

REMARKS FROM THE DIRECTOR

Alberta Diabetes Institute



I would like to extend a very warm welcome to this momentous two day event commemorating the 25th anniversary of the Edmonton Protocol. Today, we reflect on a quarter-century of innovation, dedication, and profound impact on the lives of individuals living with type 1 diabetes across Canada and around the globe.

The success of the Edmonton Protocol is a testament to the power of collaborative effort. We owe an immense debt of gratitude to the brilliant minds and tireless efforts of our researchers and clinicians, whose unwavering commitment to pushing the boundaries of medical science made this breakthrough possible. Their dedication transformed an ambitious vision into a tangible reality. We also extend our sincere thanks to the funding bodies* whose crucial support fueled this pioneering work, and to the provincial government and Alberta Health Services, whose strategic vision and robust infrastructure provided the essential environment for such groundbreaking research to flourish.

However, the deepest gratitude must be reserved for those without whom this transformative treatment would simply not have been possible: the courageous participants with type 1 diabetes who volunteered for these early trials, placing their trust in us and contributing directly to scientific advancement. And, with profound humility, we honor the incredible generosity of the organ donors and their families. Their selfless act of giving the gift of life has paved the way for countless individuals to experience a life free from the daily burden of insulin injections. Their legacy lives on in every success story of the Edmonton Protocol.

Twenty-five years ago, the Edmonton Protocol laid a foundational stone, making the notion of a life free from the need for insulin treatment tangible. It demonstrated that cell therapy for diabetes was not just a dream, but an achievable goal. As we celebrate this significant milestone, we also look forward with immense hope and excitement. We are now on the cusp of a new era, where stem cell-derived islet cell therapies are rapidly advancing and are truly on the threshold of clinical application. What began as a treatment for the few is now poised to become a reality for the many, offering renewed hope and a brighter future for countless individuals worldwide.

Finally, our sincere thanks go to the Gairdner Foundation and all of our sponsors for their invaluable support in making this commemorative event possible. Your commitment helps us celebrate our past achievements and inspire our future endeavors.

Thank you.

Peter Senior

Director of the Alberta Diabetes Institute

Dr. Charles A. Allard Chair in Diabetes Research

* Alberta Diabetes Foundation, Breakthrough T1D, CIHR, Diabetes Canada, DRIFCan and many others