

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Research Canada Gives Qualified Support for Budget 2010

OTTAWA, March 4th, 2010 — Research Canada: An Alliance for Health Discovery is pleased with a number of measures in the Federal Government's 2010 Budget which supports health innovation and commercialization. At the same time, it remains concerned that the government has not gone far enough in redressing an imbalance in the current system of health research investments thereby jeopardizing Canada's ability to undertake the foundational research that will result in the innovations which will be our competitive edge in the global economy.

Research Canada is pleased with the \$75 million for Genome Canada to conduct genomic research along with \$45 million over five years for prestigious post-doctoral fellowships to attract top level talent to Canada. The additional \$10 million over two years to the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) for a clinical trials' network to help move research on isotopes and imaging technologies into clinical practice is also welcomed. Research Canada celebrates the on-going support of the Rick Hansen Foundation with an increase of \$9 million for spinal cord research over two years. As well, the organization believes the \$40 million Small and Medium-sized Enterprise Innovation Commercialization Program over two years is a step in the right direction.

"We remain encouraged that the federal government in a period of fiscal restraint has increased public investment in health research and is committed to sustained growth of the enterprise by increasing CIHR's base budget by \$16 million per year," commented Dr. Michael Julius, Research Canada's Chair and Vice-President of Research, at Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre in Toronto. "Investments in health research are investments in the new economy; however, without a substantive increase in the base budget of CIHR (1% of health spending over a five-year period) in support of research personnel and operating grants, CIHR will not be internationally competitive in funding critical, foundational research that creates tomorrow's jobs for the new economy," added Dr. Julius.

"Canadians believe health and medical research makes an important contribution to the Canadian economy and to their well being," said Ms. Deborah Gordon-El-Bihbety, President and CEO of Research Canada. In a recent public opinion poll commissioned by Research Canada and five national health organizations, Canadians identified health and medical research as a top national priority even during stringent economic times. "The economic impact of Canadian health research is significant. On an annual basis our industry generates \$12 Billion in economic activity and provides employment and training for over 10,000 people across Canada. The sector also supports more than 20,000 scientists, clinical investigators and other researchers and staff as well as local and regional businesses," Ms. Gordon-El-Bihbety added. The survey conducted by Angus Reid Public Opinion also revealed that a majority of Canadians believe just over 20 cents out of each dollar spent on health care in Canada should go toward health and medical research.

Canada has many of the right ingredients to succeed in the knowledge based economy including a highly skilled workforce and some of the best research facilities in the world. "Laying the foundation for a stronger and more sustainable economy of the future will be predicated, however, on our country's ability to make research and development in the health and life

sciences a top national priority,” said Mr. Jacques Hendlisz, Research Canada’s Vice-Chair and Director General and CEO of the Douglas University Mental Health Institute in Montreal. “While Budget 2010 takes some important steps in this direction, it falls short of ensuring Canada’s ability to become a global leader health research,” he added.

Research Canada is a not-for-profit, voluntary organization whose members are dedicated to advancing health research in Canada. Its membership is drawn from all sectors including the leading health research institutes, national health charities, hospitals, regional health authorities, universities, private industry, health professional associations and others.

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