

Wait Time Alliance

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Canadian Anesthesiologists' Society

Wait Time Alliance welcomes new member

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

Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada

March 17, 2008 OTTAWA – The Wait Time Alliance (WTA) is pleased to welcome the Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada (SOGC) as its 13th member. Today the SOGC has released national wait time benchmarks for obstetrical and gynaecological health services for consultation, investigation and surgery in the four key areas of practice, those being; **Obstetrics, Maternal Fetal Medicine, General Gynaecology, Gynaecological (OB/GYN) Cancers and Urogynaecology.**

"Access to obstetrical and gynaecology services is at crisis levels in many parts of Canada," said Dr. Guylaine Lefebvre, President of the SOGC. "The benchmarks being released today represent the first initiatives to manage and monitor wait times in the field of obstetrics and gynaecology. Now, we are setting our sights on establishing a clearly defined wait-time strategy to avoid potentially negative effects that overly long wait times can have on our patients."

Physicians and health professionals working in this OB/GYN face serious challenges in access to care, especially since emergency and most non-elective surgery wait times are becoming a problem for practitioners in gynaecology.

"Having the SOGC join the Wait Time Alliance is extremely important given this is a specialty providing critical services to half of our population and one where patients face severe access issues," added the Co-Chair of the WTA, Dr. Lorne Bellan. "The WTA is pushing both federal and provincial governments to expand the benchmarking process beyond the five original priority areas, as inadequate wait times have a tremendous negative impact on patient care."

To become a member of the WTA, the SOGC had to document wait time benchmarks using level 5 evidence or higher. This criteria has been attained and the results will be published in a SOGC policy statement in the Society's Journal March 2008 edition (http://www.sogc.org/guidelines/documents/gui204PS0803_000.pdf). The document also states that "access to obstetrical care, in particular, is in crisis in Canada, and delayed obstetrical care is a life and death issue for the mother and her baby".

"We must continue to work at giving maternity care the resources needed to keep it safe and available in Canada," added Dr. Lefebvre. "The time is now for federal, provincial and territorial governments to address this health human resource deficiency and the SOGC looks forward to working within the WTA to help make that happen."

The Wait Time Alliance (WTA) was formed out of concern among Canada's doctors over delayed access to care for their patients, and an interest in working collaboratively with stakeholders to improve wait times. The WTA is comprised of several national medical specialty societies whose members are directly involved in providing care to patients. For more information on the WTA please go to: www.waittimealliance.ca

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