

I'm personally pleased to stand before you as the CISEPO founder and director of international continuing education for the faculty of medicine, University of Toronto. As you may know it's just three months since I was suddenly stricken with paraplegia due to a spinal cord injury secondary to tumor, hospitalized and unable to walk. Since my neurosurgery and rehabilitation I'm delighted to have walked to the podium, to thank my circle of care – family, friends and health care professionals - to make these introductory remarks, to recognize our partners and to briefly review the history of teleHealth and CISEPO's role on the world stage with this technology for Canada and across the Arab and Israeli frontier.

First let me welcome all participants at all Canadian and international sites today to this international round. I'm particularly pleased to introduce Ms Bonnie Berger, Commercial Counselor and Senior Trade Commissioner from the Canadian Embassy in Tel Aviv (also representing Ambassador Paul Hunt who was unable to attend) and Ms Mona Ashkar, Trade Commissioner at the Embassy of Canada. Both are visiting the Technion - Israel Institute of Technology today and have joined us for these videoteleconference rounds.

Today's international behavioral neurology round is yet another milestone for CISEPO, University of Toronto and the Peter A. Silverman global eHealth program. I'd like to review the milestones in this innovative development on the global scene and celebrate the participation of key partners in the development of what we are seeing today.

The concept of distance medical rounds through high-quality production was pioneered by our own CISEPO vice chair, Tim Patterson. Tim established proof of concept in the mid-1980's with programming between Canada and Romania and then Canada and China and India. It is that remarkable experience that brings us to this sophisticated moment.

The first videoteleconference diagnostic rounds took place in 1993 when I reviewed a patient and their x-rays between Canada and Israel utilizing ISDN as a technology. This received wide media attention as the patient was helped substantially.

We began our first formal University of Toronto accredited teleHealth rounds through the Peter A. Silverman global eHealth program, in Otolaryngology and Pathology between Mount Sinai Hospital, University of Toronto and hosted by the Surgical Skills Centre and the Technion on April 26, 2002, establishing the format and prototype.

In 2006 with the support of a large donation from the Saul A Silverman Family Foundation and Peter A. Silverman QC, we formalized the Peter A. Silverman global eHealth program among the MOU signatories: myself for CISEPO; Professor Harvey Skinner, for the Department of public health sciences at the University of Toronto; Joe Mapa, president of Mount Sinai Hospital and Steven Herbert, president of Baycrest.

Since then we have undertaken regular rounds in behavioral neurology and geriatric psychiatry on a regular basis to date. We have demonstrated leadership in the field and created an ongoing distance educational model going forward.

I would therefore like to introduce Professor Harvey Skinner, chair of CISEPO and dean of health at York University, who is with us today. I would also like to acknowledge Tim Patterson of course. Further I would like to recognize Dr. Morris Freedman, who has received a University of Toronto Colin Woolf award for his work in these rounds and to also acknowledge the Department of Neurology at the University of Toronto, the excellent ongoing efforts of Dr. Sandra Black at Sunnybrook Hospital, and the recent expanding engagement with the World Federation of Neurology.

Professor Hillel Pratt, a long-standing member of the CISEPO family, has just assumed the role of Dean of the school of graduate studies at the Technion which forms a focal point for today's presentation hosted by the Technion. We congratulate Hillel who has worked with us for two decades and we thank the Technion, its senior administration and Hillel and his colleagues for receiving the Trade Commissioner and Canadian Embassy today.

As for the CISEPO team on the ground, I would like to acknowledge the CISEPO Director for Jordan, Professor Ziad Elnasser who joins us today in his role as CEO of the King Abdullah University Hospital in Irbid. He's also joined by Professor Tewfik Daradkh, Chair of the Department of Psychiatry and Dean of the Faculty of Medicine of Jordan University of Science and Technology. Both have worked diligently with our CISEPO team through the years in teleHealth and curriculum-based educational programming.

We are also pleased to acknowledge Dr. Yehudah Roth. Yehudah is chair of Otolaryngology at Wolfson Medical Center, University of Tel Aviv and CISEPO director for Israel. Yehudah has recently co-authored a groundbreaking edition of the prestigious Otolaryngology Clinics of North America devoted to teleHealth advances supported by Dr. David Goldenberg at Pennsylvania State University and a former faculty member at the Technion.

We're also pleased to acknowledge Professor Ziad Abdeen, CISEPO director for Palestinian programs and his team at Al Quds University as they engage in our many programs.

So as we move into 2012, I think it's important and timely to reflect on how we got to this unique moment. I hope the few words I've had to say convey our thanks and best wishes to all of you for helping us achieve this wonderful educational medium to advance health care and cooperation internationally.

I would also take the opportunity on behalf of the entire medical team to thank the patients and families who have participated over the years to help us all learn and to the staff, residents and fellows who have worked hard to make each round an excellent educational experience for all.

Always moving forward!