

FHLIP 2024 — Highlights & Achievements

Theme: *From Reactive to Proactive: The Role of Digital Health*

Date & Venue: February 22, 2024 — University of Toronto Hart House (with a virtual stream).

By the numbers

- 254 attendees (Hart House 115 + Virtual 139)
- 18 accepted oral presentations, which were also published in a MEDLINE-indexed outlet.
- **9** “Laptop Talks” launched as a fast, poster-alternative format.

What attendees said

- **86%** felt we created a **positive cross-stakeholder dialogue**.
- **77%** agreed the **system’s voices** were represented.
- **89%** left **more confident** that digital health can make a difference.

Program snapshot

- **Opening Keynote: Hon. Deborah Matthews** — *Things I Wish I Knew Before I Became Minister of Health*.
 - Matthews opened with a candid diagnosis of Canada’s performance gap, pointing to international comparisons where Canada ranks 10th of 11 advanced systems and arguing the problem isn’t spending, it’s how we spend. She urged a shift “upstream” toward social determinants—highlighting the stark cost gradient from hospital beds (~\$1,000/day) to supportive housing (~\$100/day)—and asked why funding still skews to the most expensive settings. Matthews also called for more “sunshine” in the system, citing how public surgical wait-time reporting shortened queues by making performance visible. Her through-line: build policy and budget processes that retire what doesn’t work, scale what does, and equip a chronically reactive system to meet the demographic “grey tsunami” with proactive care.
- **Closing Keynote: Dr. Michael Hillmer** — day wrap-up & pathways to proactive care.

- Hillmer’s closing message tied the day together around execution: if we want proactive care, we must finish the hard work of digital transformation—connect data, standardize interfaces, and turn analytics into everyday decisions. He underscored interoperability as the lever for convenience and continuity, so that information follows patients and teams can act in real-time rather than react days later. The call to action was practical: align on standards, integrate workflows, and measure impact with shared metrics so transformation shows up at the bedside and in community care. He emphasized moving from talk to delivery; his keynote circuit this season also reinforced the same themes of connected, data-driven care across Ontario.

Morning Panel: PHIPA — Good Enough or Time to Modernize?

Moderator: Fahreen Walimohamed

Panelists: Christine Sham • Mahmoud Azimae • Don Willison.

One-line takeaway: Ontario’s PHIPA protects privacy, but in 2024, the pendulum may be swinging too far, limiting life-saving data sharing; experts have called for targeted modernization to enable safe, value-based secondary use while preserving trust.

Afternoon Panel: The Role of Health Informatics in Environmental Sustainability

Moderator: Dr. Jessica Cuppage

Panelists: Dr. Susan Deering • Dr. Myles Sergeant • Dr. Aviv Shachak.

One-line takeaway: Informatics can measure and shrink healthcare’s footprint—from greener procurement and analytics-guided efficiency to decision-support that embeds environmental impacts in policy and clinical choices.