



**INSTITUT DE  
CARDIOLOGIE  
DE MONTRÉAL**



## **PRESS RELEASE**

**For immediate distribution**

### **THE MONTREAL HEART INSTITUTE AND ITS PARTNERS IN THE UNIVERSITÉ DE MONTRÉAL HOSPITAL NETWORK ARE RECOGNIZED BY CANADA FOUNDATION FOR INNOVATION AND ITS INNOVATION FUND COMPETITION**

**Montreal, November 28, 2006** – The Montreal Heart Institute (MHI) is very proud to learn that the two large-scale projects it developed and submitted on pharmacogenomics and clinical research have been singled out for excellence and for funding by the Canada Foundation for Innovation (CFI). These two projects will receive a total of approximately \$16 million from the federal government (through the CFI) and the Government of Québec. The projects involve collaboration between the MHI and the entire Université de Montréal hospital network, in particular the CHU Sainte-Justine, the Centre hospitalier de l'Université de Montréal (CHUM) and the Hôpital Maisonneuve-Rosemont. The pharmacogenomics project is led by Drs. Jean-Claude Tardif and Michael Phillips, while the clinical research project is led by Drs. Jean-Claude Tardif and Robert Thivierge.

Pharmacogenomics is an emerging science that integrates the patient's genomic data so as to personalize treatment and thereby improve the effectiveness and reduce the toxicity of medications in such areas as cardiovascular disease (including diabetes and hypertension), cancer, neuroscience and mental health, and pediatrics. Montreal is at the heart of international efforts in this area, with the creation of the Beaulieu-Saucier Université de Montréal Pharmacogenomics Centre at the MHI, the only Canadian centre in this field in compliance with Good Laboratory Practice (GLP) standards. Génome Québec and the MHI jointly operate the Centre's state-of-the-art technological platforms.

The infrastructures secured for the clinical research project will make it possible to considerably broaden the MHI Coordinating Center (MHICC) and Université de Montréal network by establishing a functional link between the MHICC and hundreds of primary care physicians for purposes of conducting innovative clinical research studies. "These infrastructures will have a major impact on our ability to compete internationally and will result in novel medical approaches with important effects on the health and quality of life of Canadian patients," says Dr. Jean-Claude Tardif, Director of the MHI Research Center and Professor of medicine at Université de Montréal. "More specifically, this new infrastructure will make our Pharmacogenomics Center unique in the world and will help to transform the science of pharmacogenomics into clinical reality," states Dr. Michael Phillips, Associate professor at Montreal Heart Institute and at Université de Montréal, and Director of pharmacogenomics at Génome Québec.

Robert Busilacchi, the MHI's Executive Director, reminded us of the colossal support for pharmacogenomics from a generous donor couple: "The exceptional donation, in 2005, by Michel Saucier and Gisèle Beaulieu for the construction of the Pharmacogenomics Centre, as well as investments from the MHI Foundation, have led to several major investments by the Université de Montréal, Génome Québec, Genome Canada and the Canadian Foundation for Innovation."

This grant from the CFI, together with the investment of \$21 million recently announced by Génome Québec and Genome Canada, will bring the total sums invested in the Centre de pharmacogénomique to \$40 million. "For Quebec, pharmacogenomics is a recognized area of excellence. We would like to take advantage of this great achievement to applaud the talent and exceptional work of Drs. Tardif and Phillips. Once again, experience shows that by playing a structuring role and by supporting dynamic forces in society, Génome Québec contributes to Quebec's competitiveness and consequently to the development of the life sciences," says Paul L'Archevêque, President and CEO of Génome Québec.

For his part, Jacques Turgeon, Ph.D., Vice-rector of research at the Université de Montréal, states that "these extraordinary achievements attest to the Montreal Heart Institute's leadership in pharmacogenomics and clinical research, for the benefit of all Canadians." Mr. Turgeon added that these two projects will have an exceptional strategic and structuring effect on the technological and economic development of Montreal, Quebec and Canada.

### **About the Montreal Heart Institute**

Founded in 1954, the Montreal Heart Institute constantly aims for the highest standards of excellence in the cardiovascular field through its leadership in prevention, ultra-specialized care, training of professionals, clinical and fundamental research, and assessment of new technologies. It is affiliated with the Université de Montréal and its clinical outcomes are among the best in the world. The MHI Research Centre officially came into existence in 1976 and has made enormous strides since its creation. Today, there are approximately 450 employees, students and researchers at the MHI Research Center. The MHI's outstanding feature is the balance it achieves between basic research, clinical research and clinical care. Its prime focus areas of research are vascular diseases, myocardial function and electrophysiology. Genomics (including pharmacogenomics), biomarkers and preventive cardiology are other areas of focus. To learn more about the Institute, please visit our website at [www.icm-mhi.org](http://www.icm-mhi.org).

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