

October 7th, 2022

The very best Departmental Acknowledgements come from our members, who feel compelled to share their admiration for their closest colleagues. The following tribute comes from the PICU family: Pediatric Critical Care fellows (2021-2022), medical & nursing colleagues and Robbie Thompson.

“A genuine leader is not a searcher for consensus but a molder of consensus.”
Martin Luther King Jr.

This week's Departmental Acknowledgement goes to a leader, a giant in critical care medicine and someone who is changing the world by changing our thinking: **Dr. Sam Shemie**.

The academic: Sam first came to the Montreal Children's Hospital in 2002. He completed his pediatric residency and his critical care fellowship at the Montreal Children's Hospital followed by a fellowship and short career at the Hospital for Sick Children in Toronto, where he remained Honorary Staff. Once he returned to Montreal, he became full professor by age 48, held the Bertram Loeb Chair in Organ and Tissue Donation at the University of Ottawa for a decade and now holds a Medical Advisory role of Deceased Organ Donation for Canadian Blood Services.

The researcher: Sam asks research questions that are innovative and push boundaries. His research interests include the clinical and policy impact of organ failure support technologies, the development and implementation of national ICU-based leading practices in organ donation and research related to end-of-life care, death determination and deceased donation. Behind his research is the commitment to improve the care provided to pediatric and adult patients worldwide. He has published over 185 impactful publications, over 15 book chapters, has given over 500 invited talks; of which 300 were international/national and has received a total of \$6.5M in grants from a variety of funding agencies. He has led more than 20 international initiatives that significantly impacts our practice and the way we understand death and organ donation. In 2006, he led a forum of 89 experts that resulted in a made-in-Canada definition of neurological determination of death for children and adults, to ensure consistency and reliability in its diagnosis, declaration, documentation, and reporting. In August 2020, he completed The World Death Project, a culmination of 4 years of unfunded work with broad international collaboration that developed a minimum standard for brain death determination. Published in JAMA with links to 17 supplemental papers, this work was endorsed by 35 world federations and international societies in critical care, neurocritical care, neurology, and neurosurgery, with the goal to harmonize practices across the world. Ground breaking work.

The mentor and teacher: We have trainees come from all corners of the world to train with Sam Shemie. He is an excellent educator who has an ability to deeply challenge the fellow's understanding of physiology. He coaches trainees to find the answers to scientific questions in and out of medicine. “He is a door opener to new worlds, he allows one to see the work of the pediatric intensivist with different glasses, and he is a career trampoline for those who have a curious mind, no matter their previous experience, cultural background, or age”. “He is an inspirer”. He prompts his trainees to be critical and purposeful thinkers. This doesn't end with medical trainees – the interdisciplinary team and his colleagues learn from him every day. He mentors by giving his colleagues leadership opportunities, engaging them in research, connecting them to people of influence and lending an ear when they are simply having a bad day.

The doctor & the person: Sam is one of those people who leaves a lasting impression after one short interaction. He inspires and we are lucky that he chose the Montreal Children's Hospital to share his expertise. He is usually the last to speak, always calculating and acknowledging members of the team. "Sam leads by example and is always in control". "He can walk into any situation and immediately calm the room just with his presence". It really shows how he is respected and revered by the PICU community, his colleagues, trainees, and patients. Robbie, one of his patients said it best: "Sam constitutes what I believe to be the definition of a great Doctor, and I don't say that just because he's resuscitated me. In all the years that I've known him, Sam's kindness, caring soul, and humor have always preceded the steps he makes to come and greet you. The devotion to not only his practice, but to help human beings through a combination of compassion and scientific knowledge, is something that I believe all of us, not just medical professionals, can learn from. And Sam teaches us, simply just by being Sam."

Have a good weekend.

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