

Media Release



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Ophthalmologist first Manitoban to receive Lifetime Achievement Award

Misericordia's Dr. Lorne Bellan is the first Manitoban to win the Canadian Ophthalmological Society's prestigious Lifetime Achievement Award recognizing those who have made a significant contribution to eye and vision care.

Significant contribution is an understatement when it comes to Dr. Bellan, whose achievements range from creating a provincial centralized cataract surgery waitlist to bringing an ophthalmology residency program to Manitoba.

"I'm thrilled," said Dr. Bellan. "It's very special to be honoured by your peers, and it's the highest award so it's quite exciting."

He's not only being recognized for his extensive research in ophthalmology, but also for leading national studies on reducing wait times. In 2005 he was one of the inaugural members of Canada's Wait Time Alliance, a group of doctors from across Canada studying access to specialty care.

Dr. Bellan and his team helped the federal government set up benchmarks as to how long people should wait for cataract surgeries.

Dr. Bellan is also credited for spearheading the University of Manitoba Ophthalmology Residency Program located at MHC.

"It's a team effort to build a residency program so I certainly didn't do it all that on my own," he said. "But from the get go it was obvious to me at the time we didn't have enough ophthalmologists in Manitoba."

Dr. Bellan said the method for determining how many ophthalmologists were needed in the province was no longer accurate and needed to change.

"The bulk of the surgeries we do pertains to the elderly population," he said.

“What I introduced was this notion that we had to do our calculation on the number of people we needed relative to the number of people over 65.”

Dr. Bellan also received multiple other awards - including the Canadian Society of Oculoplastic and Reconstructive Surgeons Lifetime Achievement Award - at the Canadian Ophthalmological Society’s recent annual meeting in Quebec City.

As he reflects on his 30-year career, he has a message to anyone considering getting into the profession: “It’s a very rewarding career, there have been amazing advances in technology and our patients are very appreciative of everything we do.”

INTERVIEWS/PHOTO OP:

When: TODAY 12 p.m. (noon)

Where: Misericordia Health Centre GREEN DESK (2nd floor Buhler Eye Care Clinics)

What: Interview Dr. Bellan and then watch him perform a highly-specialized eye procedure (approximately 10 minutes) at 12:30 p.m.

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