



Electronic Medical Record (EMR) Program – Department of Health

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Why Is This Important?

- EMR is one important component of each New Brunswicker's health record and is meant to capture doctor visits and prescriptions, allow access to lab results and provide strategic information to assist in the planning and design of an efficient and effective health system.
- For the past eight years (2012 through 2019), an integrated EMR system has been under implementation by the Department of Health.
- The Province invested over \$26 million to implement and operate the EMR program.
- Failure of the EMR program could negatively impact residents of New Brunswick and the future of healthcare delivery in the Province.

Overall Conclusions

- The provincial EMR program failed to achieve its intended outcomes. After eight years and over \$26 million of investment, less than half of eligible physicians adopted the system.
- The Department proceeded with the single-vendor EMR knowing the business model was flawed from the outset.
- The complex delivery structure which involved Velante Inc. as a middleman, weakened the Department's governance and oversight of the program and was not in the best interest of New Brunswickers.
- The Department appeared to bear all the risk even though the program was operated by the New Brunswick Medical Society.

What We Found

Oversight Failure by Department and Weak Accountability

- Department had hands-off approach to EMR funding
- Department did not monitor program effectiveness
- Department did not review financial records of funding recipients to substantiate use of funding
- Department did not hold funding recipients accountable for use of funds and results achieved
- Department continued funding the program despite obvious signs of failure
- No program audit conducted to evaluate achievement of program outcomes and compliance with funding criteria
- Continued EMR usage not a criteria for funding

Single-Vendor Provincial EMR Model Failed

- Unsustainable business model from the outset
- Less than 50% of the 800 of eligible physicians adopted the provincial EMR system
- Physician implementations never met Canada Health Infoway target, after numerous extensions
- EMR still not fully integrated with the Electronic Health Record system
- Lab integration, a desired essential component, was significantly delayed
- The single-vendor EMR model was finally terminated in 2019
- New Brunswick has one of the lowest EMR adoption rates in Canada