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Dr. Peter Nickerson awarded Kidney Foundation Medal for Research Excellence

[Montreal, Quebec – May 5, 2018] The Kidney Foundation of Canada is pleased to announce Dr. Peter Nickerson is the recipient of the 2018 Medal for Research Excellence. Dr. Nickerson has earned an international reputation as a leader in kidney transplant research. His groundbreaking work is helping to advance clinical practice in Canada by providing doctors a better understanding of why transplanted kidneys are rejected and detecting signs of organ rejection earlier.

The announcement was made during the Canadian Society of Nephrology's Gala on May 4, marking the CSN's 50th anniversary.

“Transplantation is often the best option for Canadians who have lost renal function,” said Elisabeth Fowler, National Director of Research. “Dr. Nickerson is at the forefront of research to help doctors identify problems with transplanted kidneys earlier, before notable damage occurs. His work is helping to improve outcomes for transplant recipients.”

Applying his research into practice, Dr. Nickerson is widely recognized for his role in building a national transplant network for hard-to-match kidney patients through his work as medical advisor with Canadian Blood Services' Donation and Transplantation program. Launched in 2013, the Highly Sensitized Patient (HSP) program is giving new hope to Canadians who previously had very little opportunity for a kidney transplant, saving lives and impacting hundreds of patients and families. Of the more than 2,200 patients who are waiting for a kidney transplant in Canada today, almost 500 are highly sensitized, and therefore likely to reject more than 95 per cent of potential donor organs. Historically, these patients have waited much longer for suitable organs, spent more time on dialysis, or died before a suitable organ match could be found.

“With Dr. Nickerson's leadership and collaboration with the team at Canadian Blood Services in launching the Highly Sensitized Patient Kidney program, health systems are now sharing kidneys across the country for one purpose: to find more Canadian patients a kidney, sooner,” said Dr. Graham Sher, CEO, Canadian Blood Services (CBS).

“This program has enabled transplants for more than 400 sensitized patients, some of whom waited decades on dialysis,” added Amber Appleby, interim director, donation and transplantation, Canadian Blood Services.

Dr. Nickerson is a Distinguished Professor of Internal Medicine and Immunology at the Max Rady College of Medicine, University of Manitoba, and Vice Dean (Research) in the Rady Faculty of Health Sciences. He holds a number of other senior positions in addition to the abovementioned, including Medical Director of Transplant Manitoba, Medical Advisor with CBS, Medical Consultant, Transplant Immunology Laboratory, at Shared Health and the Flynn Family Chair in Renal Transplant at the University of



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Manitoba. His research interests include transplant immunology, non-invasive diagnostics monitoring immune activation, and health policy and system design.

Dr. Nickerson and his team are developing non-invasive diagnostic tools (urine chemokine measurements) that are now in the final validation stages for use as diagnostic and prognostic markers. The researchers have also been recognized for their work identifying the role of HLA antibodies in causing premature kidney graft loss. Currently, the team's research has been at the forefront of HLA molecular mismatch assessment, which is setting the stage for precision and personalized medicine in kidney transplantation.

"Early in his career, Dr. Nickerson blazed new trails by applying bench-side research to clinical practice," said Dr. Brock Wright, Chief Executive Officer, Shared Health, a Manitoba health organization. "His innovative thinking has been instrumental in developing progressive standardized laboratory methods that have changed practice in Canada and offered hope to individuals living with kidney disease across the country."

Over the course of his career, Dr. Nickerson has been recognized by his peers for his outstanding contributions to the scientific community. In 2016, he was awarded both the Paul I. Terasaki Clinical Science Award from the American Society of Histocompatibility and Immunogenetics, and the Clinician-Scientist Established Investigator Award by the American Society of Transplantation. In 2012, he was awarded a Fellowship in the Canadian Academy of Health Sciences.

About the Medal for Research Excellence: Since its creation in 1996, the Medal for Research Excellence has been awarded annually to a Canadian resident who is recognized nationally and internationally for excellence in kidney research. Excellence can be determined by the impact of an individual's research on the discovery of new knowledge to advance the field of kidney-related research. Another key factor is the potential of the recipient's research to significantly improve patient care.

About The Kidney Foundation of Canada: *Kidney health and improved lives for all people affected by kidney disease* - for over 50 years, this vision has guided The Kidney Foundation of Canada to be a collaborative, inventive and focused leader in the development of programs, services, research opportunities and awareness campaigns that have had a positive impact on Canadians living with, or at risk of developing kidney disease. Since 1964 The Kidney Foundation of Canada has contributed \$119 million to medical research projects to ensure that treatment options and patients results continue to improve.

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