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**Attention News/Health Editors:**

**Wait Time Alliance (WTA) Report Card on Provincial Benchmarks:  
An Easy “A” for Cardiac Bypass Surgery; an “F” For Failing to Address the  
“Big Picture” in Cardiac Care**

OTTAWA, April 19, 2007/CNW Telbec/ - While the Canadian Cardiovascular Society (CCS) gives provincial governments an ‘A’ for meeting or exceeding the benchmark for access to cardiac bypass surgery (CABG), it thinks that an ‘F’ is a fair grade for governments’ failure to look at the “big picture” of cardiac care that is provided to patients.

Dr. Blair O’Neill, Chair of the CCS Access to Care Working Group said, “Adopting a benchmark for CABG is a good start. But the First Ministers originally promised to address cardiac care, so the CCS developed patient-centred benchmarks for cardiac care - which encompass a broad range of services and procedures. This included benchmarks for referral to a specialist upon a patient’s first symptoms, right through to completion of rehabilitation and return to a healthy and productive life. Yet, by choosing a surgical procedure such as CABG, which is performed on only a limited population and is no longer as common as procedures such as angioplasty, governments are *not* making a meaningful and positive impact on wait times for Canadians – one in 3 of whom will die from heart disease. CABG is important but only one narrow aspect of cardiac care.”

“Also,” added Dr. Chris Simpson, Co-Chair of the Working Group, “access to CABG was already an “A” *before* the First Ministers adopted the benchmark, so the bar was set pretty low to begin with. What we’d like to see is the full spectrum of cardiac care benchmarks adopted by all provinces, and as part of the pan-Canadian Heart Health Strategy that is currently under development.”

The CCS looks forward to contributing to further dialogue on wait time strategies for the cardiovascular health care of all Canadians. Please go to [www.ccs.ca](http://www.ccs.ca) for a copy of the CCS’s benchmarks and a commentary on wait times. Backgrounder attached.

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**The CCS is the national voice for approximately 1600 cardiovascular physicians and scientists. The CCS mission is to promote cardiovascular health and care through knowledge translation (including dissemination of research and encouragement of best practices); professional development; and leadership in health policy.**

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