

## MAJOR FUNDING EXPECTED IN SUPPORT OF ALBERTA'S LIFE SCIENCES' SECTOR

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

San Diego, CA - June 20, 2017 – Today, the University Hospital Foundation, accompanied by representatives from Merck Canada Inc. and the Government of Alberta's Ministry of Economic Development and Trade, announced that they are working towards the creation of the Alberta Merck Innovation in Health Fund (AMI in Health Fund). This Private Public Philanthropic Partnership (P4) will aim to support innovation and industry-driven applied research in Alberta's life science sector, with the ultimate goal of advancing long-term health outcomes, quality of life, and economic prosperity for Albertans.

Once established, the initiative will focus on supporting health research and innovation in critical areas such as cardiometabolics, oncology, neuroscience, generation of real-world evidence, and health care delivery. In addition, it will support other health innovation projects in the province, including a Merck-sponsored health technology incubator that will support the growth of early startup health companies and apply innovations which will enhance healthcare practices and reduce costs.

"Merck Canada is excited to continue its work with Alberta's most promising researchers and entrepreneurs as it works towards establishing the AMI in Health Fund in an effort to advance long-term health outcomes, quality of life and economic prosperity for Albertans," said Mr. Chirfi Guindo, President and Managing Director of Merck Canada Inc. "This potential collaboration between industry, philanthropists and the public sector would elevate the province's life sciences industry to new heights and allow us to more effectively respond to promising new discoveries."

"It is a great step forward for healthcare in Alberta - especially for the patients who will benefit," said Bob Bessette, Chairman of the Board of Trustees for the University Hospital Foundation. "This potential new partnership will build capacity for innovation that will change and save lives."

The hope is that in creating a channel between the commercial needs of Merck Canada, the health priorities of Albertans and the life science sector within the province, the AMI in Health Fund would work towards creating exciting opportunities in Alberta's workplace.

"The economic diversification strategies of the Government of Alberta are well-aligned with Merck Canada programs in Alberta," said the Honourable Deron Bilous, Minister of Economic Development and Trade. "This potential partnership will bring together the elements needed to create an environment of market-focused innovation with a strong potential for commercial success."

The fund would also serve as a means to bring together under one large partnership structure, or incubator, all ongoing and future health innovation collaborations between Alberta and Merck Canada. Within this structure, Alberta's health research and innovation ecosystem will be connected to the health research commercialization expertise of Merck Canada Inc. and Merck Research Laboratories.

“The research and development network of Merck is critical for our medical researchers and health entrepreneurs to transform amazing ideas and discoveries into solutions that could potentially save lives. This is more than a business deal—it is part of a bigger University of Alberta mission to support Alberta’s evolution towards a health economy. Our scientists will be bolstered by the support of Merck’s research expertise,” said Dr. Richard Fedorak, Gastroenterologist and Dean of the Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry, University of Alberta.

### **About University Hospital Foundation**

The University Hospital Foundation raises and manages funds to advance patient care, research and health care education at the University of Alberta Hospital, the Mazankowski Alberta Heart Institute and the Kaye Edmonton Clinic. Learn more at: [www.GiveToUHF.ca](http://www.GiveToUHF.ca)

### **About Merck Canada Inc.**

For over a century, Merck has been inventing for life, bringing forward medicines and vaccines for many of the world’s most challenging diseases. Merck is a leading global biopharmaceutical company with a diversified portfolio of prescription medicines, vaccines, biologic therapies, including biosimilars, and animal health products. In Canada, Merck is a leader in a broad range of areas such as oncology, infectious diseases, diabetes, and vaccines, and markets more than 250 pharmaceutical and animal health products.

Based in Montréal, Québec, Merck employs approximately 810 people across Canada. Merck is one of the top R&D investors in Canada, with investments totalling \$25.1 million in 2015 and more than \$1 billion since 2000. For more information about our operations in Canada, visit [www.merck.ca](http://www.merck.ca) and connect with us on [YouTube](#) and Twitter @MerckCanada.

### **About Alberta Economic Development and Trade**

The Ministry of Alberta Economic Development and Trade focuses on economic growth and diversification by supporting innovation and research; expanding access to capital for small and medium-sized enterprises; promoting trade, investment and market access initiatives; and leading Alberta’s negotiations on trade agreements. Please visit our website at <http://economic.alberta.ca>

### **About Faculty of Medicine & Dentistry, University of Alberta**

The Faculty of Medicine & Dentistry at the University of Alberta is a leader in educating and training exceptional practitioners and researchers of the highest international standards. The faculty’s mission is to advance health through excellence in teaching, research and patient care. It is home to one of the top 100 ranked medical schools in the world. For more information please visit [www.ualberta.ca/medicine](http://www.ualberta.ca/medicine)

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