



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Winnipeg innovators Mark Torchia and Richard Tyc recognized with first-ever Governor General's Innovation Award

Calgary, AB (April 28, 2016) – Dr. Mark Torchia and Richard Tyc, P.Eng of Winnipeg, MB are among the first Canadians to receive a Governor General's Innovation Award.

The pair are being honoured for their development of the NeuroBlate® System, a unique device that is helping surgeons to successfully treat patients with malignant brain tumours that were previously considered inoperable. With this life-changing technique, patients are often able to leave the hospital a day or two after surgery with a minimal amount of post-procedure pain.

“My initial reaction to learning about the award was shock,” said Dr. Torchia, an associate professor of surgery in the University of Manitoba's Faculty of Medicine. “It's an incredible honour, and the fact that it's an inaugural award makes it particularly special.”

Richard Tyc was equally surprised by news of their selection as one of six winners of the first-ever Governor General's Innovation Award. “It's pretty special to even be included on the short list of nominees for something like this that honours innovation in this way, but to be selected as one of the recipients is humbling.”

Announced in 2015, the Governor General's Innovation Awards inspire Canadians to embrace innovation and to emulate innovative, entrepreneurial risk-takers who have developed new or better ways of creating value and who are having a meaningful impact on our quality of life. The awards recognize that innovation is one of the primary driving forces behind Canada's prosperity, standard of living and quality of life.

Torchia and Tyc received the 2015 Ernest C. Manning Foundation Principal Award for the NeuroBlate® System and were nominated for the Governor General's Innovation Awards by the Foundation. “The Governor General's Innovation Awards are the highest honour for Canadian innovators,” noted Manning Foundation President Jennifer Diakiw. “In creating these awards, the Governor General is shining a light on Canada's innovation strengths and top innovators like Dr. Torchia and Mr. Tyc. We are thrilled to see them receive this prestigious award.”

Dr. Torchia and Mr. Tyc believe that awards like the Governor General's Innovation Award and the Manning Foundation's Principal Award have an impact that extends far beyond recognizing individual winners. “For Richard and I, as developers of a medical technology, awards like this provide another way for patients and their families, people who are in the midst of some despairing diagnosis, to learn about something that could benefit them,” explained Dr. Torchia. “It offers information and hope.”

They also see awards like this as helping to promote and encourage Canadians to pursue innovation and create new ideas, while also expanding our understanding of what innovation means. “What I appreciate so much about the Governor General’s Innovation Award is that it encompasses such a broad range of what innovation can be,” said Dr. Torchia. “Often we tend to focus so much on innovation technology, but innovation is bigger than that. These awards speak to the fact that innovation can be anything that makes a lasting change for society.”

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*The Ernest C. Manning Awards Foundation was established in 1980 by Alberta Energy Company CEO David Mitchell. He, with former Alberta premier Ernest C. Manning and others, created the foundation to encourage, celebrate and reward Canadian innovators of all ages and across all disciplines. Over the past 35 years, the Foundation has built a national network of 3,000 young and adult innovators who are leaders and visionaries in all areas of human endeavour. It has awarded innovation prizes to 272 Canadians who have added value to our economy and have demonstrated the imagination to innovate and the stamina to succeed in developing and successfully marketing a new concept, process or procedure to improve the human condition. **For more information, including the full list of 2015 Innovation Award winners, visit: www.manningawards.ca.***

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