

VISION QUEST

2020



FIGHTING
BLINDNESS
CANADA



PRESENTED BY **BAYER INC**

WELCOME



It gives me great pleasure to welcome you to Vision Quest 2020!

Fighting Blindness Canada's mission is to drive development and access to new treatments and cures for blinding eye diseases. We do this by funding the most promising vision research in Canada and by working with the community and health care policy makers to ensure that new treatments are available to all Canadians. Thanks to our generous donors and supporters like you, we're getting closer every day.

2019 was a year of change for Fighting Blindness Canada. We expanded our mandate to include all blinding eye diseases and reflected that expansion by changing our name to Fighting Blindness Canada. I would also like to introduce you to Larissa Moniz who is the new Director of Research and Mission Programs. Larissa brings her research experience from Canada and the UK to her role and in 2020, will be developing Fighting Blindness Canada's new research strategy to ensure we are having greatest impact for Canadians.

In 2019, we challenged Canadian vision researchers to tell us how they would transform the lives of people living with blindness and vision loss - and they responded more enthusiastically than ever before! We received 48 applications for funding, four times more than our last grant competition. So far, we have funded six projects, which we will share with you today. In 2020, we hope to raise more funds to support additional meritorious research projects.

We would like to thank our Vision Quest sponsors for 2020: our Presenting Sponsor, Bayer Healthcare, and our National Visionary Sponsors, Novartis Canada and Allergan, and our National Event Sponsor, AGTC. We would also like to thank our National Partner in Accessibility, Accessible Media Inc. Their support enables Fighting Blindness to bring you the latest breakthroughs in vision research.

As we enter 2020, we are seeing the promise of research become a reality. New treatments for glaucoma, AMD and the first vision-restoring gene therapy for an inherited retinal disease will be submitted for Canadian drug approval and I look forward to telling you more about these innovative treatments later this year. These incredible successes would not be possible without the support of our community. We are so grateful to all of you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Doug Earle". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Doug Earle
President & CEO
Fighting Blindness Canada

GET INVOLVED

Every year, people across Canada join the fight against blindness by participating in our signature fundraising events: Last Call, Cycle for Sight, Comic Vision and Ride for Sight. Thousands of motorcyclists, comedy fans and cyclists coast-to-coast fundraise for vision research, bringing us closer than ever to treatments and cures for blinding eye diseases. Find out how you can become a participant or 'virtual rider' and raise money for sight-saving research by calling 1.800.461.3331 ext. 231 or visiting our event websites:



lastcalltoronto.ca

cycleforsight.ca

comicvision.ca

rideforsight.com

**YOU CAN
RESTORE
HOPE & SIGHT**

**JOIN OUR MONTHLY
GIVING PROGRAM TODAY**

Visit: fightingblindness.ca



Sign up today and you'll receive a pair of designer sunglasses donated by MARCHON

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Please consider leaving a gift to Fighting Blindness Canada in your will. Contact Ann Morrison at 1.800.461.3331 ext. 232 or amorrison@fightingblindness.ca

PROGRAM

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 2020

1:00 pm	REGISTRATION OPENS
1:00 pm - 2:00pm	REFRESHMENTS AND EXHIBITORS Make sure to visit all the tables and fill up your BINGO card for a chance to win!
2:00 pm - 2:10pm	OPENING REMARKS Doug Earle, President & CEO, Fighting Blindness Canada
2:10 pm - 2:30pm	FBC RESEARCH UPDATE Dr. Larissa Moniz, PhD, Director, Research & Mission Programs, Fighting Blindness Canada Dr. Larissa Moniz will be give a brief overview of FBC's research portfolio with a focus on our newest six research awards, announced last month
2:30 pm - 3:10 pm	AGE-RELATED MACULAR DEGENERATION: CURRENT AND FUTURE TRENDS Dr. Bernard R. Hurley, BSc, MD, FRCS vitreoretinal Surgeon at the University of Ottawa Eye Institute and Professor of Ophthalmology at the University of Ottawa Fifteen years ago a diagnosis of age-related macular degeneration (AMD) meant that going blind was only a matter of time. Fortunately, since the discovery of anti-VEGF injections, blindness is no longer a certainty. Dr. Hurley will discuss our current approaches to treating AMD and share information about exciting new treatments on the horizon.

