drugs to market. That's really not their statutory responsibility."

Goozner added that a complete prohibition against conflicted medical experts would "be a signal that they understand that there is both a public perception, and an internal problem, about the culture of the FDA."

The FDA hopes to issue final guidelines "as soon as possible," says agency spokesperson Heidi Rebello. — Wayne Kondro, *CMAJ*

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News@ a glance

Transplant tourism: In a bid to curb the growing incidence of organ trafficking, now estimated at 10% of global transplantation practices, the World Health Organization has unveiled a blueprint of acceptable principles and standards for cell, tissue and organ donation and transplantation. "If all countries agree on a

common approach, and stop commercial exploitation, then access will be more equitable and we will have fewer health tragedies," Coordinator of the Clinical Procedures team in the WHO's Department of Essential Health Technologies Dr. Luc Noel said following the Mar. 30 release of the blueprint at the second Global Consultation on Transplantation.

Progress report: The Wait Time Alliance of the Canadian Medical Association issued its spring report card on provincial efforts to meet wait-time benchmarks established for 5 priority areas designated in the 2004 federal—provincial health care accord. The Alliance elevated its

grades for both hip replacement and cataract surgery from a C (last November) to a B (Apr. 19). But knee replacements (formerly assessed in tandem with hip replacements) continued to receive a C grade, as did magnetic resonance imaging. B grades were also issued to CT and cancer care, while sight restoration and cardiac care (bypass grafting only) were the only areas to rate an A grade.

Prescribing powers: Alberta pharmacists have officially been given the legislative authority to initiate new prescriptions under certain circumstances (*CMAJ* 2006;175:463-4). The regulations allow pharmacists to alter the dose, formulation and regimen of a drug; renew prescriptions; substitute another drug for a prescribed Schedule 1 drug; administer flu travel vaccines; and assess patients and prescribe without necessarily obtaining physician authorization. — compiled by Wayne Kondro, *CMAJ*

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