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News Release

ITAC and CHITTA Merge to Create a Single Healthcare ICT Voice

November 17, 2005. ITAC, the Information Technology Association of Canada, and CHITTA, the Canadian Healthcare Information Technology Trade Association, have announced that they will merge to create one single industry association. Collectively they will represent over 100 companies producing information and communications technology solutions for the health sector. The merger will combine ITAC's strengths in advocacy, communication and administration, with CHITTA's specific focus and industry knowledge in health, to create one strong, consistent voice for the industry.

Historically, Canada has under-invested in ICTs for the health sector. At a level of less than 2 per cent of health operating expenditures, Canada is far behind other countries such as Sweden, which invests 4 per cent, (according to a 2004 Conference Board of Canada study.) However, the recent initiatives of Canada Health Infoway are encouraging, promising to drive \$2b, if not more, of new spending on interoperable Electronic Health Records (EHRs).

"ICT solutions have been proven to have a profound impact on health outcomes, including wait times, accidental deaths due to prescription errors, and the speed of diagnosis," said Bernard Courtois, President and CEO of ITAC. "As Canada increases spending in this area, our members will be able to bring significant global experience to bear on swift implementation, clinician adoption and realization of the benefits. Critical to this will be the adoption of national standards."

Dave Wattling, Chair of CHITTA, believes that Canada has specific advantages that can help to position Canadian ICT companies in the global marketplace. "Every jurisdiction on earth is struggling to find ways to deliver better health care to its citizens more efficiently," he said. "Our country is leading the way on interoperable EHRs, along with the UK and US, and can become a world leader in the adoption of ICT solutions for health. Starting with improving our own use of these new solutions, we can export our know-how and create an economic driver for Canada."

Under the terms of the agreement, the combination of ITAC's members interested in the health sector and the current CHITTA membership will constitute an expanded CHITTA. CHITTA will operate as a division of ITAC and CHITTA's board will be expanded to ensure representation of the entire membership. The expanded board will continue to set and oversee the health ICT agenda.

ITAC is the voice of the Canadian information and communications technology industry. Together with its affiliated organizations across the country, the association represents 1300 companies in the information and communications technology (ICT) industry in all sectors including telecommunications and Internet services, ICT consulting services, hardware, microelectronics, software and electronic content. ITAC's network of companies accounts for more than 70 per cent of the 566,000 jobs, \$130 billion in revenue, \$5.2 billion in R&D investment, \$20.7 billion in exports and \$11.5 billion in capital expenditure that the sector contributes annually to the Canadian economy.

CHITTA was launched in 2002 by a dedicated group of CEOs and senior executives from leading Canadian companies. Their firms represent a broad spectrum of ICT companies that provide products and services to the Canadian healthcare community. Representing over sixty firms in the Canadian Healthcare ICT community, CHITTA believes that the Canadian healthcare information technology industry must play a responsible, responsive, cooperative and leading role in Canada's transition to a 21st century healthcare system.

CHITTA has, and will continue to play, a key role in facilitating collaborative relationships between industry and other key stakeholders, Governments, Agencies, Regions and professional associations in the Canadian Healthcare Informatics Community and provides leadership in promoting Canadian healthcare ICT capabilities abroad.

More information on CHITTA can be found at: www.chitta.ca

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