



Canada's Newest Research Institute Unveiled in Thunder Bay

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Thunder Bay – This morning, Canada's newest research institute was unveiled at Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre (TBRHSC).

The newly-minted Thunder Bay Regional Research Institute is a sovereign corporation with its own board of directors. It will develop integrated research strategic plans as a joint venture partner of the TBRHSC.

The announcement marks a key milestone for transforming healthcare in Northwestern Ontario, positioning TBRHSC as a leader in patient care through research. Today, the new board was introduced. It will be chaired by Mr. Keith Jobbitt, a former Chair of the Board for Thunder Bay Regional Hospital, and governed by five other proven leaders: Dr. Gary Polonsky, Mr. Don Caddo, Dr. Lou Siminovitch, Mr. Robert Paterson, and Mr. Michael Gourley.

"This is a milestone occasion. The launching of Canada's newest research institute strategically places Thunder Bay among Canada's leading Academic Health Sciences Centres," Mr. Jobbitt said. "This research institute will support an integrated research environment, one that involves patient, academic and research communities. It holds great potential for transforming care delivery in key areas, including cardiac care, cancer care, and neurosciences."

In 2006, TBRHSC launched a new Corporate Strategic Plan with Research and Teaching as a main pillar. One of the recommendations of the new Corporate Research Strategic Plan was to support the development of a separate research institute.

There are good reasons for taking this route; for example, a separate research corporation is often more attractive to private/industry investors, it ensures research funding is kept separate from clinical funding and, with a board of directors that is entirely focused on research, the corporation will be nimble and able to quickly take advantage of opportunities.

A key factor in the research institute's success will be its collaboration and partnerships with other research institutes, private industry partners, and academic institutions like Lakehead University, the Northern Ontario School of Medicine, and Confederation College.

"This initiative will further solidify Lakehead University's partnership in health sciences research," said Dr. Rui Wang, VP Research, Lakehead University.

A prime example of this collaboration is the Molecular Medicine Research Centre, which is the first and flagship program under the Thunder Bay Regional Research Institute.

"We are truly hitting the ground running with the great work that has already been done with the MMRC. The first four scientists have been identified, the translational research space at ICR Discoveries, where the MMRC will be housed, is close to completion, and we've established true partnerships with Lakehead University," said Michael Power, Founding and Acting CEO of the Thunder Bay Regional Research Institute and VP of Regional Cancer Services and Diagnostics, TBRHSC.

Award Winning Program

Cancer Care Ontario (CCO) recently awarded its prestigious Innovation Award to the MMRC. Innovation Awards seek to recognize, encourage and reward the development of innovative leadership projects that enhance and improve cancer care performance in Ontario. Confederation College President and CCO Board member Pat Lang presented the award to the MMRC group today on behalf of Cancer Care Ontario.

"This award along with today's announcement of a new research corporation is further proof that Thunder Bay and Northwestern Ontario can build and sustain a knowledge-based economy, with good jobs and academic opportunities for our citizens," Mayor Lynn Peterson said. "With an award-winning, innovative program already under its belt, Thunder Bay Regional Research Institute will be a great asset to our community."