



## NEWS RELEASE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**April 20, 2021**

### **NEW CONTEST GIVES MANITOBANS CHANCE TO NAME STATE-OF-THE-ART TELEPRESENCE ROBOTS**

**Winnipeg, MB** – Victoria General Hospital Foundation, Research Manitoba and the College of Rehabilitation Sciences at the University of Manitoba’s Rady Faculty of Health Sciences announced a contest today to name 15 new telepresence robots. Participants can submit names through The Vic Foundation website at [TheVicFoundation.ca](https://TheVicFoundation.ca) for their chance to win a special prize package.

These telepresence robots are part of a new study by UM researchers which will assess whether these robots can effectively support informal caregivers of individuals living with dementia. This study was funded through an inaugural strategic partnership between The Vic Foundation and Research Manitoba.

“We are proud to partner with Research Manitoba to support innovation in our province and the work of Dr. Reg Urbanowski, Dr. Amine Choukou, and their research team,” says Charlene Rocke, Executive Director of The Vic Foundation. “We are thrilled to give Manitobans the opportunity to be part of a project that builds on our proud history of empowering Manitobans to live safely and independently at home through Victoria Lifeline by assisting caregivers of individuals living with dementia and supporting their vital efforts to sustain independence and quality of life for those in their care.”

A recent report from the Canadian Institute for Health Information indicates 45 per cent of family caregivers providing care for older adults with dementia experience distress related to their role, compared to just 26 per cent of caregivers providing care for older adults without dementia.

“Some caregivers sacrifice so much to take care of their loved ones,” says Dr. Amine Choukou, assistant professor in occupational therapy at the College of Rehabilitation Sciences, Rady Faculty of Health Sciences, University of Manitoba. “We anticipate these robots will help them live healthier, more balanced lives.”

The strategic partnership between The Vic Foundation and Research Manitoba is designed to promote innovation, support local research, and advance the economy.

“Our partnership with The Vic Foundation is very exciting for us and the many talented researchers working on this community-based project,” says Karen Dunlop, Chief Executive Officer of Research Manitoba. “Because it has the potential to advance bioscience innovation in our province and impact families, caregivers, and individuals living with dementia. This contest is a unique way for Manitobans to connect with and champion the research community.”

Manitobans have until May 14 to submit their names, and the winners will be announced on social media on May 21.

**Background:**

Research Manitoba and the Victoria General Hospital signed a Strategic Partnership agreement on July 30, 2020 and the total partnership funds are \$670,000. On September 4, 2020 Research Manitoba announced the Manitoba COVID-19 Rapid Response Grant Competition and eight Manitoba clinical trials related to COVID-19 and applied health research. A portion of the funding announced on Sept. 4, 2020 is part of this telepresence robot partnership with the UM's College of Rehabilitation Sciences (\$100K from RMB and \$100K from VGHF). On September 24, the partners announced the allocation of the remainder of the partnership funding, which is \$470,000. ([Click here for more info](#))

**What is a Telepresence Robot?**

A telepresence robot is a computer, tablet, or smartphone-controlled robot, which may include a video-camera, screen, speakers, and microphones. This helps the person/people interacting with the robot view and hear its operator and the operator can simultaneously view what the robot is "seeing or looking at" and "hearing."

**About Victoria General Hospital Foundation:**

[Victoria General Hospital Foundation](#) is dedicated to advancing healthcare at Victoria General Hospital and in our community to create healthier futures for us all. Since 2009, we have invested more than \$15 million in innovations that enhance patient care, prevent disease and injury, and improve the overall health and well-being of our community.

**About Research Manitoba:**

[Research Manitoba](#) is a provincial funding agency, which strives to champion the Manitoba research community, supports early career researchers and graduate students in Manitoba and coordinates funding of research in health, natural and social sciences, engineering, and the humanities. Our organization also fosters partnerships to advance and strengthen Manitoba's resources, assets, and innovations. Research Manitoba's goal is to become the most improved province in research.

**About College of Rehabilitation Sciences, Rady Faculty of Health Sciences:**

The [College of Rehabilitation Sciences](#) offers Masters programs in occupational therapy, physical therapy and a Bachelor's program in respiratory therapy. In addition, the college offers the Master of Science, Rehabilitation Sciences graduate degree program and is one of the four participating academic units to offer the Applied Health Sciences (AHS) PhD program at UM.

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