

Alberta Doctors' Digest

Dr. Norman M. Kneteman



Dr. Neil D.J. Cooper (L) and Dr. Norman M. Kneteman (R). (Photo credit: Curtis Comeau).

Dr. Norman Kneteman has devoted his life and his career to liver and organ transplantation. He has been honoured for his work many times by such organizations as the Canadian Liver Foundation, the Canadian Diabetes Association and the Canadian Society of Transplantation, and has received many awards, including the Alberta Centennial Award, the Queen Elizabeth Golden Jubilee Medal, and the Order of Canada. The AMA Medal for Distinguished Service recognizes the value of his work and the contribution he has made to the practice of medicine and to the lives of patients in Alberta.

He earned his medical degree from the University of Alberta, then trained in transplantation at the Washington University School of Medicine in St Louis, Missouri. He came back to the University of Alberta to establish a Liver Transplant Program, which has become the premier transplant program in the country, performing all of Western Canada's pediatric transplants. He also established the U of A's hepatobiliary surgery program and has trained many of the surgeons currently performing complex hepatobiliary and pancreatic surgery for cancer in Alberta.

Dr. Kneteman is the consummate surgeon-scientist, with a translational research laboratory exploring treatments for hepatitis C and hepatocellular carcinoma in the population he treats with liver transplantation. He is recognized internationally for his contributions to transplantation, including the humanized liver chimeric mouse model and the Edmonton Protocol for Islet Transplantation, as well as his hepatobiliary and pancreatic surgical skills. His humanized liver chimeric mouse model and research with Dr. Lorne Tyrrell has led to drug discovery and the ability to treat certain serotypes of hepatitis C.

As director of the Liver Transplant Program in Edmonton, he has assembled a superb team that has refined and developed the Edmonton Protocol, established the living liver donor program, and provided crucial support to the Edmonton Multiorgan Transplant Program. His collaborative research with Dr. Locksley McGann, Dr. Ray Rajotte, and Dr. James Shapiro established the basis of islet isolation and cryopreservation for the Edmonton Protocol. His American Society of Transplant Surgeons accredited fellowship program has trained surgeons all over the world. His success in recruiting and training top talent – and the number of provincial, national, and international awards his trainees have received – is a testament to both his professional and his personal generosity.

Dr. Kneteman is currently the provincial director of Transplant Programs for Alberta Health Services, and remains active as a surgeon and a translational scientist. He still serves on many committees and remains passionate about transplantation and the care of patients with complex hepatobiliary and pancreatic problems. His record of publications is extensive and continues to grow, and he is in demand for lectures both in Canada and internationally. He has also long been a passionate and effective advocate for organ donation, giving talks and interviews and making media appearances to raise public awareness of the need for donation and of the lifesaving benefits of transplantation.