

# Unintended Consequences of Informatics Initiatives



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# Outline

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- Research project structure
- Stories from the field

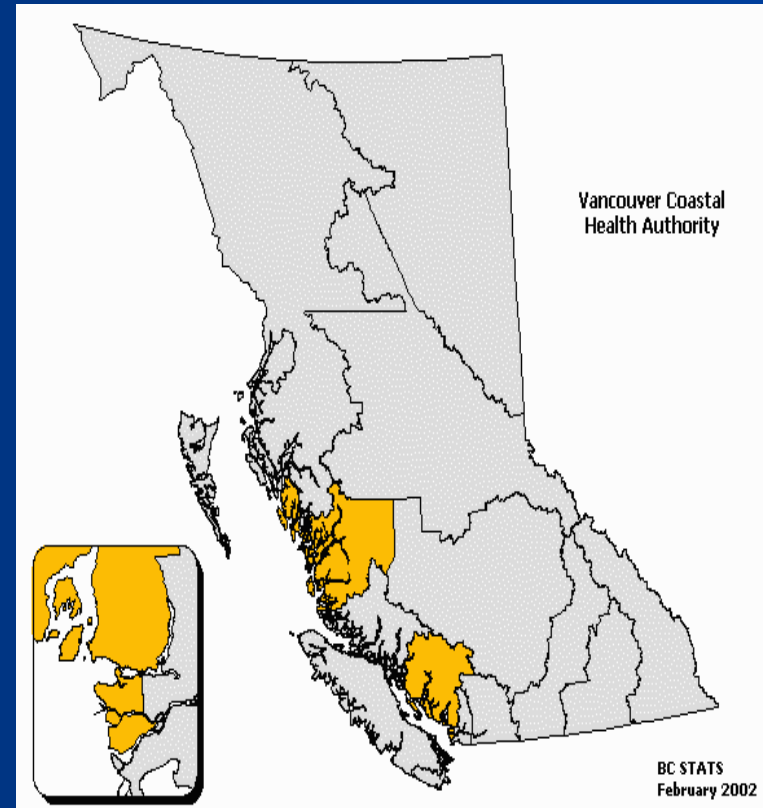
# Today's Objectives

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- Appreciation for the complexity of VCH Informatics Initiatives
- Greater understanding of how ICT unintended consequences impact patient care
- Raising participant awareness through shared experiences

# Vancouver Coastal Health

- Pop served: 1,003,150 - 25% of BC residents
- Geographic area: ~ size of Nova Scotia
- Annual funding: \$2.1 Billion
- # of Staff: 24,500
- Hospitals: 14
- Facilities: 476 buildings; 556 locations
- First Nation Communities: 15
- # of Beds: 8,500 (acute, rehab and residential)
- Annual ED visits: 297,749
- Annual Cases/Discharge: 73,988
- Annual same day surgical visits: 81,076
- Annual clinic visits: 619,412



# Systems Opportunity

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- IT is seen as a major driver to achieve the VCH strategic priorities of improved patient safety and quality of care
- Over 60 ICT initiatives in progress
- Increased understanding of complex system interdependencies → improved system efficiencies

# Proposed Methodology

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- Action research project
  - Semi-structured interviews
  - Focus groups
  - Ethnographic field research

# What happens now

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- Focus on technology not best practice
- Workflow analysis with limited reengineering of work practice
- Inadequate support for clinicians during or post change process
- Lack of buy-in to change process
- Garbage in / Garbage out...

# Expected outcomes or... looking at the human factors

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- Practice trumps technology
- ICT implementations transform practice



# Research question

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**What can VCH learn from assessing the intended and unintended consequences of ICT implementations to better predict the determinants of successful ICT implementations?**

# Stories of past ICT implementations ... setting the context



# Stories of past ICT implementations

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- Automated medication dispensing machines
  - Creative RN practice → unsafe med practices
- Wireless telephone linked to nurse call system
  - Improved communication
- Tablet PC's for home care RN's
  - No wireless infrastructure

# Capturing your experiences...

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- What are the opportunities?
- What are the barriers?

**“Technology optimism means in practice the ability to recognize bad surprises early enough to do something about them”**

Tenner, E. (1996). *Why things bite back: Technology and the revenge of the unintended consequences*. New York: Knopf.

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# Thank you for your time!



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# Contact info

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