Preface from the Scientific Program Co-Chairs

The theme of Medinfo2007 is "Building Sustainable Health Systems". Particular foci are health challenges for the developing and developed world, the social and political context of health care, the knowledge that is needed for safe and effective health care, and the difficult task of building and maintaining complex health information systems. Sustainable health information systems are those that can meet today's needs without compromising the needs of future generations. It is a challenge and an opportunity to develop and implement systems that can be improved – not replaced. To achieve this and to build a global knowledge society, we need to seek increased scientific and technological co-operation, and we need to facilitate access to and use of high-quality knowledge and information.

We are pleased to report that more than 900 submissions were made to Medinfo2007. This includes full papers, panels, posters, and workshops. Submissions were made from every region of the world and from many countries, including, among others, Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, China, Finland, France, Germany, Great Britain, India, Israel, Italy, Japan, New Zealand, Portugal, Russia, Singapore, Switzerland, and the United States, making this a truly international conference.

The majority of submissions (638) were made in the full paper category. Papers were refereed by members of the biomedical informatics community and final decisions were made by the SPC members at a three day meeting in Chamonix, France in late January 2007. Of the 638 papers submitted, 292 were accepted for presentation and publication (a 46% acceptance rate). 260 were not accepted for publication, but their authors were offered the possibility of presenting their work in the Medinfo2007 poster session, and they were also given the opportunity to create a set of slides that is planned to be part of a continuous slide show throughout the meeting. 86 paper submissions were rejected (13%).

The contributions to Medinfo2007 reflect the breadth and depth of the field of biomedical and health informatics. Papers cover topics in health information systems, knowledge and data management, education, standards, consumer health and human factors, emerging technologies, sustainability, organizational and economic issues, genomics, and image and signal processing.

To recognize the truly outstanding contributions to the conference, there will be "Best Paper" and "Best Poster" awards at the meeting. A student paper competition will also be held. All decisions will be made by an international jury at the meeting itself, and the winners will be announced during the closing session of the Congress.

On behalf of the members of the Medinfo2007 program committee (listed below), we wish to thank all those who contributed to Medinfo2007 by sending in their paper, poster, panel, and workshop contributions. We give special thanks to all those who carefully reviewed the many excellent submissions. We expect that the papers included in this volume will be of great interest to anyone engaged in biomedical and health informatics research and application.

Alexa T. McCray, PhD
Harvard Medical School
Boston, Massachusetts, USA

Heimar Marin, RN, PhD
Federal University of São Paulo
São Paulo, Brazil