

Getting to Know Cleveland Clinic Innovations: Mark Low

Mark Low is Cleveland Clinic Innovations' (CCI) Managing Director of the Global Cardiovascular Innovation Center and the NIH Center for Accelerated Innovation- Cleveland Clinic. In this role, Mark oversees the operations of two grant-based centers that support the commercialization of some of the most promising technologies from Cleveland Clinic, Ohio and the nation.



In the Fall of 2007, Mark Low received a phone call at his office in Seattle, Washington asking if he'd be interested in running an unprecedented grant-based cardiovascular innovation center with mandates to commercialize dozens of technologies, to attract hundreds of millions of dollars in seed and venture capital funding, and on top of all that, to create nearly a thousand new jobs in a Midwestern region that he hadn't lived in since he was in kindergarten.

Having worked on the East and West Coasts for cutting edge companies in the medical product development industry for 30 years, one would expect Mark to politely decline. Those that know Mark, however, would contend that shying away from a challenge this big just isn't his style.

"I was excited about the opportunity from the get-go," says Mark. "This was not only a chance to work on numerous innovative technologies and make an economic impact, but it was also a chance to work for one of the nation's premier healthcare institutions at Cleveland Clinic."

The Global Cardiovascular Innovation Center (GCIC) is a cardiovascular product development consortium focused on the formation, attraction, expansion and retention of cardiovascular companies to create jobs and facilitate economic development in the State of Ohio. In less than 8 years, it has surpassed every one of its goals as outlined in the initial grant proposal. The Center boasts the development of 50 Ohio-based technologies, the attraction of 22 companies to establish operations in the State, over \$760 million attracted in follow-on funding, and the creation of over 860 new Ohio jobs.

In addition to just the sheer metrics, the center has ushered patient benefiting products to the bedside, that wouldn't have had much of a chance without GCIC, especially when considering the challenging economic environment into which GCIC was born. The success has become widely recognized throughout the nation and beyond, and Mark credits this to the bold and unprecedented vision of Cleveland Clinic and the State of Ohio, actualized by a small, but dedicated industry-experienced, results-focused team.

"It was an incredibly ambitious idea," says Mark. "Bringing together a consortium of clinical, academic, and industry partners in the name of cardiovascular innovation and economic development was a tremendous risk, but it has paid great dividends."

The growing stature of Cleveland Clinic Innovations and GCIC played a part in securing yet another ground-breaking opportunity for Cleveland Clinic. In 2013, the Clinic's Lerner Research Institute received the go-ahead from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to develop and direct a NIH Center for Accelerated Innovation (NCAI). Funded by the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute, the mission of NCAI is to improve the translation of basic science advances and discoveries into commercially viable products to improve patient care and advance public health.

One of only three such Centers formed in the U.S., the Cleveland Clinic Center is a 7 year \$14M program which, like GCIC, is a multi-institutional consortium focused on technology development and education as well as commercialization know-how. Mark and his team manage the operation of this Center in parallel with GCIC.

Mark not only takes this new task in stride, he sees it as a new exciting opportunity to propel a whole new crop of innovations to the market.

“The beauty of my role with GCIC and NCAI is that I’m not devoted to one particular technology or company,” says Mark. “My team and I have the privilege of coming into work every day, learning from the brilliant minds here at the Clinic, and playing with some of the most innovative, patient-impacting ideas out there. You really can’t beat it.”