



CQDM EXPLORE COMPETITION ANNOUNCES ITS FIRST AWARD WINNERS

**Six research-based pharmaceutical companies combined efforts
to fund four highly innovative research projects**

Montreal, September 28, 2011 — The Quebec Consortium for Drug Discovery (CQDM) is pleased to announce the recipients from its first Explore competition. Four outstanding research projects will receive a total of \$1.2 million in financial support over the next two years. The final selection was made through the collaboration six research-based pharmaceutical companies who are founding members of the Explore Program. They partnered to select innovative and forward-thinking projects that could lead to advances in disruptive technologies.

The six pharmaceutical companies - AstraZeneca, Boehringer Ingelheim (Canada) Ltd., Eli Lilly Canada, GlaxoSmithKline Inc., Merck and Pfizer Canada - contribute to the program through investment and by providing expertise in the form of mentorship. They are all members of the Explore Advisory Committee of CQDM.

The chairman of the Explore Advisory Committee, Julie Edwards, Manager, Scientific Affairs at Boehringer Ingelheim (Canada) Ltd. said that this was an exceptional collaboration with six major companies working together towards a common goal: the promotion and support of pre competitive research for drug discovery. "More than 50 highly innovative projects from Québec researchers were evaluated by representatives of the pharmaceutical companies, who have used their knowledge and experience to select the projects considered of scientific merit and greatest potential impact for the industry," she said.

"The projects selected in this competition are very innovative and, through their diversity meet the major challenges of the biopharmaceutical industry," said Max Fehlmann, President and CEO of CQDM. "We are proud to help these talented researchers pursue their research of which the projects chosen may have tremendous potential for the development of new medicines," added Dr. Fehlmann.

The CQDM Explore competition received 51 proposals that were all evaluated by the Explore Advisory Committee. The goal of this competition is to support research projects directed towards the validation of new non-traditional ideas that may either have a high potential impact on the process of drug discovery or by discovering novel drug targets.

The four projects are:

Terence Hébert (McGill University)

FIAsh-Walk Mapping: A Step-by-Step Approach to GPCR Conformation Cartography

This project aims at generating a library for G-protein coupled receptors sensors to analyze the conformational mapping of receptor dynamics upon binding and activation. For the first time, drug design may benefit from the understanding of conformational dynamics which are inherently ignored by the current structure-based design paradigms.



Rafael Najmanovich (Sherbrooke University)

Detection of Molecular Interaction Field Similarities and its Application in the Rational Drug Design of Selective Multi-Functional Inhibitors

The aim of this project is to develop and validate a computational program to detect similarities in the binding-sites of drugs. This innovative approach may have applications in the design of drugs and the prediction of protein function.

Enrico Purisima (National Research Council, Biotechnology Research Institute)

Virtual Affinity Maturation of Therapeutic Antibodies

This project aims at developing a novel platform to design antibodies using an innovative computational technique allowing to model and virtually optimize the interactions of antibodies with their target molecules. This innovative technique promises to revolutionize the discovery of therapeutic antibodies for the treatment of a wide range of diseases.

Brent Richards (McGill University)

Pinpoint Critical Drug Targets for Autoimmune Disease

The aim of this project is to identify somatic mutation sufficient for the development of autoimmune diseases. The proof of concept will be done on patients with rheumatoid arthritis.

About AstraZeneca

AstraZeneca is a global, innovation-driven biopharmaceutical business with a primary focus on the discovery, development and commercialisation of prescription medicines for gastrointestinal, cardiovascular, neuroscience, respiratory and inflammation, oncology and infectious disease. AstraZeneca operates in over 100 countries and its innovative medicines are used by millions of patients worldwide. For more information please visit: www.astrazeneca.com

About Boehringer Ingelheim

Boehringer Ingelheim is one of the world's 20 leading pharmaceutical companies. Headquartered in Ingelheim, Germany, independent family-owned Boehringer Ingelheim operates globally with more than 42,000 employees in 145 affiliates that include a network of research and development facilities and production sites in 13 countries. Since 1885, Boehringer Ingelheim has been committed to researching, developing, manufacturing and marketing innovative pharmaceuticals that represent major therapeutic advances and improve human and animal health. Our drug discovery focuses on six major therapeutic areas: respiratory diseases, cardiometabolic diseases, oncology, neurological diseases, immunology and infectious diseases. In 2010, Boehringer Ingelheim posted net sales of 12.6 billion euro while investing almost 24% of net sales on research and development in prescription medicines, its largest business segment.

