

Press release
For immediate release

Beaulieu-Saucier Pharmacogenomics Centre Announced
Personal donation of \$5 million from two alumni will fund construction of centre

Montreal, November 9, 2005 – Montreal is about to become a major centre for pharmacogenomics research, thanks to the creation of a new centre dedicated to this advanced medical science. A personal donation of \$5 million from Michel Saucier and his wife Gisèle Beaulieu to their alma mater, the Université de Montréal will fund the construction of the ***Beaulieu-Saucier Pharmacogenomics Centre*** on Montreal Heart Institute property.

Pharmacogenomics is a very promising branch of drug research that uses a patient's genetic profile to select appropriate medications and fine-tune drug therapies.

"Pharmacogenomics is expected to be a determining factor in the future of healthcare," said UdeM rector Luc Vinet. "By gathering our network of pharmacogenomics experts around leading-edge technological platforms, the UdeM will not only be at the forefront of research in this field but we will also be able to train the very first generation of pharmacogenomics scientists and clinicians in Canada. We are enormously grateful to Michel Saucier and Gisèle Beaulieu for believing in this forward-looking project."

Jean Royer, Chairman of the board of directors of the MHI, added that Michel Saucier and Gisèle Beaulieu's magnanimous gesture, "will undoubtedly change the very history of medicine in Quebec, in Montreal and right here at the Heart Institute since it will allow us to build a great centre that will have a significant impact on the way we care for people. The board of directors enthusiastically agreed to welcome this important project to the Institute's site because it includes a team of renowned researchers, all working in complementary fields of expertise, who are, according to many specialists, unique in the world today."

For Michel Saucier, the advancement of scientific research means the advancement of hope: "Since my days in the Faculty of Pharmacy at the Université de Montréal, the number of drugs has increased exponentially, but individual receptivity to drugs is still poorly understood and it too often results in undesirable side-effects. I have a lot of confidence that advances in pharmacogenomics research that will take place in Canada will contribute significantly to the optimization of the way we use existing and future drugs."

Project highlights

The *Beaulieu-Saucier Pharmacogenomics Centre*, which is expected to open officially in the Summer of 2007, will be built on Viau Street between Bélanger and Saint-Zotique. It will accommodate researchers and students working in major fields of pharmacogenomics and genetics, pharmacoproteomics, metabolomics, statistical genetics, pharmacoepidemiology and clinical pharmacology, as well as pharmacokinetics and pharmacodynamics. One of the centre's priorities will be to create a world-class clinical diagnostic laboratory.

All of the medical disciplines in the UdeM clinical network will have access to the pharmacogenomics platform as a tool for their projects. In addition, links will be established with the reputed UdeM's *Centre de recherche en droit public* (public law research centre) in order to set ethical rules and evaluate the social and economic impacts of the research.

For Dr. Jean-Claude Tardif, director of the MHI Research Centre, pharmacogenomics has revolutionary potential. "We hope to transpose our knowledge about the human genome and genomics and proteomics techniques into knowledge that can be used in doctors' offices," he said. "Right now, doctors prescribe medication on the basis of trial and error, trying to mix-and-match patients with the right drugs. An understanding of the individual genetic profile could very well be the key to developing personalized medical treatment with increased drug effectiveness and safety."

About the Université de Montréal

Founded in 1878, the Université de Montréal today has 13 faculties and together with its two affiliated schools, HEC Montréal and École Polytechnique, constitutes the largest centre of higher education and research in Québec, the second largest in Canada, and one of the major centres in North America. It brings together 2,400 professors and researchers, accommodates nearly 55,000 students, offers some 650 programs at all academic levels, and awards about 3,000 masters and doctorate diplomas each year.

About the Montreal Heart Institute

Founded in 1954, the Montreal Heart Institute is an ultra-specialized hospital centre dedicated to care, research, teaching and prevention, as well as the assessment of new technologies in cardiology; it is affiliated with the Université de Montréal and enjoys an international reputation.

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