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Workshop Update

On March 14 & 15 we will hold a workshop in Calgary to bring together interested parties to discuss the phase-2 pilot projects with a view to advancing implementation of the prioritization tools in the health care system. The goals are:

- present and discuss the most recent evidence on validity of the WCWL prioritization tools for cataract removal, general surgery, hip/knee replacement, children's mental health and MRI scanning
- provide an opportunity for regional health authorities, hospitals, researchers and others with an interest, in implementation of the prioritization tools to gain insights from the pilot studies

Format

Each of the five clinical areas will be the focal point of a 1 to 2 hour session; there will be introductory and closing remarks. Presentations and participation by other projects and jurisdictions consistent with the workshop's goals are welcome and encouraged.

Preliminary Agenda

The workshop will begin at 1:30 pm on Thursday March 14th and will end on March 15th at 3:30 p.m. A reception and dinner for all registrants will follow the final presentation on Thursday. Workshop updates and the final agenda will be posted on the WCWL website www.wcwl.org. Check it out from time to time.

The Details

There is no fee for the workshop or included meals, however participants must cover their own transportation and accommodation expenses. A discounted rate is available for rooms (\$C129.00) and suites (\$C229.00) at the Delta Calgary Airport Hotel. Contact them at 403 291 2600 or 800 268 1133 and cite group code G14WC.

How to Register

Space is limited to 50 people, and all registrations must be received, by email, prior to February 28, 2002.

Submit a request to register, including your affiliation and complete address and internet particulars, to info@wcwl.org and include "request to register" in the subject line. A confirmation will be returned by email within 3 days.

Questions?

Address any questions about the workshop to John McGurran by email jjmcg@telusplanet.net or telephone 1 403 210 3813.

Structure Changes

At their November 8 meeting, the partners discussed changes to the structure and organization as the project moves into WCWL_2. The University of Calgary has joined, the University of Alberta has departed, and the Manitoba Medical Association will be invited to become a member. It was strongly felt that public involvement should be considered.

Proposed changes such as a reduction in the size of the steering committee and the addition of a research committee would be reviewed and agreed upon by the all partners. In addition the partners agreed to call for nominations for the position of Chair.

WCWL Policy Relevance - Saskatchewan

Recent reports from the province of Saskatchewan provide more evidence of the extent to which the WCWL prioritization tools are seen as relevant and functional elements of the healthcare system. Both the government's Action Plan for Saskatchewan Health Care and the report Surgical Wait List Management: A Strategy for Saskatchewan indicate that the province is looking at how to implement the tools in elective surgery such that they are applied consistently.

Another element of the Saskatchewan plan is the development of a province-wide surgical wait list to track and better manage access to elective or planned service. Through audits, the list would be kept up-to-date and accurate, thus contributing to improvement in efficiency and fairness. This could be reviewed regularly

Saskatchewan also plans to establish a waiting list website which, in time, would include waiting times for specialists. A surgical waitlist website was introduced in British Columbia in 1999 to give patients and their physicians information to choose specialists when the need exists. The Saskatchewan site is anticipated for Spring 2002 and would initially hold information on how the surgery booking system works and how long patients can expect to wait.

Other elements of Saskatchewan's strategy to improve access to needed elective care include recruitment and retention of required health care personnel, establishment of a new surgical wait list fund to cover operating, equipment and facilities costs.

This strategic response by the province to public complaints about long waiting lists and access to elective care can be traced back to the 1999 report of its Task Team on Surgical Waiting Lists.

Additional information about recent initiatives in Saskatchewan can be found on their website:
<http://www.health.gov.sk.ca/>

Upcoming Events

- Feb 15-16, 2002. Diagnostics and Solutions: Is the Canadian Model of Health Care Sustainable? The 7th Annual conference of the McGill Institute for the Study of Canada, Montreal
<http://www.arts.mcgill.ca/programs/misc/home.htm>
- Feb 18-19, 2002. Experts Meeting on the OECD Waiting Times Project. Paris

Publications Update

WCWL articles have been accepted for publication in Canadian Journal of Surgery (general surgery panel report), Canadian Association of Radiology Journal (MRI panel report), Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (children's mental health panel report), Canadian Journal of Ophthalmology (cataract surgery panel report), and Hospital Quarterly (public opinion report). Copies will routinely be distributed to WCWL partners and panel members as they become available. Others may request a copy by email: info@wcwl.org.

UPDATE

WESTERN CANADA WAITING LIST PROJECT
THE UPDATE is the ideally 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 or jjmcg@telus-planet.net or visit our website at <http://www.wcwl.org>

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