



Praxis Spinal Cord Institute

NEWS RELEASE For Immediate Release

February 20, 2024

Climate Change Challenge Creates Solutions for Vulnerable Populations

Praxis Spinal Cord Institute SCI Climate Futures offers rapid deployment of cooling solutions in extreme heat

VANCOUVER, B.C. – February 20, 2024 – Praxis Spinal Cord Institute is launching “**AccessCool: Innovations for a Climate-Ready Future**”, a pitch competition for innovative cooling technologies and their potential to develop sustainable strategies, addressing the detrimental health effects of heatwaves on individuals with spinal cord injury (SCI) and other disabilities. This pitch competition is framed in the context of the 2021 heatwaves and the urgency to address resiliency for our most vulnerable. SCI Climate Futures aims to contribute to preparing B.C. to cope with and protect its citizens from heat dome events.

The pitch competition takes place on Friday, February 23, 2024, at Simon Fraser University Harbour Centre in Vancouver, B.C. as a hybrid with in-person and online options for attendance. The competition ends with a presentation to a panel of industry experts, clinicians, and end-users. This event is a must for those keen on addressing climate resilience accessibility.

Our judging panel comprises: **Brandon Clevenger** Climate and Emissions Inspector at [City of Vancouver](#); **Lisa Westerhoff** Principal Team Lead, Research & Planning at [Introba](#); **Spring Hawes** Regional PLEX Engagement Liaison, [Praxis Spinal Cord Institute](#); and **Ryan Hazlett** Leader, Incident Investigations, [Technical Safety BC](#).

In 2023, Praxis Spinal Cord Institute launched SCI Climate Futures as an emergency response to the health issues posed by the ongoing B.C. heatwave crises. The first phase was a rapid response program for British Columbians, providing free cooling devices to 140+ individuals with disabilities, such as an SCI and multiple sclerosis that make them vulnerable to extreme heat. This phase was served in collaboration with [BC Hydro](#). The second phase aims to identify and accelerate the adoption of innovative technologies for sustainable and accessible cooling solutions.

Attendees are invited to the pitch competition to find out about the latest innovations in residential cooling and about the challenges and opportunities at the intersection of health, equity, and climate justice from innovators in the sustainable technology space in the movement towards a sustainable



future today. The key benefits to attending will be learning about new innovations that you can deploy through your work, networking with industry leaders and innovators, and learning about the opportunities and challenges in B.C. for climate resiliency in the housing space.

SCI Climate Futures is a pioneering initiative at the intersection of health, equity, and climate justice to identify sustainable and accessible cooling technologies that safeguard the well-being of individuals who are vulnerable to extreme heat. This is a unique initiative that is addressing the needs of vulnerable people during heatwaves by including consultations with the people most affected.

For more details and to register, please visit:

- <https://praxisinstitute.org/events/sci-climate-futures-accesscool/>
- <https://praxisinstitute.org/commercialization/praxis-sci-climate-futures/>

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About Praxis Spinal Cord Institute

Praxis Spinal Cord Institute plays a key role in the development of new technologies and treatments for those living with SCI. Our vision is a world without paralysis after SCI. We advance research and innovation worldwide through networks of international researchers, health care professionals, clinical trials, entrepreneurs, investors, and PLEX (people with lived experience of SCI).

Based in Vancouver, B.C. Canada we facilitate an international network of people with SCI and world-class experts who work together to identify, prioritize and solve the most urgent challenges. Our multi-disciplinary, adaptable approach maximizes our impact, to accelerates discovery and innovation to benefit quality of life for the SCI community.