Boehringer Ingelheim's Canadian operations are home to 700 employees working for health across the country with headquarters in Burlington, Ontario and a well-established state-of-the-art research centre in Laval, Quebec where more than 140 scientists are dedicated to infectious diseases research.



To learn more about Boehringer Ingelheim and its vision of Value through Innovation, visit: www.boehringer-ingelheim.com.

About Eli Lilly Canada Inc.

Lilly, a leading innovation-driven corporation is developing a growing portfolio of first-in-class and best-in-class pharmaceutical products by applying the latest research from its own worldwide laboratories and from collaborations with eminent scientific organizations. Headquartered in Indianapolis, Indiana, Lilly provides answers – through medicines and information – for some of the world's most urgent medical needs. Eli Lilly Canada, headquartered in Toronto, Ontario, employs close to 500 people across the country. Additional information about Eli Lilly Canada can be found at www.lilly.ca. Lilly employees are committed to fulfilling Lilly's mission of making medicines that help people live longer, healthier, more active lives.

About GlaxoSmithKline

GlaxoSmithKline (GSK) is a leading research-based pharmaceutical company with a challenging and inspiring mission: to improve the quality of human life by enabling people to do more, feel better, and live longer. This mission gives GSK the purpose to develop innovative medicines, vaccines and healthcare solutions that help millions of people. GSK is consistently recognized as one of the 50 best employers in Canada and is a top 15 investors in Canadian research and development, contributing more than \$141 million in 2010 alone. With a proud tradition of charitable and community support, GSK is designated a Caring Company by Imagine Canada. Discover more at GSK.ca.

About Merck

Today's Merck is working to help the world be well. Merck is a global health care leader with a diversified portfolio of prescription medicines, vaccines, consumer and animal health products. In Canada, Merck markets over 530 pharmaceutical, consumer and animal health products. Merck is a leader in a broad range of areas such as cardiology, infectious diseases, respiratory, vaccines, women's health and sun care, and is focused on expanding offerings in other areas, including virology, oncology and diabetes.

Merck is one of the top R&D investors in Canada, with an investment of \$78.6 million in 2010. Merck has a large manufacturing facility in Québec dedicated to the annual production of some 35 million units of its various brands, including Claritin® and Aeries®. Based in Montréal, Québec, Merck employs over 1400 people across Canada. For more information about our operations in Canada, visit www.merck.ca.

About Pfizer Canada

Pfizer Canada Inc. is the Canadian operation of Pfizer Inc., the world's leading biopharmaceutical company. The company is one of the largest contributors to health research in Canada. Our diversified health care portfolio includes biologic and small molecule medicines and vaccines for humans and animals, and many of the world's best-known consumer products. Every day, Pfizer Canada employees work to advance wellness, prevention, treatments and cures that challenge the most feared diseases of our time. We apply science and our global resources to improve the health and well-being of Canadians at every stage of life. Our commitment is reflected in everything Pfizer does, from our disease awareness initiatives to our community partnerships, to our belief that it takes more than medication to be truly healthy. To learn more about Pfizer's *More than Medication* philosophy and programs, visit morethanmedication.ca. To learn more about Pfizer Canada, visit www.pfizer.ca.



About The Québec Consortium for Drug Discovery

The Québec Consortium for Drug Discovery (CQDM) is a meeting ground for all stakeholders in biopharmaceutical research. Its principal mission is to fund research projects carried out in partnership between the academic and hospital milieus in the public sector and the pharmaceutical and biotechnology industries in the private sector.

An innovative Canadian initiative, the CQDM has a twofold goal: to accelerate the drug discovery process and to develop safer and more effective drugs. Project funding is made possible through contributions from Pfizer Canada, AstraZeneca, Merck, Boehringer Ingelheim (Canada) Ltd., GlaxoSmithKline, Eli Lilly Canada Inc., the Business-Led Networks of Centres of Excellence (BL-NCE), the Ministère du Développement Économique, de l'Innovation et de l'Exportation (MDEIE) du Québec and the Fonds de la Recherche du Québec en Santé (FRQS). For more information: www.cqdm.org

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