

Media Release

"Extraordinary" Canadian physician wins national award for contributing to global health

March 6, 2013, Ottawa — A Montreal physician who has made a career of risking her safety to help patients in some of the world's worst conflict zones has been awarded the 2013 Teasdale-Corti Humanitarian Award by the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada.

"Dr. Liu is an extraordinary physician who has placed herself continually in situations of danger and deprivation so that she could help patients," said Andrew Padmos, MD, FRCPC, CEO of the Royal College. "She exemplifies the unwavering commitment to humanitarianism that the Teasdale-Corti award is intended to recognize."

Dr. Joanne Liu, FRCPC, is a pediatrician who has had an extraordinary career with Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF - Doctors Without Borders), working in such countries as Haiti, Sudan, Congo and more than a dozen others. She has treated patients while listening to missiles flying overhead and slept with her boots on in case of a rebel attack. Just weeks after she finished working in a Kenyan camp in September 2011, two of her female MSF colleagues were abducted and are still missing today. Despite these challenges, Dr. Liu has saved many lives and also endured the hardship of witnessing countless deaths she was powerless to prevent.

A graduate of McGill University, Dr. Liu has served on the Board of Directors of MSF Canada and acted as its president. Currently practising as an emergency pediatric physician at CHU Sainte-Justine Hospital in Montreal, she has also served in Canadian hospitals from Yellowknife to Vancouver. Today, she is working on an innovative telemedicine project that provides doctors and patients with access to specialized medical advice in major humanitarian emergencies.

"As a doctor, I have always told myself that that we should never get used to death," said Dr. Liu. "In my career, I fight to give people the best possible chance to live their lives. For me, carrying on with this work is about keeping in mind the larger objective of what one can do for other people."

The Teasdale-Corti Humanitarian Award is named for Dr. Lucille Teasdale-Corti, a Canadian surgeon and international aid worker, and for her husband Dr. Piero Corti — both of whom contributed significantly to the development of medical services overseas. It recognizes physicians who go above and beyond the norms of practice to provide health care and medical services worldwide.

This award is a prestigious element of the Royal College awards and grants program, which distributes \$1 million dollars a year through awards, grants, fellowships and visiting professorships.

About the Royal College

The Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada is the national, not-for-profit organization that oversees the medical education of specialists in Canada by setting high standards for postgraduate medical education and continuing professional development. In collaboration with health organizations and government agencies, the Royal College also plays a role in developing sound health policy in Canada.

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