Alumnus Delivers Record-Setting Gift
University of Manitoba Launches New Dental Implant Program

The Faculty of Dentistry at the University of Manitoba, through the record-setting support of an alumnus, is pleased to announce the launch of a unique dental implant program targeting underserved populations.

Dr. Gerald Niznick (DMD 1966) has come forward with a $500,000 commitment to the Faculty of Dentistry to develop and launch a novel denture program that will demonstrate how modern, standardized and cost-effective dental implant procedures can and should be a part of conventional dental therapy available to and affordable by all. It is the largest gift ever received by the Faculty of Dentistry at the University of Manitoba.

“At the same time, an important state-of-the-art educational curriculum component will be created at Canadian dental schools with the Faculty of Dentistry at the University of Manitoba, establishing a leadership role in managing this unique program,” said Dr. Anthony Iacopino, Dean of Dentistry. “This would not be possible without the support of Dr. Niznick who has contributed generously to dental education and research of implant dentistry on a global basis, and will now provide a direct benefit for our local community.”

This three-year commitment, initially targeting First Nations populations, will see each participating dental school recruit an Implant Fellow to assist with the teaching, research, and service components of the program. Dental students and practicing professionals will be taught how to use these systems for denture patients both in preclinical and patient care settings.

“This program will be the first of its kind nationally or internationally and will provide an international leadership position for the Faculty of Dentistry in the area of implant dentistry,” Dean Iacopino said. “Our graduating students will be among the best prepared graduates for patient care in this increasingly important area of dental practice.”

Treatment will be provided for up to 30 patients in each university center annually. Outcomes will be reviewed and evaluated by Dr. Niznick and the University with the goal of expanding the program based on clinical results.

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Alumnus Spurs Another Faculty First
Implant program to feature new, innovative technology

Canada’s First Nations populations currently suffer from many unmet oral health needs that significantly affect their quality of life. One common problem is a very high rate of tooth loss, resulting in the need for full dentures. Now, thanks to a gift of $500,000 from dental implant industry leader, Dr. Gerald Niznick, the University of Manitoba will lead an innovative program that will see the potential for dramatic improvements to the oral health of First Nations communities across the country.

The Gerald Niznick First Nations Implant Dentistry program will see Manitoba’s dental school take the lead in a national implant program that is planned to include three schools, with potential to expand further. This will position the Faculty of Dentistry as an international leader in the area of implant dentistry and will ensure that its graduating students are among the best prepared for patient care in this important developing area of dental practice.

“Dr. Niznick is known for his philanthropy in dentistry and implant dentistry in particular. However, this is a unique gift as it targets a critical unmet need for an underserved population and it will dramatically improve quality of life for these patients. We are thankful that Dr. Niznick has given our school the opportunity to participate in his community service vision,” said Dean of Dentistry, Dr. Anthony Iacopino.

The problem with traditional complete lower dentures is that they are inherently unstable. Patients may experience difficulty in chewing function, leading to poor nutrition and overall health. Dr. Niznick first introduced the solution to this problem in 1982 and since that time, his treatment of placing 2 free-standing implants in the edentulous lower jaw for retention of an overdenture, has become the minimum recommended standard of care by the American College of Prosthodontists. Two years ago, Dr. Niznick filed a patent on a new 1-piece implant, called GoDirect, that dramatically simplifies and reduces the cost for this life-changing procedure.

This desire to innovate dental education led Dr. Niznick to partner with Manitoba’s dental school to establish a novel program that will serve the dual purpose of improving the oral health and quality of life of First Nations populations in addition to demonstrating that implant overdentures should be part of conventional dental therapy available and affordable to all endentulous patients.

“I am pleased my implant innovations will serve such a worthy cause and proud that the University of Manitoba is taking a leading role in this project” said Dr. Niznick. “It will provide dental students and faculty with a rewarding experience that will positively influence dental implant therapy across Canada.”

Dr. Niznick graduated from the Faculty of Dentistry in 1966 and received a Master’s Degree in Prosthetics, the specialty of replacing missing teeth, from Indiana University in 1968. He has received an Honorary Doctorate degree from U. of M. in 2004, for his leadership in the field of implant dentistry, as evidenced by receiving 35 US Patents. He is one of the Faculty’s most successful oral health entrepreneurs, having founded several implant companies over the last 30 years and is now President and CEO of Implant Direct Sybron Int’l. This success has allowed him to become one of the greatest
supporters of dental education, particularly in the field of implant dentistry, helping to foster innovation and excellence.

“This gift from Dr. Niznick will certainly bolster our ‘Drive for Top Five’ strategic plan and help us continue to develop one of our critical ‘Nine Pillars of Innovation’ within the area of education and training in implant dentistry,” said Dr. Iacopino. “It will be yet another demonstration that we have reached our goal of becoming one of the top five dental schools in North America.”

Thanks to Dr. Niznick and his vision for implant dentistry education, the Faculty of Dentistry, its students and the large First Nations population that is geographically close to us will benefit from new research, instruction and treatment in this exciting field.

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