The IT Revolution: Impact on Health Enormous – Public Role Essential

June 28, 2000 – The revolution in information technologies (IT) is having and will have an enormous impact on health and health care.

The direct effects on health care technology are the most visible – better diagnostic, monitoring, and surgical equipment, sophisticated prostheses and miniature aids for the disabled, better technological support for self-care and independent living. Health consumers will benefit hugely from almost unimaginable developments in these areas in the near future.

But it is the impact of IT on broader and, often, more critical, influences on health that will be most profound.

This is a major conclusion of a new CPRN discussion paper entitled, ***Information Technology, Health and Health Care: A View to the Future***, by Trevor Hancock and CPRN researcher, Philip Groff.
The Director of CPRN's Health Network, Sholom Glouberman, says it's crucial to look beyond the mpact of IT on health technologies, themselves, for a true measure of its effect on health.

"Many critical contributors to health are not, strictly speaking, health related," says Glouberman. "A person's social status, their level of education, the degree of control they have over their work – these are the factors that have the greatest impact on health. So, when we look for the health impact of the IT revolution we need to look at how it affects these areas of experience."

The broader influences on health include the changing role of the state in the globalized era, the shifting boundary between public and private space, new concepts of community, independence and control and, above all, movement towards or away from social equality.

"Information technologies can reduce social inequality. They can break down barriers to information, provide access to expert advice, enhance individual independence. But," Glouberman warns, "they can just as easily enhance inequality. The choice is ours."

The impact of IT in this regard depends on a number of factors; on who owns the technology, who controls access to it, who selects the information it disseminates, its affordability and the technical literacy of the citizen-consumer. If we ignore these concerns the democratic potential of the new technologies will be more myth than reality.

…/2

Why is this so important to health?

There is an empirical and direct relationship between social inequality and inequality of health outcomes.

This fact underlines the importance of developing public policy in this area, says Judith Maxwell, President of CPRN.

“Public policy will determine whether IT empowers citizens to participate more fully in decisions about health and health care and, indeed, in decisions in all areas of their lives. Greater control for
individuals means less inequality and better health outcomes.”

You can access or download a copy of this document by clicking here.

e-network e-network
work e-network e-net
e-network e-network
work e-network e-net
e-network e-network
work e-network e-net
e-network e-network
work e-network e-net
e-network e-network
work e-network e-net
e-network e-network
work e-network e-net
e-network e-network
work e-network e-net
e-network e-network
work e-network e-net
e-network e-network
work e-network e-net
e-network e-network
work e-network e-net
e-network e-network
work e-network e-net
e-network e-network
work e-network e-net
e-network e-network
work e-network e-net
e-network e-network
work e-network e-net
e-network e-network
work e-network e-net
e-network e-network
work e-network e-net
e-network e-network
work e-network e-net
e-network e-network
work e-network e-net
e-network e-network
work e-network e-net
e-network e-network
work e-network e-net
e-network e-network
work e-network e-net
e-network e-network
work e-network e-net
e-network e-network
work e-network e-net
e-network e-network
work e-network e-net
e-network e-network
work e-network e-net
e-network e-network
work e-network e-net