



BULLETIN



CANADIAN GENETIC DISEASES NETWORK

Vancouver, Tuesday September 1, 1992: Merck Frosst Canada Inc., Canada's largest research-based pharmaceutical company, and a key industrial partner in the Canadian Genetic Diseases Network, will invest \$15 million to establish a Centre for Molecular Medicine and Therapeutics at the University of British Columbia.

This development represents the first major research commitment in Western Canada by a multinational pharmaceutical company.

Speaking at a press conference today in Vancouver, Dr. Michael Tarnow, President of Merck Frosst, named Dr. Michael Hayden, Director of the Canadian Genetic Diseases Network and Professor of Medical Genetics at the University of British Columbia, as Director of the new facility.

Commented Dr. Cecil Pickett, Vice President of Merck Frosst Research Laboratories, "The new Centre for Molecular Medicine and Therapeutics will allow world class scientists to build on established excellence in human molecular genetics in Canada and to carry on a legacy of discovery and scientific advances that have been recognized by the scientific and medical community worldwide."

The establishment of the Centre will expand the scientific partnership which has already been formed with the Canadian Genetic Diseases Network. The Canadian Genetic Diseases Network is a nation-wide consortium of 23 of Canada's leading researchers in genetically-transmitted disease.

The vision of a unique, world-class research centre dedicated to the study of the genetic causes of disease was authored by Dr. Hayden. "The goal of this Centre will be to use technology in understanding the mechanisms which cause diseases with genetic components, such as heart disease and disorders of the nervous system", explained Dr. Hayden.

He added that the Centre will have an integrated research program investigating genes involved with causation and susceptibility to diseases, genetic modelling, gene targeting, and novel therapeutic approaches.

One of the major strengths of the Centre will be the facility to attract senior scientists who will contribute not only to research projects, but also provide training opportunities for Canada's young researchers. These individuals will actively collaborate with researchers in Merck laboratories worldwide, and with scientists in the Canadian Genetic Diseases Network.

Dr. Hayden commented that "the Centre will, in fact, act as a core facility, accessible by members of the Merck and Network research community".

The establishment of The Centre for Molecular Medicine and Therapeutics in Canada represents the largest single extramural funding arrangement carried out by Merck. It is also seen as the cornerstone for the future of a biopharmaceutical industry on Canada's west coast.

It is anticipated that the centre will be operational in 1993.

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