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ETHICAL ALLOCATION OF SURGICAL RESOURCES

I congratulate the editors for publishing the article by Dr. Michael Gross, entitled "The ethical allocation

of scarce resources in surgery: implants and costs" in the December 1997 issue (page 421).

Many excellent comments on the specifics of the article were published in the same issue. I would only add that in the Capital Health Authority in Edmonton, standardization of prostheses in orthopedic surgery has been one of the few things that have gone very right. Three years ago, all 27 surgeons in the region agreed on a contract for prostheses with 2 main suppliers. This action has reduced costs by over 35% and has provided a wide inventory of prostheses to meet all patient needs and surgeon concerns. This process was surgeon driven and controlled.

I think Dr. Gross speaks to a broader issue and that is the frustration that physicians and surgeons feel across Canada with health care reforms. In many areas of the country, physicians and surgeons have been disenfranchised from the process, and

decision-making has taken place with little regard for patient interests or with token medical input. After almost 4 years of restructuring in Alberta, many of the original problems remain (i.e., lack of beds, staff, equipment and operating room time).

In my opinion for health care reform to be a meaningful exercise, health care providers must be at the forefront of the reform. I think we all fully realize the financial constraints that the health care system in Canada must deal with. However, if decision-making is left to the "bean counters," the system as we know it will not survive.

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Notices

Avis

Update in general surgery

The University of Toronto's Faculty of Medicine will present a conference entitled "Update in general surgery" from Apr. 30 to May 2, 1998, at the Sutton Place Hotel, Toronto. Credits are available for MO-COMP and AMA Category 1. For registration information contact: Continuing Education, Faculty of Medicine, University of Toronto, Room 121, 150 College St., Toronto ON M5S 1A8; tel 416 978-2719, fax 416 971-2200

Wound care symposium

The Prairie Skin and Wound Committee and the Canadian Association of Wound Care will host a symposium entitled "Western Canada wound care symposium: meeting the challenges of the future" at the

Winnipeg Convention Centre, Winnipeg, from May 13 to 15, 1998. The conference provides an interdisciplinary forum where participants will learn about new educational and research developments in wound care. The sessions and interactive workshops will cover such topics as education, interdisciplinary wound care, diabetic ulcers, pressure ulcers, venous stasis ulcers and vascular assessment. Participants will have an opportunity to interact with leading experts and colleagues from across North America. For registration information contact Christine Paley, The Medicine Group Ltd., Ste. 610, 3 Robert Speck Parkway, Mississauga ON L4Z 2G5; tel 905 896-2800 or 800 667-4134, fax 905 896-2850, email medgroup@passport.ca or register Online at <http://www.wound-care-mtg.com>

International Federation of Societies for Surgery of the Hand

"The future at hand: sharing knowledge towards the 21st century" will be the theme of the 7th Congress of the International Federation of Societies for Surgery of the Hand (IFSSH). The congress, hosted by the IFSSH and MANUS Canada will be held from May 24 to 28, 1998, at the Vancouver Trade and Convention Centre, Vancouver, BC. For further information contact: Conference Secretariat Events by Design, 601-325 Howe St., Vancouver BC V6C 1Z7; tel 604 669-7175; fax 604 669-7083; 74117.273@compuserve.com

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