



**CANADIAN ASSOCIATION OF GASTROENTEROLOGY**  
**L'ASSOCIATION CANADIENNE DE GASTROENTÉROLOGIE**  
CAG/ACG National Office, 2902 South Sheridan Way, Oakville, Ontario L6J 7L6 CANADA  
Telephone: 905-829-2504 Fax: 905-829-0242 Toll Free: 1-888-780-0007  
E-mail: [cagoffice@cag-acg.org](mailto:cagoffice@cag-acg.org) Website: <http://www.cag-acg.org>

July 20, 2006

**President/Président**

William G. Paterson, MD  
Kingston, ON  
Ph: 613-544-3400 x 2332  
Fax: 613-544-3114  
[President@cag-acg.org](mailto:President@cag-acg.org)

**President Elect/Président Désigné**

Ronald Bridges, MD  
Calgary, AB  
Ph: 403-210-9356  
Fax: 403-220-8747  
[PresidentElect@cag-acg.org](mailto:PresidentElect@cag-acg.org)

**Past President/Président Sortant**

Desmond J. Leddin, MB  
Halifax, NS  
Ph: 902-473-7833  
Fax: 902-473-4406  
[PastPresident@cag-acg.org](mailto:PastPresident@cag-acg.org)

**V-P Clinical Affairs/V-P Affaires Cliniques**

Alan Barkun, MD  
Montreal, QC  
Ph: 514-934-8233  
Fax: 514-934-8375  
[ClinicalAffairs@cag-acg.org](mailto:ClinicalAffairs@cag-acg.org)

**V-P Finance/V-P Finances**

Carlo Fallone, MD  
Montreal, QC  
Ph: 514-843-1616  
Fax: 514-843-1421  
[Finance@cag-acg.org](mailto:Finance@cag-acg.org)

**V-P Secretary/Secrétaire**

Mary H. Perdue, PhD  
Hamilton, ON  
Ph: 905-525-9140 x 22585  
Fax: 905-522-3454  
[Secretary@cag-acg.org](mailto:Secretary@cag-acg.org)

**V-P Treasurer/Trésorier**

Derek McKay, PhD  
Hamilton, ON  
Ph: 905-525-9140 x 22588  
Fax: 905-522-3454  
[Treasurer@cag-acg.org](mailto:Treasurer@cag-acg.org)

**Committee Chair/Président(e)s de Comités**

**Admissions:** Nathalie Vergnolle, PhD  
**Archives:** Noel Williams, MD  
**Communications:** David Morgan, MD  
**Education (Acting):** Alaa Rostom, MD  
**Endoscopy:** David Armstrong, MD  
**Ethics:** J. Decker Butzner, MD  
**Finance:** Carlo Fallone, MD  
**Fellows' Course:** Nicola Jones, MD  
**Gender:** Winnie Wong, MD  
**Hepatobiliary/Transplant:** Paul Adams, MD  
**Liaison:** Susan Natshéh, MD  
**Nominations:** Mary Perdue, PhD  
**Pediatrics:** Peggy Marcon, MD  
**Practice Affairs:** Naoki Chiba, MD  
**Program Directors:** Jamie Gregor, MD  
**Regional Representation:** Peter Lightfoot, MD  
**Research:** Kris Chadee, PhD

**Executive Director**

Paul Sinclair, MSc

**Canadian Journal of Gastroenterology, Editor**

Paul Adams, MD

To: Federal Minister of Health  
Provincial Ministers of Health

Dear Minister,

Benchmarks for appropriate waiting times for medical care are an essential step towards improving access to health care services. Last year the Canadian Association of Gastroenterology (CAG) organized a multi-disciplinary consensus conference to set evidence- and expertise- based medically acceptable wait times for digestive health care. I am pleased to present you with the enclosed publication of the recommendations.

The CAG has also completed a study of wait times across Canada (soon to be published in the scientific literature), and comparison of actual times with consensus targets paints an alarming picture. For example, the consensus panel recommended that patients with symptoms highly suggestive of cancer be seen, and if indicated, endoscoped within two weeks of family physician referral. Yet, this target is currently met in only one third of patients.

A third CAG study of available human resources indicates that 33% of Canadian gastroenterologists are due to retire over the next 10 years, and that Canada has fewer specialists than many western countries.

With baseline assessment and standardization in place, the CAG will begin to evaluate quality and effectiveness within the system. Although no single strategy will provide the solution to the current situation, the CAG is committed to taking the steps possible and under our control towards improvement and we look to government to partner towards a comprehensive strategy that will provide a patient guarantee for all Canadians.

We invite you to visit the CAG website (Media Room) for more information on the steps we have taken to study and address problems of access to digestive health care. The CAG welcomes the opportunity to work with all stakeholders to address the clear deficiencies in digestive disease care.

Sincerely,

William G. Paterson, MD, FRCPC  
President, Canadian Association of Gastroenterology

c Provincial Ministers of Health  
The Honourable Tony Clement, Federal Minister of Health