



Press Release

Time for progress is now

Wait Time Alliance releases benchmarks in five new clinical areas

Kingston, November 26, 2007 — The Wait Time Alliance (WTA) released its 4th report today unveiling new wait-time benchmarks or performance goals in five medical specialties: emergency care, psychiatric care, plastic surgery, gastroenterology and anesthesiology.

“The benchmarks we are releasing today represent the next critical step in helping to ensure more patients get the care they need when they need it,” said Dr. Lorne Bellan, President-elect of the Canadian Ophthalmological Society and co-chair of the WTA. “With these performance goals, and those released by the WTA in the initial five clinical areas targeted by governments in 2005, a clear course has been set for breaking the back of wait times.”

The *Time for Progress* report includes a comprehensive range of wait-time benchmarks or performance goals developed by the Canadian Psychiatric Association, the Canadian Association of Emergency Physicians, the Canadian Society of Plastic Surgeons and the Canadian Association of Gastroenterology. In addition, as a member of the WTA, the Canadian Anesthesiologists' Society has provided wait-time benchmarks in the area of pain management, and critical links in the development of wait-time benchmarks by other WTA specialties given the anesthesiologist's role as a member of the surgical team.

“These five new areas represent medical specialties in which thousands of Canadians require treatment every day,” said WTA co-chair and President of the Canadian Association of Nuclear Medicine, Dr. Jean-Luc Urbain. “Those patients now have more information about how long they are waiting, and most importantly, whether the system is forcing them to wait longer than the medical consensus says they should.”

In releasing the *Time for Progress* report in a speech today to a joint conference on wait times co-hosted by Kingston General Hospital and Queen's University, CMA Past-President Dr. Colin McMillan called on governments to step up action on wait times.

.../2

Canadian
Anesthesiologists'
Society

Canadian Association
of Emergency
Physicians

Canadian Association
of Gastroenterology

Canadian Association
of Nuclear Medicine

Canadian Association
of Radiation
Oncologists

Canadian Association
of Radiologists

Canadian
Cardiovascular Society

Canadian Medical
Association

Canadian
Ophthalmological
Society

Canadian Orthopaedic
Association

Canadian Psychiatric
Association

Canadian Society of
Plastic Surgeons

“The medical consensus is strong and growing,” Dr. McMillan told the audience. “What is needed now is a similar commitment on the part of governments to act now to fulfil their promises to meet deadlines around the initial five clinical areas identified in the *10-Year Plan to Strengthen Health Care* and to take action in these newly identified areas.”

Of critical concern to the WTA is whether governments will meet their self-imposed deadline of Dec. 31, 2007 to announce multiyear targets for meeting wait-time benchmarks in the initial 5 clinical priority areas.

In addition to the new benchmarks, the WTA released a new set of recommendations (see below) aimed at spurring governments to action in building on the progress achieved to date in addressing wait times.

“Canada’s first ministers made a promise to Canadians that they would act on wait times, and while progress has been made, the job is far from complete” added Dr. Bellan. “The WTA continues to do its part on behalf of patients, we expect our political leaders to do nothing less than the same.”

To access *Time for Progress* go to: www.waittimealliance.ca

For more information on the “Waiting for Medical Care” conference, consult:

http://www.queensu.ca/sps/conferences_events/annual_conferences/health_conference/index.php.

For more information:

Lucie Boileau, Media Relations Manager, Canadian Medical Association

Tel.: 1-800-663-7336 ext. 1266 or 613-731-8610 ext. 1266, **Cell: 613-447-0866**



Press Release

1867, Alta Vista Drive, Ottawa ON K1G 3Y6