

How provincial governments can #FastTrackCare

COVID-19 has exacerbated existing competition for bed space and caused surgical wait times to reach unsustainable levels, further burdening the healthcare system at this crucial time.

Nearly 200,000 Canadians have been waiting in pain for important orthopaedic surgeries across the country. Waiting for these surgeries is debilitating, reducing quality of life, and forcing patients to live in pain, impacting productivity and the economy.

Many orthopaedic procedures could have patients out of the hospital quicker or same day, but provincial governments must prioritize value-based procurement and invest in available technologies and techniques to make this happen.

Investing in orthopaedics will reduce strain on the healthcare system at a time when it needs it most, bring wait times down to recommended levels and improve the quality of life for hundreds of thousands of Canadians.

Investing in orthopaedic surgeries will help get Canadians back to work, faster.

Over 170,000 Canadians were waiting in pain for orthopaedic surgery in 2019, and this was before COVID-19 shut down hospitals from performing these essential procedures. In 2018, 53% of orthopaedic surgeons reported not having a job at the time of certification, up almost 20% from the year before and up 35% from 2011. This is the highest of any discipline.

To get Canadians out of pain and back to work the provincial government needs to:

1. Increase the number of orthopaedic surgeries that can be performed each year.
2. As provincial governments move towards more centralized healthcare procurement models, they must ensure a value-based lens is applied to all purchasing decisions by investing in important technologies and techniques that help enable the healthcare system to reduce recovery times, get better outcomes for patients and reduce wait-times.

This two-pronged solution would reduce the financial burden of orthopaedics on the healthcare system and have the biggest impact on increasing capacity by lowering demand for beds, getting Canadians healthy and allowing them to get back to work.

