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RE: "Waiting for wait times"

National Post, Wednesday, June 27, 2007

Dear Editor:

As your recent editorial regarding the Health Council of Canada report on wait times points out, the lack of comparable provincial wait time data is a significant flaw. However, equally concerning is that governments have also only established a partial list of the wait time benchmarks promised under the 2004 *Ten-year Plan To Strengthen Health Care*.

There are no national benchmarks for diagnostic imaging and benchmarks for cardiovascular services are incomplete. The benchmark established for treatment in radiation oncology is also longer than that recommended by the experts in the field. Governments' have also not yet established targets for achieving these benchmarks nor have they established comparable access indicators, both of which were promised in the 2004 Accord. □

Progress has been made on addressing wait times, but fulfilling the promises made in the 2004 Accord requires that governments establish a timetable to meet the commitments made to Canadians in the Health Accord by the end of 2007.

You can't manage what you can't measure. Until and unless all governments agree to standardize collection and reporting of wait time data, Canadians will just have to wonder whether or not their health system is truly performing.

Sincerely,



Dr. Lorne Bellan,
Chair,
Wait Time Alliance

The Wait Time Alliance Secretariat/Secrétariat de l'Alliance des temps d'attente

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