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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Rick Hansen and Dr. Charles Tator discuss spinal cord injury in Canada**

Monday, May 10, 2010, Toronto, ON – Tomorrow, on May 11<sup>th</sup> celebrated athlete and Order of Canada recipient, Rick Hansen, will deliver the inaugural ThinkFirst Canada lectureship alongside fellow Order of Canada recipient, neurosurgeon and founder of ThinkFirst Canada, Dr. Charles Tator. Rick Hansen will be addressing the significance of spinal cord injury in Canada.

As a spinal cord injury survivor and athlete, Hansen champions the serious issue of spinal cord injury in Canada and around the world. "In addition to our efforts to find a cure for spinal cord injury, we must also focus on and invest in prevention methods," says Hansen. "I've dedicated my life to raising awareness and funding for spinal cord injury research while also encouraging kids and youth to safely participate in sports and athletic activities."

Reducing the impact of injury starts with prevention, "targeted injury prevention programs have proved successful in reducing catastrophic injury," says Tator. In a recent study completed by Dr. Tator and colleagues they concluded that the 69 per cent reduction in spinal cord injury in hockey players since 2001 is directly due to the development and dissemination of injury prevention programs.

It's not just doctors that believe we need to deliver an ounce of prevention. In the current ThinkFirst-Tator study on catastrophic injury, participants indicated that 79 per cent of their sustained injuries were preventable. "With injury being the leading killer of children and youth in Canada it's more important than ever to invest in injury prevention," says Tator, "that's why we've developed the lectureship, to keep injury prevention top of mind."

Think *first* and help reduce the burden of injury in Canada. Visit [thinkfirst.ca](http://thinkfirst.ca) to learn more about keeping children and youth injury free.

*ThinkFirst Canada is a national, charitable organization dedicated to preventing brain and spinal cord injury. Founded in 1992 by renowned neurosurgeon, Dr. Charles Tator, ThinkFirst Canada continues to be an injury prevention leader encouraging children and youth and those who care about them to be active and safe. ThinkFirst advocates for proven injury prevention strategies including helmet use. At the heart of ThinkFirst Canada are 19 Chapters that stretch across the country. ThinkFirst's injury prevention message is promoted through TD ThinkFirst for Kids, sport*

*programs, schools, community presentations, concussion education and with the help of VIPs (Voices for Injury Prevention), a dedicated group of injury survivors who share the message that prevention is the only cure.*

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