

5 Questions with Dr. Keith R. Brunt, IMPART investigator team Canada, Dalhousie Medicine New Brunswick:

1. How do you encourage innovation in your organization?

We tell and demonstrate that you can do incredible science, develop and improve new medical technologies. The IMPART trainees are being shown how to identify the opportunities in problems and use science and creativity to develop innovation that overcome them. We encourage new ways of seeing solution-based approaches to find success.

2. What are some of the biggest barriers to innovation?

People often misunderstand the to embrace innovation requires that something be destroyed or displaced. That can mean either the old way of doing things is inferior or the new way of doing things fails. Innovation requires change or failure and people are uncomfortable with both those things. We must give people small-scale safe places to be innovative and reward them regardless of the outcomes, because the lessons we learn with a small failure can lead to the right innovation to improve our lives.

3. Why do you think innovation is important for Saint John and the province?

We are small, nimble and hungry for the investment that comes with being innovative and taking some risk. Investments have been made to make Saint John a place where you can't find a reason not to move your business or come to try to create one. Low costs, great entertainment, world class health specialists, advanced education and established industry partners, make Saint John and the Maritimes the next most obvious big play in Canada to break into the knowledge-based economy. People can grow their ideas and be creative here and that matters to artists, technologists, and entrepreneurs that drive innovation.

4. What are some simple things you've done to drive change?

We showed that opening ourselves up to explore our problems with industrial partners is hugely beneficial and mutually rewarding. Our population is getting healthier and we are seeing the early signs of a bullish run on development in the health, information, communication, art, environment and energy sectors. Given this, we showed that we can attract exceptional people from around the world and nimble companies that need room to grow and explore innovation in a safe place in the health sector – as such our partners benefit in ways they couldn't in crowded places like Vancouver, New York or Silicon Valley. The world went virtual and we did too, by removing mental barriers as to whom we could work with and where they could be.

5. What success have you had with innovation in your organization?

Our team based out of Saint John has achieved national recognition for medical research & innovation, securing millions in research grants and equipment to help improve the lives of New Brunswickers. We have published in the most prestigious medical journals internationally and continue to invest resources into training local and newcomer talents in the health enterprise sector. Attracting new companies to the region is accelerating and incubating our own home-grown health sector products and solutions for export to the rest of Canada and the world continues on pace. We are putting New Brunswick on the map for all the right reasons, with a healthier population, jobs and investment in the health sector and empowering our young people to become medical entrepreneurs and specialists. When people look for growth and come to Saint John – they all get it!!