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### WHAT'S NEW?

WCWL is delighted to have NHS Management Trainee, Jane Battell, as part of the team from October through December. Jane describes her program elsewhere in the newsletter and welcomes the opportunity to discuss health care from the NHS perspective.

At the recent meeting of the International Society for Prioritization in Health Care, a small group of countries with an interest in prioritization of access to elective health care formed and has proposed to meet again in Calgary in 2003 to discuss work-in progress. Details will be provided as the plan progresses.

A new administrative assistant, Loreen Stevenson, has joined WCWL in the Calgary Office. Partners and associates will have the opportunity to meet Loreen at our upcoming meetings. She can be reached at (403) 210-3813 or lcsteven@ucalgary.ca

### WCWL\_2: IMPLEMENTATION AND EVALUATION OF THE WCWL PRIORITY CRITERIA TOOLS

The WCWL priority criteria tools were designed to provide an explicit, transparent, and standardized way to prioritize patients for elective procedures and services.

The WCWL research team has met on several occasions to discuss the process through which implementation and evaluation might occur.

The principal goals of an evaluation of these tools are:

- To assess the reliability and validity of the WCWL tools;
- To assess the acceptability and feasibility of using the WCWL tools in the context of wait list management in real world settings;
- To understand the critical factors essential to securing and maintaining the participation of patients, physicians, other providers and managers of the health care system; and
- To assess the impact of the implementation of a tool-based system on patients, practitioners, and the health care system.

Regional health authorities (RHAs) which choose to implement the tools will have the opportunity to contribute to and participate in the evaluation.

To ensure consistency and comparability of findings across regions an overall evaluation protocol is being developed. RHAs will collaborate to modify and customize the protocol to meet their particular needs.

The evaluation of the WCWL tools takes place in the context of regional wait list management. Understanding of the broader context in which the tools are applied is essential to their evaluation. Thus, implementation and evaluation could proceed in three stages.

Stage 1(Pre-Implementation) will identify the available and needed resources for implementation, the change of management strategies and the critical success factors for participation of all stakeholders.

Stage 2 (Implementation without prioritization) is a wash-in period in which priority criteria tools will be completed by practitioners on all patients waitlisted for a relevant procedure or service. Data collection will proceed in parallel with the existing system and the priority score will not be used to prioritize patients.

Stage 3 (Implementation with and without prioritization) is designed primarily to assess the impact of the implementation of the WCWL tools on patients, practitioners and the health care system. Specific goals are to assess the validity and usefulness of the WCWL tools in real-world settings and to explore the relationships between priority scores, length of waiting time, burden of suffering and patient benefit.

## CONFESSIONS OF A NHS MANAGEMENT TRAINEE

The National Health Service was established in Great Britain by Aneurin Bevan in 1948 - its goal to provide free healthcare to all at the point of delivery. Funded through taxation alone, it removed the fear of having to pay for the doctor. Its creation undisputedly led to better general health and as an organization it continues to strive towards a healthier nation today. The NHS has changed dramatically since its inception in 1948. There is now a multitude of different jobs available in the NHS, from the doctor or nurse, to the estates manager, the engineer, the private finance manager. As a result schemes have had to be established to provide formal training for every discipline.

The National Health Service Management Training Scheme has been running in England and Northern Ireland for many years (Scotland and Wales have different schemes). A nationally, and internationally, recognized management training scheme, it is run by the NHS Leadership Centre in conjunction with a wide variety of other schemes. There are approximately 65 trainees selected per year from approximately 3,000 applicants, either direct from university or from the workplace. People apply for a variety of reasons, primarily because it offers excellent general management experience in an extremely challenging and fast paced environment. Due to the intensely political nature of the NHS, as soon as there is a change of government there are invariably a new set of targets to be met. For most trainees, this is one of the attractions of the scheme. It is a constant challenge to achieve the goals set by the government, however, at the end of each day the majority of us can return home knowing that we are helping to shape and change policy if only in a small way. The overall goal of the scheme is to create the future leaders of the NHS, and through the experience that is offered during the two year program, many trainees go on to become senior level managers, health policy developers and ministers at the Department of Health.

The scheme itself is divided into 4 stages: orientation, first placement, elective and second placement.

The orientation is a three-month "tour" of the NHS, enabling the trainee to look behind the scenes of the largest employer in Europe. The first placement is an operational post, involving real health care management experience, in contrast to the second placement, which involves developing more strategic management skills.

The elective is a three-month "sabbatical" where trainees are able to plan and undertake a wide range of activities, whether in the health setting or elsewhere. I have come to Canada to work with WCWL for my elective; other trainees are working in Australia, New Zealand, Africa and Sweden. Those who have not chosen to go abroad are working for NHS organizations, private sector companies or a mix of both. I think that this elective represents a unique opportunity to share information with other organizations and learn valuable skills to take back to the NHS. At the end of the period trainees are required to produce a report, detailing the activities they have undertaken and the knowledge that they have gained.

Throughout all this, trainees study part-time for the Postgraduate Diploma in Health Care Management at the University of Birmingham and De Montfort University in Leicester, developing background knowledge and skills. I have found this to be an invaluable part of the scheme as it gives me the chance to learn about the historical context of the NHS, as well as the methodology needed to be able to undertake day-to-day management tasks. Should I choose to, I can continue studying through the University of Birmingham to extend the diploma to a Masters in Health Care Management when I finish the scheme.

Recent surveys in the UK ranked the NHS Management Training Scheme second in a poll of all the training schemes offered nationwide. As I am sure everyone involved will tell you, it is a much-deserved accolade, for a scheme that provides some of the best and most diverse health management education in the UK.

*Jane Battell (battell@ucalgary.ca)*

## UPCOMING MEETINGS

Several WCWL meetings are scheduled for the near future; all will take place at the Delta Calgary Airport Hotel.:

**October 29** - initial meeting of the Implementation Panel

**November 8** - joint meeting of the Research and Steering Committees

**December 4 & 5** - meeting of the WCWL Partnership.

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## UPDATE

THE UPDATE is the monthly newsletter of the Western Canada Waiting List Project. It is published at the Department of Community Health Sciences, University of Calgary, 3330 Hospital Drive NW, Calgary, Alberta, Canada T2N 4N1. For more information, please contact John McGurran, Project Director, at (403) 210-3813 info@wcwl.org or visit our website at <http://www.wcwl.org>

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Funding for the Western Canada Waiting List Project is provided by Manitoba Health, Saskatchewan Health, Alberta Health & Wellness, the British Columbia Ministry of Health and Health Canada.