

Taming of the Queue VI – Improving Patient Flow

March 26-27, 2009

The annual *Taming of the Queue* conference brings together health care providers, system managers, policy-makers and researchers to examine the progress and exchange better practices that Canadian and international jurisdictions are making to reduce wait times for medically necessary services, a key goal of current health care reform activity in Canada.

This year's conference, *Taming of the Queue VI – Improving Patient Flow*, took place in Ottawa on March 26 and 27, 2009. It focused on the flow of patients through the health system. The conference began with a view on wait times from the patient's perspective, setting the scene for expert presentations by speakers from national, provincial and regional health related organizations, as well as individuals with unique perspectives on the health system. The presentations covered a number of themes:

- Improving access to primary care;
- Improving wait times in the referral-consultation process;
- Patient flow management tools and strategies;
- Queue jumping; and
- Mitigating demand through prevention and appropriateness of care.

In addition, government perspectives on wait time reduction were offered by federal Minister of Health, the Honourable Leona Aglukkaq, and Quebec Minister of Health, Dr. Yves Bolduc.

Following are the presentations, in alphabetical order, delivered at the conference.

Advanced Access: The Family Practice Experience

Ernst Schuster, Alberta AIM

www.cprn.org/doc.cfm?doc=2018&l=en

Ernst Schuster holds the position of Medical Director, Primary Care, for Capital Health (now part of Alberta Health Services), where he provides Medical Leadership to Capital Health in Primary Care. In his presentation he outlined: the principles of advanced access to primary care; an approach to quality in family practice; and how to use a patient panel in monitoring family practice.

Adventures in Improving Access

Kishore Visvanathan, Saskatoon Regional Health Region

www.cprn.org/doc.cfm?doc=2019&l=en

Kishore Visvanathan is Division Head, Urology, for Saskatoon Health Region (SHR) and Associate Professor of Surgery at the University of Saskatchewan. He is project lead for Advanced Access (an initiative to reduce Saskatoon urology wait times) and is also co-chair for SHR's Client and Family-Centered Care Steering Group. In his presentation, Dr. Visvanathan described the advanced access program in urology in Saskatoon Health Region.

Appropriateness: Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon

John You, Department of Medicine, McMaster University
www.cprn.org/doc.cfm?doc=2020&l=en

John You is a general internist and health services researcher with an interest in the appropriateness of diagnostic imaging. He has served on the Ontario Wait Times Strategy MR/CT Expert Panel and holds an Ontario Ministry of Health Career Scientist Award to support policy-relevant work to increase evidence-based decision-making for diagnostic imaging. In his presentation, Dr. You described appropriateness, with a specific focus on diagnostic imaging, and why it was relevant to a wait times conference.

Improving Family Physician and Specialist Communication and Coordination

Brie DeMone, Manitoba Health and Healthy Living
www.cprn.org/doc.cfm?doc=2021&l=en

Brie DeMone is the Director of Manitoba Health and Healthy Living's Wait Times Task Force and is responsible for developing and implementing a number of provincial access projects including: the Bridging General and Specialist Care (BGSC) project; and Manitoba's Catalogue of Specialized Services (CSS). In her presentation she described these two initiatives.

Improving Surgical Access in the Interior Health Authority

Michael Carter, Kelowna General Hospital
www.cprn.org/doc.cfm?doc=2022&l=en

Michael Carter is a urology specialist in Kelowna, BC. He has served on the Interior Health Authority Surgical Council since its inception in 2004 and is currently its co-chair. In his presentation, Dr. Carter discussed how to improve surgical access in the interior of BC.

Improving Wait Times in the Referral-Consultation Process: WCWL Priority Referral Scores

Tom Noseworthy and Carolyn DeCoster, Western Canada Waiting List Project
www.cprn.org/doc.cfm?doc=2023&l=en

Tom Noseworthy is Director, Centre for Health and Policy Studies, Professor (Health Policy and Management) and Head, Department of Community Health Sciences, University of Calgary. In 2007, he was named by the Governor General as a Member of the Order of Canada for his contributions to medicine and health care policy. Carolyn DeCoster is a Senior Researcher with Alberta Health Services (Calgary Health Region) and holds faculty appointments in the Department of Community Health Sciences at the Universities of Calgary and Manitoba. In a joint presentation, Dr. Noseworthy and Dr. DeCoster outlined approaches to developing a prioritization system for referrals from primary care.

Meeting the Service Challenge: Getting the Right Mix of People, Space and Technology

Steve Pelletier, Clarence-Rockland Family Health Team
www.cprn.org/doc.cfm?doc=2024&l=en

Steve Pelletier is the managing associate in a fully computerized 11 doctor group practice that provides primary and urgent care in the rural community of Clarence-Rockland, Ontario. Dr. Pelletier has special interest in human resources management, medical economics and overcoming the obstacles to integration of computers into established medical offices. His presentation focussed on his most recent efforts to create a facility that leverages the use of a multidisciplinary team, custom designed space and computers to effectively provide responsive and high quality service to all residents of Clarence-Rockland.

