



**INSTITUT DE  
CARDIOLOGIE  
DE MONTRÉAL**

**AFFILIÉ À**  
Université   
de Montréal

**PRESS RELEASE**  
**For immediate release**

## **The Montreal Heart Institute, proud to sponsor the Grand défi Pierre Lavoie**

**Montreal, February 5, 2009** – A pioneer in preventive medicine in Canada, the Montreal Heart Institute (MHI) is proud to sponsor the Grand défi Pierre Lavoie because promoting healthy lifestyle habits through this large-scale project stirring people to action in all parts of Québec is also at the heart of the MHI's preventive mission. Indeed, an MHI team will take part in the Grand défi Pierre Lavoie 2009 by cycling 1,000 km in 40 hours in the summer of 2009. On the team are Anique Ducharme and Michel White, cardiologists, Michel Carrier and Michel Pellerin, heart surgeons and John D. Rioux, PhD, researcher.

“We are very proud to support the Grand défi Pierre Lavoie aimed at motivating young people to take action in ways that enable them to be healthier and to stay healthier,” said Dr. Martin Juneau, director of prevention at the MHI, director of the “ÉPIC Centre for Preventive Medicine and Physical Activity, and professor of medicine at the Université de Montréal. “It is now estimated that some 80% of cardiovascular diseases and a significant portion of cancers could be avoided through healthy lifestyle habits. We are therefore convinced that adopting healthy lifestyle habits will benefit these young people and motivate them to carry these good habits into their adult lives,” concluded Dr. Juneau, who also sits on the board of directors of the Grand défi Pierre Lavoie.

### **The MHI and Pierre Lavoie: Two Hearts Beating as One**

For several years now, the Montreal Heart Institute and Pierre Lavoie have been brought together in a special way in the cause of orphan genetic diseases as well as prevention through healthy lifestyle habits. Indeed, it was funds raised during the first years of the Défi Pierre Lavoie that enabled a research group headed by John D. Rioux - today a researcher at the Montreal Heart Institute - to locate the gene in lactic acidosis, a genetic disease that kills a large number of children with it before the age of five. This first giant step led to the creation of a genetic screening test for this disease, which the ministère de la Santé et des Services Sociaux now offers to the entire Saguenay-Lac Saint-Jean population. It also led to the forming of a research consortium composed notably of researchers from the MHI, whose work is directed toward a better understanding of the mechanisms whereby gene mutations cause the disease.

Because Pierre Lavoie and the MHI also shared a common objective to promote healthy lifestyle habits, another tie was quickly forged between them. It is therefore completely natural that the MHI associate itself with the Grand défi Pierre Lavoie, for it has been emphasizing the benefits of physical activity and a healthy diet for several years. It does so in a particular way with the 4,800 members at its ÉPIC Centre for Preventive Medicine and Physical Activity, which last year marked its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary. In 2004, the MHI's division on prevention decided to heighten its presence in the community and marked this important turn by sponsoring the *5/30 Health Challenge* and the *Quit to Win! Challenge*, two programs experiencing ever-growing success, as well as other initiatives.

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

Founded in 1954 by Dr. Paul David, 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. To learn more about the Institute, please visit our website at [www.icm-mhi.org](http://www.icm-mhi.org).

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#### **Information:**

Julie Chevette  
Communications Consultant  
Montreal Heart Institute  
514 376-3330, ext. 2641  
[julie.chevette@icm-mhi.org](mailto:julie.chevette@icm-mhi.org)

Doris Prince  
Head, Communications and Public Relations  
Montreal Heart Institute  
514 376-3330, ext. 3074  
[doris.prince@icm-mhi.org](mailto:doris.prince@icm-mhi.org)