**3:10 pm -
3:50 pm**

SLOWING OR STOPPING DISEASE PROGRESSION BY PREVENTING THE DEATH OF CELLS IN THE RETINA: OUR PROGRESS TOWARD THE CLINIC

Dr. Catherine Tsilfidis, PhD, Senior Scientist at the Ottawa Hospital Research Institute

Gene therapy is a cutting edge technique for treating disease by using healthy copies of genes to replace damaged ones. Many eye conditions are caused when important cells in the eye die and lose function. Dr. Tsilfidis is researching a form of gene therapy that can prevent this cell death. This discovery may have implications for many eye diseases; two of these conditions, retinitis pigmentosa (RP) and glaucoma will be discussed. Dr. Tsilfidis will highlight her team's research thus far and how they are translating these laboratory findings into clinical care.

**3:50pm -
4:00pm**

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE: 2020 AND BEYOND

MORE QUESTIONS?

We have recently launched the health information line to help people navigate the complex research and ophthalmology landscape in Canada.

We are here to help.

Contact the **health information line:**

Call us **1.888.626.2995**

Email us **healthinfo@fightingblindness.ca**



SPEAKERS



DR. LARISSA MONIZ PhD Director, Research & Mission Programs
Fighting Blindness Canada

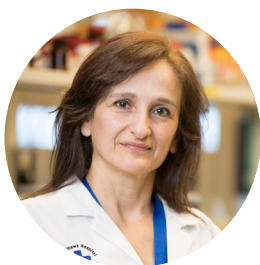
Larissa Moniz joined Fighting Blindness Canada in 2019. She has a PhD in molecular biology from the University of Toronto and continued her research in the UK at UCL. Larissa has worked in research and knowledge translation in at a number of health charities both in the UK and Canada, most recently at Prostate Cancer Canada.

At Fighting Blindness Canada Larissa's team works to deliver on the mission of the organization which is to fund research towards treatments to preserve and restore vision, ensure that all Canadians have access to appropriate vision care and to provide support and information to individuals living with vision loss.



DR. BERNARD R. HURLEY BSc, MD, FRSCS

Bernard R. Hurley, BSc, MD, FRCSC is an Assistant Professor at The University of Ottawa Eye Institute where he is also the residency program director and the fellowship program director. He has received awards for top clinical instruction in the department in 2016, 2013 and 2011. He completed his post-graduate medical education with a Retina Fellowship at the Wills Eye Hospital in Philadelphia where he was twice awarded the Outstanding Fellow Award. He has written several chapters and has been the author or co-author of many peer-reviewed publications on topics including diabetic retinopathy and age-related macular degeneration. He has received research support from the E.A. Baker Foundation.



DR. CATHERINE TSILFIDIS PhD, Senior Scientist, Ottawa
Hospital Research Institute

Catherine Tsilfidis is a senior scientist in the Neuroscience Program of the Ottawa Hospital Research Institute, and an Associate Professor in the Departments of Ophthalmology and Cellular and Molecular Medicine at the University of Ottawa. She currently holds the Don and Joy Maclaren Chair in Vision Research. Her research is aimed at developing a gene therapy strategy that blocks apoptosis and slows down retinal disease progression. She has applied this approach to the treatment of animal models of retinal disease. Her laboratory is currently optimizing gene therapy parameters for application to human disease. Dr. Tsilfidis is the Assistant Dean of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion at the Faculty of Medicine at the University of Ottawa. She is passionate about promoting the advancement of women in science and has created mentoring programs for female faculty and for female post-doctoral fellows.

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