Nursing in Your Family Practice Initiative: Primary Health Care

Patsy Smith, Primary Health Care Consultant, CDHA
www.cprn.org/doc.cfm?doc=2025&l=en

Patsy Smith is a leadership and health care consultant with a special interest in primary health care systems. Currently, she is the project lead for the “Nursing in your family practice” initiative with Primary Health Care at Capital Health. She maintains a clinical practice as a family practice nurse in a primary health care centre in rural Nova Scotia. In her presentation, Ms. Smith described the Capital Health program, which provides supports for family physicians and family practice nurses in Nova Scotia.

Operations Research Perspectives on Patient Flow and Capacity Management

Michael Carter, Centre for Research in Healthcare Engineering, Mechanical and Industrial Engineering, University of Toronto
www.cprn.org/doc.cfm?doc=2026&l=en

Michael Carter works at the Department of Mechanical and Industrial Engineering at the University of Toronto and is Director of the Centre for Research in Healthcare Engineering. Since 1989, his research focus has been in the area of health care resource modeling with a variety of projects in hospitals, home care, rehab, long-term care, medical labs and mental health institutions. He is also an Adjunct Scientist with the Institute for Clinical Evaluative Sciences (ICES) in Toronto. In his presentation, Professor Carter discussed how operations research can provide unique perspectives on flow management in health care.

Radiology Appropriateness Guidelines

Martin H. Reed, Canadian Association of Radiologists
www.cprn.org/doc.cfm?doc=2027&l=en

Martin Reed is Chair of the Guidelines Working Group at the Canadian Association of Radiologists. Dr. Reed is also Head, Department of Radiology, Children’s Hospital, Winnipeg. In his presentation, Dr. Reed discussed unnecessary imaging diagnostics and how to avoid them.

Reducing Waiting Times

Michael Wilson, Brighton and Sussex University Hospitals NHS Trust
www.cprn.org/doc.cfm?doc=2028&l=en

Michael Wilson has been Deputy CEO at the Brighton and Sussex University Hospitals NHS Trust since July 2007. Key achievements in his current role include a 50% reduction in MRSA rates, 18 weeks compliance, achievement of the A&E standard and a balanced budget for the first time in six years. In his presentation, Mr. Wilson described the NHS journey to reduced wait times, using his NHS Trust as an example.

Taming of the Queue VI: Secondary Prevention – Cardiac Telehealth

Christine Struthers, University of Ottawa Heart Institute
www.cprn.org/doc.cfm?doc=2029&l=en

Christine Struthers is currently working as the Advanced Practice Nurse for the Cardiac Telehealth program at the University of Ottawa Heart Institute since 2005. Other than managing the Telehealth program, she is also involved in following cardiac patients using home telehealth technologies such as Telehome Monitoring and Interactive Voice Response systems. In her presentation, Ms. Struthers described the cardiac telehealth approaches in Ontario.

The Other Side of the Table: The Patient's Perspective on Waiting

Peter Goodhand, Canadian Cancer Society

www.cprn.org/doc.cfm?doc=2030&l=en

Peter Goodhand is the CEO of the Canadian Cancer Society, Ontario Division, a community-based organization of volunteers whose mission is the eradication of cancer and the enhancement of the quality of life of people living with cancer. He also has a personal connection to cancer, as he was a primary caregiver and patient advocate throughout his wife's 12-year cancer journey after his family moved to Canada in 1988. It was from both of these perspectives that Mr. Goodhand elucidated the cancer patient's viewpoint on wait times, using personal experiences to complement multiple studies of patient perspectives.

The Truth Below: Unleashing the Power of Information to Elevate Performance

Michael Wagner, The Advisory Board Company

www.cprn.org/doc.cfm?doc=2031&l=en

Michael Wagner is currently a Managing Director with the Advisory Board Leadership Academies, a division of The Advisory Board Company. In his current role, Mr. Wagner is responsible for helping leaders in the health care professions elevate the performance of their institutions and innovate new ways to deliver higher quality care; working in the United States, Australia, Asia, the United Kingdom, and Europe. In his presentation, he discussed how software packages can help with flow management through better data mining.

Waiting Times for Primary and Specialists Care: The Views of Patients

Claudia Sanmartin, Health Information and Research Division, Statistics Canada

www.cprn.org/doc.cfm?doc=2032&l=en

Claudia Sanmartin works as a senior researcher in the Health Information and Research Division at Statistics Canada with a specific focus on waiting times (including contributions to the development of the first national survey on waiting times). She has also been a research collaborator with the Western Canada Waiting List Project since its inception. Dr. Sanmartin provided a unique overview of wait times across the country, reflecting on how population level data can help to define the wait time problem.