



Ontario Institute
for Cancer Research

OICR invests \$60 million to fund cancer research

Toronto – April 17, 2008. Dr. Tom Hudson, President and Scientific Director of the Ontario Institute for Cancer Research (OICR) today announced the investment of \$60 million in the Institute's key programs as well as institutional awards for equipment to find new and better ways to fight cancer.

"One of Ontario's biggest strengths is our people and the ideas they generate. Ontario is recognized as an international leader in cancer research because of people like Dr. Tom Hudson and his team of researchers. That is why we continue to attract the best and brightest minds in health science," said Minister of Research and Innovation, John Wilkinson.

"Our strategy is to build on the strengths and opportunities in cancer research in Ontario, where the likelihood of major breakthroughs and potential impacts is the highest," said Dr. Hudson. "Ontario has those strengths in early diagnosis, targets and therapeutics. We are also committed to commercializing the discoveries so that patients benefit as quickly as possible from the investments we are making."

The programs funded include:

Imaging Platform \$10 million

Led by Dr. Aaron Fenster, Director and Scientist, Imaging Research Laboratories, Robarts Research Institute in London, the platform is accelerating the development of imaging techniques for screening, early diagnosis of cancer, cancer stem cell research and clinical trials.

One Millimetre Cancer Challenge \$12.5 million

Led by Dr. Martin Yaffe, Senior Scientist at Sunnybrook Research Institute in Toronto, the program is developing methods to screen populations at risk and identify tumours when they are very small, only a few millimetres in size, which could allow for treatment aimed at long-term cancer-free survival.

Cancer Stem Cell Program \$17 million

Led by Dr. John Dick, Senior Scientist, at the Ontario Cancer Institute, the research arm of the University Health Network's Princess Margaret Hospital in Toronto, is identifying the rare subset of cancer cells that are responsible for growth of malignant tumours and are resistant to many forms of chemotherapy and radiation therapy. Effective therapies that would kill these cells would likely prove effective in preventing cancer relapse.

Immunotherapies and Biotherapies \$1 million

Led by Dr. John Bell, Senior Scientist, Cancer Therapeutics, Ottawa Health Research Institute, is developing biotherapeutic approaches to treating cancer which includes the use of viruses that kill cancer cells while sparing normal cells and use of viruses as vaccines for cancer.

The awards announced today include \$9.8 for state-of-the-art equipment in 11 sites and \$8.7 million in funding through OICR's Cancer Research Fund for 18 translational research projects. Those projects involve research that is moving discoveries in diagnosis and treatment into clinical application.

The Ontario Institute for Cancer Research is a centre of excellence, moving Ontario to the forefront of discovery and innovation. It is dedicated to research in prevention, early detection, diagnosis, treatment and control of cancer. OICR is a not-for-profit corporation funded by the Government of Ontario through the Ministry of Research and Innovation.

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Contact:

Rhea Cohen
Director of Communications
E-mail: rhea.cohen@oicr.on.ca
Telephone: 416-673-6642
Mobile: 416-671-2846