

Instrumental?

Short-sighted?

Balanced, but narrow?