



Up to the challenge: The Ottawa Hospital accepts Ontario Health Quality Council's challenge to improve cancer surgery wait times

Ottawa, Ontario (June 16 2009) – The Ottawa Hospital accepts the challenge issued last week by the Ontario Health Quality Council (OHQC) and commits to improving wait time compliance for urgent cancer surgeries in breast, colorectal, lung and prostate cancer to 80 per cent by March 2010.

"The Ottawa Hospital welcomes OHQC's call for better compliance on wait times for urgent cancer surgeries," said Paula Doering, TOH's Vice-President Clinical Programs (Cancer). "We are committed to reducing wait times to cancer surgery for our patients, and we invite OHQC and the public to hold us to that commitment."

While the Ontario Health Quality Council cited "significant" wait-time improvement for several types of surgery, their fourth annual report also expressed concern that some cancer patients wait too long for urgent surgery.

OHQC stated that:

Patients needing cancer surgery are prioritized into four categories according to the urgency of their need. This ranges from Priority 1, which calls for "immediate surgery" to Priority 4 where the target is 12 weeks. The OHQC report shows that in Priority 2 or the "urgent surgery" category, half of patients did not get their surgery within the medically acceptable two-week timeframe, including some who waited twice as long.

"We strongly encourage all hospitals that do urgent cancer surgery to take a close look at their numbers and commit to aggressive targets to bring down their wait times to match the best in the province," said, Dr. Ben Chan, CEO of OHQC.

"The Ottawa Hospital will implement plans to increase our wait-time compliance rate for priority 2 and priority 3 cancer surgeries from 51% and 66% respectively, to at least 80% by March 2010," said Paula Doering. "We're delighted to work with partners such as OHQC to translate our commitment to enhanced quality and access to care into shorter wait times for cancer surgery."

To achieve this goal, TOH will place a sharp focus on improving the process that enables our patients and their physicians to move from deciding on the best possible treatment, to scheduling a timely surgery. Our efforts will also demand the highest degree of service excellence from our physicians and employees who, along with TOH, will be held accountable for meeting its new wait time targets.

- 30 -

Media Contact:

Allison Neill, Director of Public Affairs

The Ottawa Hospital

Office: 613-737-8899 ext. 70271 aneill@toh.on.ca