International Medical Informatics Association

REPORT OF THE VP – MEDINFO

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This report was compiled from inputs from the Medinfo 2001 OC, SPC and EC Chairs and Medinfo 2004 OC Chair. The contributions are gratefully acknowledged.

Medinfo 2001

Medinfo2001 is finally here. The London Organizing Committee has done its very best to bring us an exciting conference. I take this opportunity to thank Jean Roberts and her colleagues for their hard work, dedication and sacrifices to bring us the 10th World Conference on Health and Medical Informatics at the beautiful and brand-new ExCEL conference centre. I also wish to congratulate and thank the Scientific Programme Committee co-chaired by Arie Hasman and Hiroshi Takeda for putting together such an excellent and high-quality Scientific Programme, despite initial teething problems with the electronic manuscript management system that affected the review processes as well as communications with contributors. The Editorial Committee chaired by Vimla Patel and comprising Ray Rogers and Reinhold Haux has also done a wonderful job in getting the contents of the Proceedings delivered to IOS Press on time and we eagerly look forward to seeing the hardcopy version as well as the CD version of the Proceedings at the Conference.

The final scientific programme of the Congress now runs for 4 days with 12 parallel sessions. In all, it will feature 270 papers, 161 posters (13 of them presented as e-poster scientific demonstrations), 17 pre-congress tutorials, 28 workshops, 11 panels and 8 invited keynote speakers. The regional distribution is Europe (52%), North America (28%), Asia-Pacific (17%), Africa (2%) and South America (1%).

About 1000 people are expected to attend Medinfo2001. Various internal and external factors have caused the number to fall short of expectation, despite positive comments on the content of the programme. The OC has secured

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external funding to provide bursaries for nearly 50 people from 14 countries to attend. Also various arrangements have been made to make it possible for delegates from certain countries e.g. Latin American, African and Eastern European countries as well as the People's Republic of China, to participate.

The exhibition is wide ranging but also falls short of expectations with many companies and organizations citing greatly reduced budgets and market realignment as reasons for non-attendance.

Medinfo delegates would each receive the conference proceedings on CD-ROM. Hard copies of the Proceedings would be available only for an additional fee. The hard copy Proceedings consists of two volumes and is organized into 17 chapters that cover 26 topics. All papers in the proceedings would be indexed in MEDLINE. The submission to IOS Press was completed by July 1, 2001, more than two months before the meeting, and on schedule.

It has been a tremendous pleasure for me, as VP (Medinfo) to work with so many talented and dedicated IMIA colleagues to bring Medinfo2001 to a successful fruition and I wish to record my heartfelt thanks to all who have contributed to the organization of the 10th World Congress on Health and Medical Informatics.

Medinfo 2004

With the successful conclusion of Medinfo 2001, we now eagerly await the 11th conference. Medinfo 2004 will be held in San Francisco from 7-11 September 2004 and will be hosted by the American Medical Informatics Association (AMIA). The meeting will be self-contained in one hotel, the San Francisco Hilton and Towers. The hotel is the largest hotel on the West Coast with 1,896 sleeping rooms (including 145 suites) and 110,000 square feet (10,219 square meters) of meetings pace, including a 30,000 square feet (2,728 square meters) exhibit hall.

The meeting is being guided by the American Medical Informatics Association, with an organizing committee chaired by Dr. Edward Shortliffe from Columbia University. Dr. Shortliffe was Vice-Chair, SPC for Medinfo 86 in Washington, DC. Other OC members are Dr. Marion Ball, Dr. James Cimino, Dr. Charles Safran, Dr. Nancy Lorenzi, and Mr. Dennis Reynolds. Additional members are expected to be appointed in the coming months.

With the burgeoning interest in medical informatics, there is great optimism for a successful meeting, both scientifically and financially. A kick-off is planned for the closing session at Medinfo2001 in London. The organizing committee is making plans for a major fund-raising effort, corporate sponsorships, and a large trade show -- all of which are intended to bolster the financial base for the meeting and to allow moderation when setting the meeting registration fees. The annual AMIA Fall Symposium will not be held in 2004, helping to assure that Medinfo2004 will be viewed as the major scientific informatics meeting in North

America during that year. The AMIA offices have significant expertise in meeting management and scientific review of contributed papers, so the Medinfo meeting will benefit from these capabilities as it designs its own reviewing and paper-management process.

We will look forward to another good meeting at Medinfo 2004 in San Francisco!

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