Inova's Christopher O'Connor to Receive Distinguished Scientist Award from American College of Cardiology

By **Inova Newsroom** | February 4, 2021

Falls Church, VA (February 4, 2021) The American College of Cardiology (ACC) recently announced Christopher O'Connor, MD, MACC, President of the Inova Heart and Vascular Institute (IHVI), was chosen to receive the 2021 ACC Distinguished Scientist Award – Clinical Domain.



This award recognizes Dr. O'Connor's extraordinary career as a trailblazer in cardiovascular and heart failure research, pharmacology, cardiac rehabilitation, and healthcare policy, and the indelible mark he has made on future generations of cardiologists and researchers.

"Dr. O'Connor has made lasting contributions to the field of cardiovascular medicine through his dedication to improving cardiovascular health and enhancing patient care," said ACC President Athena Poppas, MD, FACC. "It is an honor to be able to recognize him with the Distinguished Scientist Award – Clinical Domain and celebrate his tremendous achievements in the cardiovascular field."

He graduated from the University of Maryland Magna Cum Laude and finished his medical school training a member of the Medical Honor Society, AOA, as well as receiving Cum Laude distinction. He completed Internal Medicine Residency and Cardiovascular Fellowship training at Duke University Medical Center, where he served as senior investigator at the Duke Clinical Research Institute and held several leadership positions including Director of Heart Failure, Chief of Cardiology, Chief of Clinical Pharmacology, and Director of the Duke Heart Center.

In 2015, he accepted the leadership role at Inova Heart and Vascular Institute, where he has further enhanced IHVI's reputation as a top-tier center for clinical care through expanded participation in clinical trials and research.

His early interests in pharmacologic and nonpharmacologic therapies and strategies for congestive heart failure treatment bloomed into a passion for excellence in clinical trial design and conduct.

"Chris has shown tremendous thought leadership in coming up with important questions that are unaddressed and need to be adequately answered in cardiovascular medicine, and has seen the work through to fruition," said Wayne Batchelor, MD, MHS, Director of Interventional Cardiology and Interventional Cardiology Research for IHVI.

"He has been the Principal, Senior, or Collaborating Investigator for more than 700 publications, but the sheer number of his publications, while stunning, does not do justice to the novelty and clinical impact of his contributions to the literature," said Anthony DeMaria, MD, MACC, Judith and Jack White Chair of Cardiology at the University of California San Diego, and Former Editor-in-Chief of the *Journal of the American College of Cardiology*. "In an era when randomized clinical trials have become the pillars of evidence-based medicine, Dr O'Connor has been involved in the conception, leadership, execution and presentation of many of the most important studies in heart failure. His work has changed the way we manage patients with heart disease."

He led landmark studies in acute decompensated heart failure that identified novel treatment and management strategies in use today and has been instrumental in designing studies around novel pharmacologic agents for heart failure. His research and advocacy of cardiac rehabilitation resulted in Medicare coverage for cardiac exercise therapy following heart attacks, forever altering the physical landscape of hospital cardiac wings across the globe. Another arm of his research shed light on the relationship of mental state with physical recovery and survival prospects in patients with cardiac disease.

Dr. O'Connor has a national and international referral base for complex cardiovascular patients and has been recognized by U.S. News and World Report in the top 1% of cardiologists practicing in this discipline. His influence spans across a full range of medical leadership roles covering clinical research, regulatory, research and professional organization domains.

In 2017, Dr. O'Connor co-founded The Heart Failure Collaboratory (HFC), a successful public-private partnership with FDA, including a consortium of representatives from NIH, the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services, patients, private payers, industry representatives, and several academic and clinical trial investigators from the heart failure community. The HFC holds think tank and special focus conferences, establishes expert consensus statements and works to foster efficient clinical research to optimize the care of patients with heart failure.

Dr. O'Connor is the founding Editor-in-Chief of *JACC: Heart Failure* and serves on the editorial board of several top tier medical and cardiology journals. He has led a number of ACC committees, and is a Past-President of the Heart Failure Society of America, a Fellow of the European Society of Cardiology and the European Heart Failure Association and was awarded the prestigious Master of the American College of Cardiology (MACC) in recognition of his service and leadership in the ACC.

He has mentored scores of young and mid-career physicians who are now incorporating his expertise and insights to change the practice of cardiology.

"Chris has always practiced the mantra of evidence-based medicine and spreads his enthusiasm for clinical research like 'pixie dust' to all of those around him," said Christopher deFilippi, MD, FACC, Vice Chairman, Academic Affairs, IHVI.

He is particularly passionate about giving those who may have been excluded from opportunities the chance to showcase their talent and assume positions of responsibility and influence within the clinical research arena." The ACC presents three Distinguished Scientist Awards – in the basic, clinical, and translational research domains. The Distinguished Clinical Research award will be formally presented to Dr. O'Connor at ACC's annual conference in May 2021.

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About Inova

Inova is Northern Virginia's leading nonprofit healthcare provider, recognized in 2019 and 2020 by U.S. News & World Report, which named Inova Fairfax Hospital the #1 hospital in the Washington, DC region. Each of Inova's five hospitals holds a 5-star rating from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), distinguishing Inova as the highest-rated large health system in the U.S., and the only system to have all hospitals receive five stars. All five Inova hospitals were awarded 'A' grades for the Fall 2020 Leapfrog Hospital Safety Grades, recognizing Inova's achievements in protecting patients from harm and providing safer healthcare. Inova Fairfax Medical Campus was named to the Fortune/IBM Watson Health 100 Top Hospitals list, ranking in the top 10 nationwide among Major Teaching Hospitals. Our mission is to provide world-class healthcare – every time, every touch – to each person in every community we have the privilege to serve. Inova's 18,000 team members serve more than 2 million individuals annually through an integrated network of hospitals, primary and specialty care practices, emergency and urgent care centers, outpatient services and destination institutes. Inova is home to Northern Virginia's only Level 1 Trauma Center and Level 4 Neonatal Intensive Care Unit. Its hospitals have a total of 1,936 licensed beds. More information and statistics about Inova can be found at www.inova.org.

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