

## Health Authorities in British Columbia

Choose Datix for province-wide patient safety reporting



In 2001, British Columbia Health Services modernized a complicated healthcare system by merging 52 health authorities into a streamlined governance and management model.

Today, there are six health authorities in total: one Provincial Health Services Authority provides centralized programs and specialized services such as cardiac care and transplants and a further five health authorities govern, plan and co-ordinate services at a regional level.

The drive towards streamlining processes and delivering greater efficiency of patient care and services has been replicated at all levels of the organization including the use of technology to underpin the new infrastructure. For example, early in 2004, a feasibility study highlighted the requirement for a comprehensive patient safety incident reporting system for healthcare across the province.

The study followed a provincial Risk Management Committee recommendation to explore the possibility of implementing a province-wide, electronic incident reporting information solution to replace multiple existing paper-based systems in order to collect information quickly, enable timely notification to leaders and facilitate a more standardized approach to reporting patient safety events. In 2005, following an in-depth competitive selection process, Datix was selected for this reporting system.

### Standardized approach supports new business model

Important to British Columbia (BC) was a streamlined process and a standardized approach to the reporting of adverse events. The process needed to bring data together at both the health authority and provincial levels and enable the collective sharing of lessons learned. In 2007, two pilot sites were chosen, a Neonatal Intensive Care Unit with over 300 users and a Vascular & General Surgery with more than 100 users. Building on the successful pilots the first Datix system went live in February 2008.

Annemarie Taylor, Provincial Director, British Columbia Patient Safety & Learning System, estimates that approximately 60,000 healthcare providers across BC can currently report safety events using the Datix system. Once fully implemented, that number will grow to between 75,000 and 100,000. Approximately 10% of that number are authenticated Datix users trained for follow-up or further investigation of individual incidents.

### Patient safety - software of choice

In addition to choosing Datix software as the platform for the new system, the British Columbia Health Authorities called on Deloitte, Datix's strategic alliance partner in Canada, to help with project management, process definition, system configuration, testing and organizational change management.

*"This has been a truly collaborative provincial effort. In just over two years, we have achieved a significant milestone by having all six health authorities voluntarily adopt the system for reporting. Our implementation approach has helped foster a safety culture based on a more consistent, just and transparent reporting and learning environment. Using Datix more events are being reported and awareness of patient safety events is increasing. We are hearing from the health authorities that they are using the data to identify and target problems and drive improvement locally. We are confident that, with the continued commitment of our health authority participants, we will be able to achieve our collective goal of collaboration and greater safety across the BC system."*

**Annemarie Taylor**  
Provincial Director  
British Columbia patient  
safety learning system

## Dealing effectively with adverse events, claims and complaints

Jonathan Hazan, CEO of Datix commented, "The objective of the project was to bring about a change in culture as well as implementing the reporting system. To achieve this, the process had to be tailored to the individual people, resources and culture of each health authority. The one-size fits all approach simply wasn't an option. Three modules were originally implemented and these were Incident Reporting, Claims Management and Complaints Management."

Positive results from one of the initial pilot projects showed over a 150% increase in the number of reports and that these reports came from a wider distribution of staff. These findings demonstrate that the system was well-accepted by reporters, and good adoption by these users has remained consistent throughout provincial implementation.

According to Ms Taylor, "We now have over 100,000 incidents on our database, logged since our first Go Live in February 2008. Importantly, using mandatory fields ensures that we have 100% completion of the most important fields. We are finding that the vast majority of reports are submitted within 24 hours of the event, and managers in clinical areas are notified immediately."

One of the biggest challenges was changing the way people responded to reported incidents. Ms Taylor said, "With a paper system, the manager could scan a report, put it aside if it was not a critical issue and then get to the batch of reports when it was convenient. With the electronic system, action can and ideally should be more immediate. The manager can respond while the information is current and people involved are available for follow-up and issues can be quickly addressed. The system keeps each report at the forefront, allows several people to see a report concurrently and provides information about timeliness of the event management process."

## Datix Actions Module

The Datix Actions module has been particularly popular. Linked to other applications within Datix software, such as Incidents or Complaints, the Actions module allows the person looking at a report to trigger a review/activity/closure process for individual incidents. For example, if review of a medication event indicates the need for a change in policy, equipment or process, an action can be assigned to the appropriate person to ensure the changes are made and can be tracked and reported on. The person who created the 'action' is informed automatically by email when it is completed, so closing the loop.

Another significant advantage of using Datix has been its ability to help British Columbia Health Authorities meet recent legislation passed in the province around monitoring and responding to complaints.

## Patient safety & learning: a role model for the rest of the organization

The implementation of Datix has been so successful that there are plans under consideration to expand the use of the Datix system to other parts of the British Columbia healthcare organization, especially where there is a need to collect and share information about specific patient groups or activities.

For example, one group that works with adult victims of neglect is piloting the use of the system to track incidents relating to elder abuse. Another team conducting research involving parents of sick children in hospital is using the system to collect the parents' observations about patient safety events and near misses such as administering the wrong medication. The provincial ambulance service will also be starting to use a tailored version of Datix to report patient safety events that occur out in the field or when a patient is brought into the emergency room.

## The future

Ms Taylor and her team and their provincial partners have ambitious plans for the future, focusing on three major areas: building robust aggregate reports to drive system change; refining reporting mechanisms to make the most of valuable staff time and maximize the quality of data collected; continuing to work with special interest groups to develop the Datix application further and using it in a complimentary way with other systems in British Columbia and Canada to demonstrate its full value.

"Working with Datix has been a positive experience. The Datix team is easy to work, responds quickly to critical issues and offers innovative ways to enhance the system and build it around our evolving requirements," Ms Taylor concluded.



## About Datix

**Datix has been a pioneer in the field of patient safety since 1986 and is today a leading supplier of software for patient safety, improving quality, risk management, incident and adverse event reporting.**

**We aim to help healthcare organisations build a culture and practice that drives excellence in patient safety. It recruits and retains people committed to the healthcare sector and continually invests in its software and services to ensure that it integrates best practice and learning.**

**Set up specifically to meet the governance and risk management requirements of the healthcare industry, Datix is working as a partner to leading healthcare organisations across the world.**

**Within the UK this includes more than 75% of the National Health Service. Internationally the Datix client base is growing rapidly and includes large scale deployments in Canada and the USA as well as clients in Europe, Australia and the Middle East.**

## Fast Facts

- Following worldwide search Datix selected for patient safety analysis and reporting
- Requirement for more events to be reported and for greater visibility
- Pilot project showed 150% increase in number of reports
- Resulted in greater efficiency in reporting and follow-up
- Datix and Deloitte in Canada combined expertise in software, implementation processes and consulting to improve patient safety, quality and risk management practices