

PET SCANS IN ONTARIO

Introduction

Since 2004, RTO/ERO has been aware of the use of Positron Emission Tomography (PET) as an accepted procedure in the diagnosis of various cancers. In 2005, an internal report profiled Ontario's position with respect to this procedure. A PET Screen Committee, established by the Ministry of Health & Long Term Care and headed by Dr. Bill Evans, Head of the Regional Cancer Centre at McMaster University, was to ascertain the viability of the PET scan.

Statistics Canada

Cancer will replace Heart Disease as the number one killer in Canada within ten years. In comparative data throughout Canada of PET scan accessibility, Ontario has the lowest number of scans funded per 100,000 population per year – six! In the province of Quebec, it is 209 per 100,000, and in Saskatchewan, Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia and Newfoundland which have no facilities to pay for out-of-province access, the scans range from 6.5 to 15 per 100,000 population.

Status in Ontario

On a worldwide basis, the major use of PET scanning is in oncology, while in Ontario PET scans are rationed. Current cancer patients are disadvantaged through lack of standard diagnostic scanning as well as future patients. The impact for the training of future medical nuclear specialists in Ontario is now being compromised. There are insufficient scans being processed for the required experience in the interpretation of PET scans resulting in residents travelling out-of-the-province and even out-of-the-country.

Proposed Action Plan

How long must Ontario hide under the rock of “committees” and “studies” and “trials” before it acknowledges what the rest of Canada and the world have known? Access to PET scans must become routine in Ontario and not tied to the bureaucratic red tape of “experimentation” and “trial”. This is the norm for the rest of the country and must become the norm in Ontario.

Questions

1. What procedures will your government/party implement to provide routine access to PET scans for cancer patients in Ontario?
2. What leading edge technology, including the use of experimental treatments, would your government/party employ in the diagnosis and treatment of cancer?

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