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NOTE FROM THE CHAIR

Structures, Processes and Expectations

There's an unusually high level of intensity in the virtual WCWL offices these days. With funding in place, and our infrastructure deepening, all streams of work are busy and advancing: evaluation of Priority Criteria Score (PCS) implementation; primary care tool adaptation; and, waiting time formulation. The IMPLEMENTATION PANEL and RESEARCH COMMITTEE have each, and together, guided our actions and thinking. The re-constituted Steering Committee has been meeting monthly to guide and shape our participatory agenda and to strengthen our growing community of interest.

We have assembled an impressive array of inputs that will go into our thinking about "maximum acceptable waiting times" and an "EXPERT PANEL" to focus and strengthen the scientific basis for this formative research and work. An overarching 13 member "WAITING TIME PANEL" has been finalized, comprised of one half public members and one half clinician providers from the four participating provinces. This will be the nucleus committee that will integrate the array of inputs, the "scientific shaping" of the standards, and the socio-behavioral, practice and normative views shared by the panel members and influenced by these inputs.

In the end, it will all come together, a gradient of waiting times that relates (inversely) to a gradient of PCS that reflect urgency - not a political standard; not an arbitrary choice; rather, a publicly acceptable and clinically coherent maximum acceptable waiting time, beyond which reasonable people would not be expected to wait. We have until the end of next year to get it done!

Dr. Tom Noseworthy
Chair

WHAT'S NEW?

The WCWL Research Committee and Implementation Panel met for joint meetings on May 6 and 7 at the Delta Calgary Airport Hotel. Over 30 members and WCWL associates converged to address the Waiting Time Project and issues related to implementation and evaluation of the WCWL tools. Dr. Peter Glynn, Chair of the Saskatchewan Surgical Care Network, was the guest speaker.

The Waiting Time (WT) Project is progressing with the newly established Waiting Time Panel. This Panel will review all considerations around acceptable waiting times based on prioritization scores, and will propose to the WCWL Steering Committee acceptable maximum waiting times for one or more procedure. The first procedure to be examined will be hip and knee replacement. The panel will conduct its first meeting this summer. Look for details in the newsletter.

WCWL_2 FEDERAL FUNDING

We are pleased to report that \$800,000 in federal funding has been received. This funding will allow WCWL_2 to continue progress in addressing political and public demands for accountability and transparency in how waiting lists are managed. WCWL_2 will continue to focus efforts on the implementation and evaluation of priority scoring tools in the western cities, as well as on developing benchmark waiting times and adapting priority count scores for use by primary health care providers. The project will endeavor to complete these objectives by December 2004.

BENCHMARK WAITING TIME PROJECT

The Steering Committee has worked diligently throughout the spring towards the goal of establishing a Waiting Time (WT) Panel. This process has involved a great deal of deliberation and planning. The members of this panel have very recently been finalized. The first meeting for the WT Panel will be held later this summer.

A second group associated with the WT Project is the Waiting Time Expert Panel. This group will collect information to assist in establishing benchmark maximum waiting times, as well as determine the methodology to develop these waiting times. The WT Expert Panel has been assembled and begun their work.

On the following page is a description of the WT Project, including listings of the members of both the aforementioned panels.

Purpose

To develop maximum acceptable benchmark waiting (MAWT) times related to WCWL priority scores

Waiting Time Panel Members

Dr. Heather Clarke	Vancouver, BC
Ms. Barbara Brink	Vancouver, BC
Mr. Art Phillips	Vancouver, BC
Dr. Clayne Steed	Raymond, AB
Dr. Tony Fields	Edmonton, AB
Mr. Les Young	Edmonton, AB
Mr. Howard Waldner	Calgary, AB
Dr. Jack Reilly	Saskatoon, SK
Ms. Darlene Eberle	Humboldt, SK
Ms. Jeannine Brown	Regina, SK
Dr. Gary Mazowita	Winnipeg, MB
Ms. Chasity Remillard	Winnipeg, MB
Mr. Tom Carson	Winnipeg, MB

The WT Panel's Task

This Panel will review all inputs and considerations around acceptable waiting times based on Priority Criteria Scores, and would propose to the WCWL Steering Committee maximum acceptable waiting times for one or more procedure for which there exists a valid and reliable WCWL waitlist prioritization tool.

WT Expert Group

Dr. Claudia Sanmartin will lead a team of WCWL Associates and colleagues (Dr. Barb Spady, Mr. Glen Shortt, Dr. Gillian Currie, and Dr. Marjon van der Pol) charged with obtaining the information described below and subsequently determining the appropriate methodology to develop maximum acceptable wait times. These experts will act as consultants to the Waiting Time Panel. Areas of expertise include, but not limited to: economics; ethics; epidemiology, psychometric measurement; biostatistics.

Inputs & Considerations

The following have been identified in our writing as the key sources of information which will be provided to the WT Panel to establish maximum acceptable waiting times (these inputs have been abbreviated for the newsletter, please contact the WCWL office for a detailed listing).

1. Information which can be obtained now

- 1.1 Literature Reviews
- 1.2 Previous WCWL Work

2. Information to be generated by the project

- 2.1 Health Care Providers Input
- 2.2 Patient Input
- 2.3 Public Input

3. Other Inputs & Considerations

- 3.1 Philosophic Construct and Analysis
- 3.2 Queuing Theory Approach

The Process

The members of the WT Panel have been nominated by the WCWL Partners and endorsed by the Steering Committee. The WT Panel will meet as required over the course of the 18 month project. The first meeting of the panel will be held in the summer of 2003. Each of the Inputs and Considerations listed above will be assigned to an individual or team and a detailed work plan and budget will be developed in conjunction with the WCWL Project Director.

WCWL PUBLICATION UPDATE

WCWL articles have been accepted for publication: **Prioritization of Patients on Scheduled Wait Lists: Validation of a Scoring System for Hip and Knee Arthroplasty** (Canadian Journal of Surgery - August issue) and **Toward Standard Definitions of Waiting Times for Health Care Services** (web based version of Healthcare Management Forum - June). Copies will be distributed as they become available.

The following two WCWL articles were mentioned in a previous newsletter; however copies were not sent out at that time. Enclosed are copies of each of these published articles.

Mark C. Taylor, David C. Hadorn and the Steering Committee of the Western Canada Waiting List Project. **Developing priority criteria for general surgery: results from the Western Canada Waiting List Project.** Canadian Journal of Surgery. 45(5). 2002. 351-357.

David C. Hadorn and the Steering Committee of the Western Canada Waiting List Project. **Developing priority criteria for magnetic resonance imaging: results from the Western Canada Waiting List Project.** Canadian Association of Radiologists Journal. 53(4). 2002. 210-18.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

June 15-18, 2003 - The International Health Economics Association - San Francisco, USA.

June 22-25, 2003 - International Society of Technology Assessment in Health Care, Canmore, AB - Annual Meeting

August, 2003 - WCWL Waiting Time Panel meeting, Calgary, AB

UPDATE

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