

Natural Health Product Policy and Regulatory Leader Michael Smith Receives NHP Research Society Neil Tower's Award

(Vancouver, BC, May 10th, 2017). The nonprofit NHP Research Society of Canada (NHPRS) announces that Michael Smith has been selected as the recipient of its 2017 Neil Tower's Award.

Dr. G. H. Neil Towers (1923-2004) was a botanist, an ethnobotanist, a plant chemist, a brilliant teacher and an accomplished researcher who established his scientific career first at McGill, then at the National Research Council in Halifax until 1964 when he joined UBC where he maintained an active research program as a full faculty member until 1989 and as an emeritus faculty until his death. The award honouring Neil Towers was established by the NHPRS in 2012 to honor those who have made significant contributions to natural products research, regulation and commercialization in Canada and worldwide.

Dr. Michael Smith is an internationally recognized leader in regulation, policy development and research programs in the areas of Natural Health Products and Dietary Supplements. For the last 20 years, he has provided expert advice to the governments of Canada, Australia and across the world. Michael originally trained as a pharmacist and licensed naturopathic doctor. In 2001 he joined the Natural Health Products Directorate at Health Canada and over the next eight years held several positions leading to serving as Director of the Bureau of the Partnerships, Outreach and International Affairs responsible for International collaboration and stakeholder engagement. On a 2-year assignment from Health Canada, In 2009 Michael became the Assistant Secretary/Head of the Office of Complementary Medicine at the Therapeutic Goods Administration in Australia responsible for the management of the pre-market regulatory framework for complementary medicines. Over his career, Michael has worked actively on the international stage most notably with the World Health Organization (WHO) Traditional Medicine program and in 2009, was appointed to its 12 member Expert Advisory Panel on Traditional and Complementary Medicine.

Among his many noteworthy accomplishments, Dr. Smith was one of primary technical drafters of the WHO Global Strategy for Traditional & Complementary Medicine (2014-2023) and continues to participate in WHO projects, working groups and consultations notably dealing with the regulation and policy setting related to traditional and complementary medicines. Michael is an Adjunct Fellow at the National Institute of Complementary Medicine, University of Western Sydney in Australia and Adjunct Professor at National Center for Natural Product Research, University of Mississippi. He sits on numerous advisory boards including the consumer advisory board of the Integrative Health Institute at the University of Alberta, the advisory board of the Centre for Integrative Medicine, University of Toronto and the advisory board of the American Botanical Council.

An Internationally recognized leader in the regulation, policy development and research programs dealing with Natural Health Products and Dietary Supplements, Michael has acted as a consultant to organisations in both the private and public sector in North America and overseas. He has extensive experience managing national and international priority setting exercises and stakeholder engagement. It is especially apt that he is the recipient of the Neil Tower's Award as Dr. Smith was integral to the framing and formation of the NHP Research Society of Canada in 2003 as a strategy for addressing the identified need for a National NHP Research Network.

"Michael Smith is a widely respected source of perspectives and insights into the regulation of herbal medicines internationally", says Dr. Paula Brown of the NHPRS Board, "and played an integral role in establishing research priorities for NHPs in Canada."

"To receive an award for contributing to the advancement of the NHP research community is a great honour," said Smith. "My thanks to the NHP Research Society for their continual efforts to promote the integration of basic, clinical and policy research, advancing NHPs in Canada."

"Michael has always provided measured, thoughtful, and insightful approaches to the issues and challenges we face as an NHP Industry, " said Connie Kehler, president of the Canadian Herb, Specialty Ag and NHPs Coalition, "his consultative and cooperative approach helped set the foundation for NHP regulation in Canada."

Past recipients of the Neil Tower's Award include Dr. Paula N. Brown (2016), Dr. Pierre Haddad (2015), Dr. Jacqueline Shan (2014), Dr. Susan Murch (2013) and Dr. John Thor Arnason (2012).

The Neil Tower's Award was presented to Dr. Smith at the 14th Annual NHP Research Conference on March 9th in Vancouver, British Columbia.

The NHP Research Conference and Awards Ceremony was sponsored by generous contributions from the following members of the herb, dietary supplement, and natural products community:

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About the NHP Research Society of Canada

The Natural Health Product Research Society of Canada is a federally incorporated non-profit organization founded in 2003 by a collaboration of academic, industry, and government researchers from across Canada, whose mission is to facilitate and support meaningful, scientifically rigorous research and education in the field of natural health products. www.nhprs.ca