

Media Release

Thunder Bay Regional Research Institute becomes a member of MaRS Innovation

Dr. John Rowlands' X-ray Light Valve technology will be one of the first TBRI patents to be brought to market by MaRS Innovation.

January 26, 2011 (Thunder Bay, ON) – MaRS Innovation welcomes Thunder Bay Regional Research Institute as its newest member. MaRS Innovation, which stands for Medical and Related Sciences, is an incorporated non-profit organization with an international, independent, industry-led Board of Directors, and is the commercialization agent for 16 members who are leading Ontario life sciences and commercialization agents. Partners include University of Toronto, Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre, and University Health Network.

“We are very proud of the fact that TBRI decided to become a member of MaRS Innovation. TBRI is the first member outside Toronto; it opens the gate for us to have an outreach for opportunities throughout the Province,” says Dr. Raphael (Rafi) Hofstein, President and CEO, MaRS Innovation. “It is especially exciting since we view the R&D operations at TBRI as profoundly complimentary to many of the technologies that MaRS Innovation has been processing for the last two years.”

In order to become a member and a shareholder of MaRS Innovation, an academic and research organization must have intellectual property in life sciences in: medical drugs, medical devices, diagnostic imaging, information and communications technologies, or advanced manufacturing and clean technologies. MaRS Innovation is supported by the Government of Canada through the Networks of Centres of Excellence Program to focus on turning patient relevant inventions into real commercial opportunities.

“The board really weighed the importance of becoming a member of MaRS Innovation,” says Keith Jobbitt, Chair of the Board of Directors at Thunder Bay Regional Research Institute. “I feel we did our due diligence here and we understand how our membership will benefit our scientists.”

Michael Power is CEO of TBRI. He says TBRI is well positioned: “As the newest member of MaRS Innovation, we are now able to work actively with local, regional, provincial, federal and industry partners to build health research and commercialization capacity in Northwestern Ontario. In other words, we are finally able to bring scientific discoveries to the market, with the support of the Governments of Canada and Ontario, to be used in medical research that will benefit patients.” He explains. “This is a huge stepping stone for TBRI. To become a shareholder of MaRS Innovation means our regional program is credible in the eyes of the best, in the greater Toronto area.

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Dr. John Rowlands is the Founding Scientific Director of TBRI. One of his research projects is called the X-ray Light Valve (XLV). It is an inexpensive, fast, efficient alternative to digital X-rays. The goal is to use the technology in rural Canada, and in emerging markets such as China and India, for example.

XLV will allow x-ray images to be read off of a liquid crystal layer, using a basic digital light scanner, conventional computer technology and a high-voltage power supply. Similar to the components of a digital camera, the images are quick and easy to analyze, manipulate and transfer.

“The idea is that the XLV technology would be used first in mammography as a faster, better, less expensive way to screen for breast cancer, and eventually that would expand to other types of medical imaging,” says Dr. Rowlands. “Right now we use costly, cumbersome machines to provide digital x-ray images. By comparison, XLV technology is a fraction of the cost to manufacture, it produces a better image, and it allows more people to have access to digital x-rays.”

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About MaRS Innovation:

MaRS Innovation is the commercialization agent for the exceptional discovery pipeline of 16 leading Ontario academic institutions. As a single entry point to total member research activity of \$1B of annual research and development, MaRS Innovation represents an easy gateway for investors and licensees who wish to gain access to technology assets in Ontario. MaRS Innovation was conceived as a vehicle to integrate the discovery assets and resources of its members, with significant further leverage from government and private sector, in an effort to turn the most promising technologies from its members into products and services for local and global markets. Supported by the Government of Canada through the Networks of Centres of Excellence and its member institutions, MaRS Innovation is a partnership that is truly transformational and focuses on turning research strengths into real commercial opportunities. MaRS Innovation builds a portfolio of the most promising assets and advances commercialization into global markets through industry partnerships, licensing and company creation. For more information about MaRS Innovation visit: www.marsinnovation.com

About Thunder Bay Regional Research Institute (TBRI):

TBRI is an independent, not-for-profit research corporation partnered closely with Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre. Scientists and clinicians work together with academic and industry partners to bring advanced diagnostic technology to our patients. World-class research is conducted under three platforms: Advanced Detection Devices, Imaging Guided Interventions and Probe Development and Biomarker Exploration. TBRI strives to improve the quality of patient-centred healthcare by advancing new standards of excellence in the clinical investigation of novel molecular imaging-based diagnostic technologies. For further information, please visit our website at www.tbri.com

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