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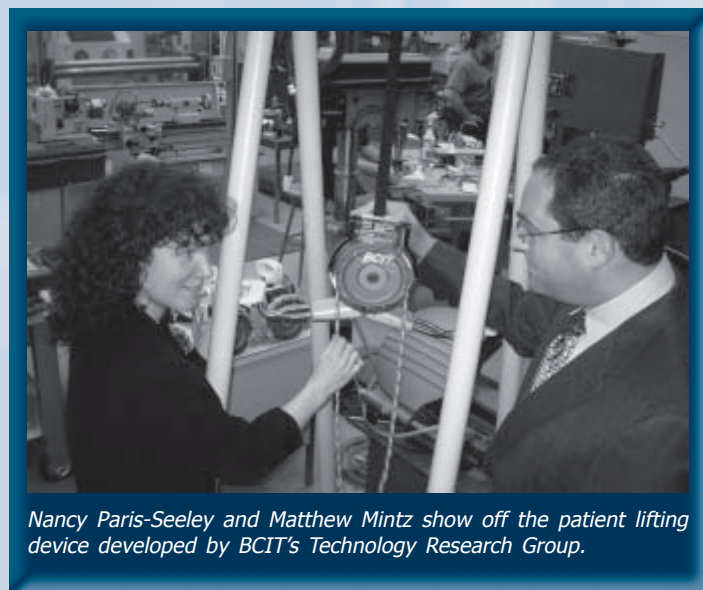
## BRITISH COLUMBIA

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### Technology Commercialization Focus Helps Develop Medical Devices for Market

by Jillian Glover

Home-support workers, unlike healthcare workers in hospitals and nursing homes, often face the risky job of manually lifting and carrying patients without the aid of lifting devices. An alarming number of lift-related workplace accidents prompted the **British Columbia Institute of Technology's (BCIT) Health Technology Research Group** to develop an innovative patient-lifting device for home use.



Nancy Paris-Seeley and Matthew Mintz show off the patient lifting device developed by BCIT's Technology Research Group.

"The home lift device will create a safer environment for home support workers community health workers and their patients clients," says Nancy Paris-Seeley, director of the Health Technology Research Group. "Like many of the health technologies our group creates, the device has huge market potential, so we want to focus on promoting it to a broader audience."

For more than 12 years, BCIT has been at the forefront of researching and developing medical technology. Now, with the support of Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD), BCIT can prepare these innovative, made-in-B.C. products like the home lift device for commercial success.

The BCIT Health Technology Research Group received \$340,000 from WD in 2004 to develop a commercialization office for medical and assistive devices. The new **Technology Commercialization Office** will help bridge the gap between researching and developing medical and assistive devices and turning them into commercially viable products. The office's support will result in more products reaching the marketplace not only in Canada, but internationally as well.

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“The innovative technologies coming out of BCIT and its clients have significant potential in a marketplace that has only just begun to be realized,” says Matthew Mintz, director of the Technology Commercialization Office. “Real opportunities appear when quality research and development is guided by market dynamics. This office will help close the loop between innovation and commercialization, bringing back benefits to B.C. companies, patients and investors.”

In the past, a lack of effective commercialization guidance has slowed the success of many businesses in the health technologies industry. Most innovators were more concerned with prototype development and not focused on creating a commercially viable product or company. To help these innovators focus on business planning and market research, the new commercialization office will provide an executive team with knowledge and experience in commercializing medical technologies.

“Capital markets today are demanding that innovators demonstrate their product’s technical merits and have a plan to take those products to market,” says Mintz. “Our goal is to help innovators take an objective look at their technology early in its development. This helps ensure that they are addressing a real market opportunity and that the design is consistent with market desires. This preparation gives them a better understanding of customers and increases the company’s credibility with investors and partners.”

The BCIT Health and Technology Research Group currently works with national and international clients from the government, private sector, academic institutions and industry associations. The group helps these clients develop state-of-the-art medical technology and strengthen B.C.’s medical device industry.

“We are excited about the new commercialization office and how it will improve the way we think about developing health technology,” notes Paris-Seeley.

The research group specializes in developing technology prototypes – involving engineering, industrial design, electronics and plastics – and evaluating new technologies in areas such as gerontology, biomechanics and epidemiology. This means they are involved in everything from assessing knee braces to developing a patient-lifting device. With the help of the new commercialization office, BCIT’s research group has the potential to help improve the quality of work and life for many people, while creating business opportunities for B.C.

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