



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.

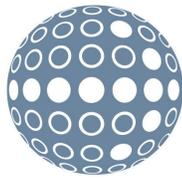
The awards announced today include \$9.8 for state-of-the-art equipment in 11 sites and \$8.7 million in funding through OICR's Cancer Research Fund for 18 translational research projects. Those projects involve research that is moving discoveries in diagnosis and treatment into clinical application.

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.

- 30 -

Contact:

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



## Ontario Institute for Cancer Research

### Backgrounder

The Ontario Institute for Cancer Research (OICR) was launched on December 5, 2005 to pursue the important, complex research questions in cancer. It was created by the Government of Ontario through the Ministry of Research and Innovation and supported with \$347 million over its first five years. Dr. Tom Hudson was appointed President and Scientific Director of OICR in July 2006. He is recruiting more than 50 internationally recognized principal investigators to conduct OICR's research.

OICR's predecessor, the Ontario Cancer Research Network (OCRN) was established by the Government of Ontario in 2002 to accelerate the research and testing of new cancer therapies. Its purpose was to enhance the cancer clinical trials environment in Ontario. OICR's programs which were incorporated into OICR include:

**Cancer Research Fund** for translational research projects.

**Clinical Trials Programs** fund cancer centres and hospitals to expand clinical trials programs and works with clinical trials professionals to develop consistent standards, guidelines and improved processes.

**OntarioCancerTrials.ca** lists the cancer clinical trials in Ontario, searchable by cancer type, treatment or location.

**Ontario Cancer Research Ethics Board** streamlines and standardizes the review of protocols for multi-centre clinical trials.

**Ontario Tumour Bank** collects cancer tissue samples and data, making them available to researchers via a website [www.OntarioTumourBank.ca](http://www.OntarioTumourBank.ca).

### Vision

The Ontario Institute for Cancer Research is a new centre of excellence in cancer research that will move the province to the forefront of discovery and innovation. Ontario residents and the provincial economy will benefit from promising discoveries and research breakthrough.

The Ontario Institute for Cancer Research will support translational research that will move discoveries in prevention, detection and treatment of cancer from the bench to the clinic. OICR's accomplishments will provide Ontario with international recognition as a leading jurisdiction in cancer research.

### Strategic Plan

After a comprehensive consultation with the cancer research community in Ontario, OICR developed a Strategic Plan which was presented to the Ministry of Research and Development in January 2007 and subsequently approved.

The priorities of the Strategic Plan are based on strengths and opportunities in Ontario, where the likelihood of major breakthroughs and potential impacts is highest.

The plan outlines research in prevention, early diagnosis, cancer targets and new therapeutics. It encompasses innovation programs and innovation platforms as well as translation programs that move discoveries from the laboratory to the clinic.

The strategy is illustrated in the OICR Blueprint below.

# OICR Blueprint

