

Friday 26 October 2012

**MEDIA RELEASE**

## **Foundations Work Together to Breathe Life into Research for Preterm infants**

The Neonatal and Paediatric Intensive Care Unit (NPICU) at the RHH has benefited from an additional \$2000 of funding from the MyState Foundation to continue vital research through the Royal Hobart Hospital Research Foundation.

The investigation funded by the RHH Research Foundation, the *Automated control of inspired oxygen concentration in preterm infants* project will apply the additional donation from the MyState Foundation toward a vital piece of equipment; a much needed air-oxygen blender which is pivotal to the research project.

This particular funding from the MyState Foundation was provided by MyState employees who work to raise money through their own initiatives and provide donations to local charities on an annual basis.

RHH Research Foundation Chairman David Catchpole said, "We are delighted that through the MyState Foundation's broad activities, employees at MyState have chosen a current medical research project within the RHH NPICU."

"The Royal Hobart Hospital's Neonatal & Paediatric Intensive Care Unit (NPICU) clearly features strongly in the hearts of MyState employees as this is the fourth time that Dr Peter Dargaville, his team and 'their tiny patients' in NPICU has been chosen to benefit from MyState donations – this time providing equipment that allows important medical research to continue," John Gilbert, CEO of MyState Limited said. Representing the MyState Foundation as a Director, John Gilbert stated that the primary objective of the Foundation was to support the local community.

"As a leading private sector supporter of Tasmanian community youth organisations, the MyState Foundation continues to strengthen our local community in a variety of ways.

"This donation not only assists the youngest members of our community, but will also assist generations in years to come.

"In the last 10 years, MyState employees have raised over \$45,000 and are incredibly proud to be providing a platform for many families in supporting vital projects such as this," John said.

Lead researcher, Dr Peter Dargaville explained that the equipment purchased through the donation was particularly important for the research project which aims to refine the amount of oxygen that is provided to babies with respiratory disease.

“Currently our nurses are required to manually adjust the amount of oxygen flow and recent research tells us that too much or too little can have long term consequences. When connected to the automated system, this blender will remove much of the guess work involved, and shorten the response time when a baby’s oxygen levels suddenly change. It will also allow us to collect some initial data, which is vital for gaining more funding to fully pursue this research agenda,” Dr. Dargaville said.

Importantly, donations such as this one from the MyState Foundation, allow medical research projects to commence, often providing early findings that warrant further research and attract additional research funding of a higher order.

“After receiving initial funding from the RHH Research Foundation via two clinical research grants for work on surfactant therapy in preterm infants, we were delighted to have recently received a grant for this project from NH&MRC valued at \$1.17m” Dr. Dargaville said. This grant was announced on 19 October 2012, and will allow a multicentre international trial of surfactant therapy to be conducted, coordinated by the Menzies Research Institute Tasmania, with Dr. Dargaville as lead investigator.

Noting that the Foundation’s Research Fellow Professor Bruce Taylor was also announced as the recipient of a further \$945,000 in the same grant round, the recent announcement of NHMRC funding will serve to expand the research careers of a number of RHH Research Foundation alumni who in turn assist in advancing the careers of emerging health and medical researchers locally.

“This clearly demonstrates the value of organisations such as MyState and local communities working together to support and foster initially small starter research grant projects, recognising the ability to leverage these to the national stage,” concluded RHH Research Foundation Chair, David Catchpole.

- ENDS -

## Media Event details

**For more info:** Heather Francis, RHHRF CEO - 0407 201 113

**Media event:** Dr. Peter Dargaville – Lead researcher, NPICU Director  
John Gilbert – Director, MyState Foundation  
Heather Francis – CEO, RHH Research Foundation

2.00pm, Monday 29 October

### Notes:

- Please meet in the foyer of the RHH before 1.50pm where a RHHRF team member will meet and escort all media through to the media event with Peter Dargaville, Director of the Neonatal & Paediatric Intensive Care Unit.
- Please note that the NPICU is a patient care area where privacy of patients and their families is of utmost importance.