

Greetings from the Finnish Social and Health Informatics Association

Not only in Finland but also globally health and welfare service systems have problems addressing present and future demands claimed by citizens, patients, health professional and policy makers. The Finnish healthcare system is a good example. We are now in the middle of a process which is at the same time political, organisational, social, operational and technological, and it is not easy to forecast its final impacts. At policy level the government is developing new legislation which will initiate the reorganisation of services. A new element in this process is also the coming nationwide freedom of choice to select the public service provider organisation. At a national level we are moving from disease management to proactive prevention and even to personal level disease prediction. It is also mandatory to develop the quality of service as well as to improve the impact of services and treatments on offer. All those targets can not be reached without developed management of health and welfare information and nationwide semantically and technically interoperable ICT-systems.

ICT has its own independent way to go. The Internet is more and more a general service platform; mobility, nationwide or even global information systems, ubiquitous ICT-systems and sensor networks are appropriate examples of this development.

At the national level in Finland at national level the most demanding challenges for the next 5 years are the roll-out of nationwide ePrescribing system, and the creation and use of the new centralised EHR-archive. Our present EHR should be developed to be semantically interoperable not only at national but also at European level. One other demanding task is to make our national eHealth information sharing system trusted.

Previously described targets require strong research, and research results should be published, discussed and criticized. A strong independent forum is required for this. The FinJeHeW journal published by the Finnish Social and Health Informatics Association and the Finnish Society of Telemedicine and eHealth has been created to be a forum for health informatics researchers and all other people and organisations interested in this topic. I really hope that our journal will be not only a dynamic and innovative forum but also, in the future, an opinion leader.

Pekka Ruotsalainen, Chairman