



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Unprecedented times require unprecedented collaboration

Joint publication from 15 North American cardiovascular societies addresses how to safely reintroduce diagnostic and treatment services during the pandemic

(May 2, 2020) As significant delays in diagnosis and/or treatment can lead to serious consequences for cardiovascular patients, it is appropriate that these patients are prioritized when healthcare systems return to normal capacity. The challenge this presents for healthcare delivery systems and providers is *how* to reintroduce cardiovascular services while ensuring the safety of patients, providers and their families.

In an unprecedented initiative, 15 major North American cardiovascular societies* have come together to outline a systematic approach to this challenge. "Safe reintroduction of cardiovascular services during the COVID-19 pandemic: Guidance from North American society leadership," – jointly published in the *Canadian Journal of Cardiology*, the *Journal of the American College of Cardiology*, the and *The Annals of Thoracic Surgery* – outlines a phased approach to safely reintroducing invasive cardiovascular procedures and diagnostic tests during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Lead author and Vancouver cardiologist David Wood, MD, president of the Canadian Association of Interventional Cardiology and member of the Canadian Cardiovascular Society, stresses the importance of a collaborative approach between healthcare delivery systems, regional governments and physicians.

"The collaborative approach will be essential to mitigate the ongoing morbidity and mortality associated with untreated cardiovascular disease," says Dr. Wood. "Hospital-based cardiovascular teams must partner with regional public health authorities to exchange up-to-date information on both the local status of the pandemic and the growing morbidity and mortality on cardiovascular waiting lists."

The approach espoused by the 15 societies balances the risk of COVID-19 exposure with the need for prompt diagnosis and treatment of cardiovascular disease. It highlights the importance of adequate supplies of personal protective equipment and COVID-19 testing for patients and staff, while at the same time protecting the pre-pandemic gains made in reducing morbidity and mortality from cardiovascular disease.

As to when this framework should be put into place, "There should be a sustained reduction in the rate of new COVID-19 admissions and mortality in the relevant geographic area before this roadmap can be implemented," explains Dr. Wood.

*Cardiovascular societies represented (*alphabetical order*)

- American College of Cardiology
- American Heart Association
- American Society of Echocardiography
- American Society of Nuclear Cardiology
- Canadian Association of Interventional Cardiology
- Canadian Cardiovascular Society
- Canadian Heart Failure Society Heart Rhythm Society
- Canadian Society of Cardiac Surgeons
- Heart Valve Society
- Society for Cardiovascular Angiography and Interventions
- Society for Cardiovascular Magnetic Resonance
- Society of Cardiovascular Computed Tomography
- Society of Nuclear Medicine and Molecular Imaging
- Society of Thoracic Surgeons

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About the Canadian Cardiovascular Society

The Canadian Cardiovascular Society is the national voice for cardiovascular clinicians and scientists, representing almost 2,000 cardiologists, cardiac surgeons and other heart health specialists across Canada. We advance heart health for all by setting standards for excellence in heart health and care, building the knowledge and expertise of the heart team, and influencing policy and advocating for the heart health of all Canadians.