



## **QUÉBEC LIFE SCIENCES FORUM GÉNOME QUÉBEC WANTS TO RECREATE THE QUÉBEC ADVANTAGE**

June 1<sup>st</sup> 2012, Montréal – Génome Québec welcomes the Québec government's plan to initiate a strategic reflection on the future of the life sciences sector in the province. According to several speakers at the forum, Québec has several significant assets: scientific excellence, a synergistic ecosystem, world-class infrastructure, a public health system and a proven government willingness to deliver a common vision and plan of action to make Québec a world leader in the life sciences.

This large gathering of the sector today brought together over 300 experts, mainly from the industrial, research and health communities. Proving the strategic and economic importance of the life sciences sector to the Québec government, the discussions were held in the presence of Jean Charest, Premier of Québec; Sam Hamad, Minister of Economic Development, Innovation and Export Trade; Raymond Bachand, Minister of Finance; and Dr. Yves Bolduc, Minister of Health and Social Services.

During the opening session, Dr. Thomas J. Hudson, a member of the Génome Québec Board of Directors and President and Scientific Director of the Ontario Institute for Cancer Research, explained the primary motivation behind the research – the desire to benefit patients, their families, the general population and the economy. "To succeed, Québec needs to develop a strategy that will advance knowledge leading to new treatments and develop a practical framework for practitioners and patients." Dr. Hudson said he was very impressed with the level of involvement of the Québec government, industry and research sectors. "A clear consensus emerged as to the direction to take in order to make Québec a leader and, thus, to provide health and economic benefits to Quebecers." In his conclusion, Dr. Hudson stressed the importance of making strategic investments as made by Ontario, Massachusetts and California.

Another guest speaker, Marc LePage, President and CEO of Génome Québec, further drew on the California model, the most productive jurisdiction worldwide in the field of life sciences, to stimulate thinking on how to recreate the Québec advantage. "With the creation of its California Institute of Regenerative Medicine, an organization dedicated to developing therapies based on stem cells, this state, which has over 270,000 employees in life sciences companies, was able to create a structure that continues to strengthen its competitive advantage. This success is explained by the state's decision to build on its existing strengths by focusing on three priorities: bringing together expertise around one theme; stimulating continuous, substantial investment; and supporting the entire innovation system." Remember that the original model was created through the initiative of patients who wanted to accelerate research in order to find solutions for their needs. According to Mr. LePage, "Québec could learn from this experience to define a new innovative and collaborative vision, and thus accelerate the transfer of knowledge to the health system."

### **About Génome Québec**

Since May 2000, Génome Québec has been the driving force behind the development of genomics in Québec. By supporting over 60 projects and 750 researchers and managing the operations of the McGill University and Génome Québec Innovation Centre, Génome Québec is helping to accelerate the discovery of new applications for genomics in strategic areas, such as human health, forestry and the environment.

The funds invested by Génome Québec are provided by the Ministry of Economic Development, Innovation and Export Trade of Québec (MDEIE), the Government of Canada, through Genome Canada, and private partners. For more information, visit [www.genomequebec.com](http://www.genomequebec.com).

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