

APPENDIX I: MEDIA RELEASES

APPENDIX I.1 JULY 26, 1999 MEDIA RELEASE

APPENDIX I.2 OCTOBER 18, 2000 MEDIA RELEASE



Western Canada Waiting List Project
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News Release

Host Sites for Clinical Panels Confirmed by Western Canada Waiting List Project

EDMONTON - July 26, 1999 - Five regional health authorities in Western Canada will each host a multidisciplinary clinical panel to conduct research and provide recommendations on health care waiting lists in specific clinical areas as part of the Western Canada Waiting List (WCWL) Project.

“The hosting and formation of the clinical panels is the next step in a process that will produce recommendations aimed at shortening waiting lists”, said Dr. Tom Noseworthy, Chair of the WCWL Project Steering Committee and Head of the Department of Public Health Sciences at the University of Alberta in Edmonton.

The five areas of study for the clinical panels and their respective host organizations are:

- Cataract Surgery – Saskatoon District Health;
- Children's Mental Health Services – Vancouver/Richmond Health Board;
- General Surgery – Winnipeg Hospital Authority;
- Hip And Knee Joint Replacement – Capital Health Authority, Edmonton;
- Magnetic Resonance Imaging – Calgary Regional Health Authority.

Each panel will consist of a cross section of clinicians who are involved in and who refer patients for the five procedures.

The goal of the WCWL Project is to develop clinically valid and useful measures of patients' relative priority for wait-listed services. By defining these measures, assessment and comparison of the clinical profiles of patients and their expected outcomes could determine wait-list priority.

In June of 1998, a major study sponsored by Health Canada concluded, in part, that: there is little or no standardization of waiting list data; regional health authorities and hospitals acknowledge they lack comprehensive information on the status of waiting lists; and there is widespread interest in standardizing and coordinating waiting lists for selected interventions.

The Western Canada Waiting List Project will address many of these issues in an effort to influence the way waiting lists are structured, evaluated, managed, and perceived by the public, providers and health boards.

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It is anticipated the Project will complete its work in the summer of 2000 with a final report and recommendations in these clinical areas for consideration by the medical and health partners in Canada.

The Western Canada Waiting List Project is a consortium of four medical associations, seven regional health authorities, the four western provincial ministries of health and four health research centres. Funding for the short-term project is from Health Canada's Health Transition Fund.

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Western Canada Waiting List Project Website

<http://www.wcwl.org/> (under construction)



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News Release

Interim Report and Waiting List Criteria Released by Western Canada Waiting List Project

EDMONTON – October 18, 2000 – The Western Canada Waiting List (WCWL) Project today released an interim report describing progress to date on the development of criteria (tools) for prioritizing patients awaiting specified elective clinical and diagnostic procedures.

The proposed criteria outlined in the interim report are intended to help distinguish, in an efficient and straightforward manner, the priority of patients for each of the five procedures: cataract surgery, children's mental health services, general surgery, hip and knee replacement, and MRI scanning. By developing criteria and making them available, the Project hopes to influence the way waiting lists are structured, evaluated, managed, and perceived by the public, providers, and regional health authorities in Western Canada.

“This interim report is a key step towards finalizing criteria for prioritizing patients awaiting five significant clinical and diagnostic procedures” said Dr. Tom Noseworthy, Chair of the WCWL Project Steering Committee, and Chair of the Department of Public Health Sciences at the University of Alberta in Edmonton. “The draft tools included in the interim report will continue to be refined this winter for our final report expected to be completed in Spring 2001”, he continued.

The criteria for each procedure were identified by clinical panels and were subjected to pilot testing in clinical practice. The pilot testing helped determine the extent to which the criteria were relevant to assessing patients' relative urgency, whether any important factors were omitted, and whether the criteria were clearly described and unambiguous.

“The project is an unprecedented partnership of Canadian governments, medical associations, regional health authorities, and research communities striving to create tools that will improve the timeliness and equity for elective patients needing health care”, he added.

Current WCWL Project activity includes refining the prioritization tools, developing a standard definition of waiting time, looking into methods for establishing acceptable

waiting times for elective procedures, and organizing a forum on priority setting across differing treatment types and services.

The WCWL Project was created in 1998 in response to a major study sponsored by Health Canada that concluded: there is little or no standardization of waiting list data; regional health authorities and hospitals acknowledge they lack comprehensive information on the status of waiting lists; and there is widespread interest in standardizing and coordinating waiting lists for selected interventions.

The Western Canada Waiting List Project is a consortium of four medical associations, seven regional health authorities, the four western provincial ministries of health and four health research centres. Funding for the project is from Health Canada's Health Transition Fund.

Current versions of the priority criteria for each procedure can be found on the WCWL Web site under "Priority Forms" at <http://www.wcwl.org/>.

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