



Speaking notes for  
**Dr. Eliot Phillipson**  
President & CEO

## **National Funding Announcement**

*Research Hospital Fund –  
Large-Scale Institutional Endeavours*

**Thursday, August 21, 2008**

**Check against delivery**

The investments announced today in a number of areas of health research are being made through the Canada Foundation for Innovation, within the context of its \$500 million Research Hospital Fund. Awards from this Fund were approved recently by the CFI's Board of Directors following a highly-competitive and rigorous assessment of merit, using the highest international standards of excellence.

Cet investissement dans les hôpitaux de recherche représente l'un des plus importants de l'histoire de la recherche en santé au Canada.

Canada's research hospitals play a critical role in Canada's health care system – by advancing knowledge through research, educating the next generation of health professionals, and delivering cutting-edge health care services. Collectively, Canada's research hospitals perform 80% of all the publicly-funded health research in the country. These hospitals, together with the universities with which they are affiliated, have a proud record of research achievements that have had global impact.

Indeed, when it comes to “return on investment” in research, few metrics define it more clearly than do major medical breakthroughs that cure illness, enhance quality of life, and provide hope. Some of the most significant achievements and world firsts of Canada's research hospitals in the past century, to mention but a few, include:

- The first clinical use of insulin for diabetes, in 1922, at Toronto General Hospital;
- The first use of calibrated cobalt-60 for cancer radiotherapy, in 1951, at University Hospital, Saskatoon;
- The first successful surgery to correct congenital heart disease in “Blue Babies,” in 1963, at the Hospital for Sick Children, Toronto;
- The first clinical trial demonstrating the effectiveness of aspirin in stroke prevention, in 1978, at Hamilton Health Sciences;
- The first successful pancreatic islet transplant for diabetes, in 1999, at the University of Alberta Hospital, Edmonton;
- Sequencing the genome of the virus that causes Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome, SARS, in 2003, at the British Columbia Cancer Agency, Vancouver.

The importance of the Research Hospital Fund cannot be overstated. It provides a once-in-a-generation opportunity to ensure that Canadian research hospitals remain at the forefront of health research in the highly competitive international research environment, and will assist them in retaining their world-class scientists, and in training the next generation of health researchers.

The investments being made through CFI’s Research Hospital Fund mean that during the past eleven years close to 5,800 research infrastructure projects have been supported at 130 institutions across

Canada. The availability of this infrastructure has been a major factor in attracting over 8,000 new researchers to faculty positions in Canadian institutions, and has resulted, to date, in the creation of 94 spin-off companies. More than 40,000 post-doctoral and graduate students in Canada have used the cutting-edge research facilities and equipment supported by the CFI, and over 11,000 of them have completed their training and have joined the public, private, and non-profit sectors in a working capacity.

These impressive figures, however, do not convey the full impact of the investments. Indeed, the real story is about Canada's future prosperity as a knowledge-intensive economy and society. This prosperity will depend on our capacity as a nation to innovate – to generate new knowledge and ideas and translate them into products, services, processes, and policies that create wealth, enhance social foundations, sustain the environment, and improve the quality of life.

Our capacity to innovate is, in turn, critically dependent on three related elements: a cutting-edge research enterprise, a highly-educated and skilled workforce, and a business, regulatory, and social environment that encourages entrepreneurship and creativity. The Government of Canada plays a leading role in facilitating each of these elements, as outlined in Canada's Science and Technology Strategy, including investments in research equipment and facilities through the Canada

Foundation for Innovation. These investments are transforming Canada's research landscape, and have signalled to the world that when it comes to research, "Canada matters."

In closing, let me congratulate the hospitals, universities, and researchers whose creativity has resulted in this announcement.

Finally, I want to express my appreciation for the Government of Canada's commitment to the nation's health research enterprise and to advancing knowledge that will bring benefits to all Canadians. By its actions, the Government of Canada is helping to ensure that Canadians will have a healthier tomorrow, by investing in research and innovation today.

Thank you. Merci.