

NEWS RELEASE

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CFRI and UBC receive \$4.9 million from CFI for a new Child & Family Research Imaging Facility

(Vancouver – June 18 2009) – The Child & Family Research Institute (CFRI) and the University of British Columbia (UBC) have been awarded \$4,848,759 from the Canada Foundation for Innovation under the New Initiative Fund to build a new Child & Family Research Imaging Facility.

The funding will support a new 3-Tesla MRI (magnetic resonance imaging) scanner and an imaging analysis and neuro-informatics lab with high tech computing and software systems. The new MRI will be located near the existing 1.5-Tesla MRI clinical scanner and the neonatal and pediatric intensive care units at BC Children’s Hospital, an agency of the Provincial Health Services Authority (PHSA).

Expected to be built by 2011, the new Child and Family Research Imaging Facility will be one of only a few research-dedicated pediatric MRIs in Canada. CFRI and BC Children’s have a specially adapted incubator that can be placed inside an MRI scanner to enable imaging of critically ill babies.

The new facility will be used to measure brain structure, metabolism and function in healthy and vulnerable infants, children and adolescents. It will help researchers to address three key questions:

- How do brain injuries in early life impact brain development, adaptability and resilience?
- How does the environment experienced by the fetus, infant and child modify brain development, adaptability and resilience?
- How do new therapies and treatment approaches for pediatric brain disorders directly affect brain structure, function and metabolism?

“The 3T MRI will give us a new window into the brain so we can understand normal development and how children are affected by brain disorders, as well as evaluate new therapies for protecting the brain,” says Dr. Steven Miller, the facility’s principal investigator. Dr. Miller is a clinician scientist in developmental neuroscience and child health research at CFRI and associate professor in the UBC department of pediatrics. “This will transform how we do brain research so we can improve the lives of children.”

The new facility will offer opportunities for collaborations among brain researchers and imaging scientists in the Vancouver area, as well as allow research teams to process and combine images from other sites across Canada and internationally.

“This is a landmark grant for CFRI, for BC Children’s, and for an outstanding team of researchers at UBC and Simon Fraser University,” says Dr. Stuart MacLeod, executive director of CFRI, vice president, academic liaison and coordination at PHSA, and associate dean of research in the

Faculty of Medicine at UBC. “This will move us onto a new plane in the study of neurological and mental health conditions in infants and children.”

“This wonderful achievement will make a positive difference in the lives of BC children,” says Larry Gold, president of BC Children’s Hospital and Sunny Hill Health Centre for Children. “It is a great example of how BC Children’s, as an academic health centre, brings together researchers, clinicians and educators across disciplines to benefit our infants, children and youth.

Twelve UBC research projects will receive \$38 million in CFI infrastructure funding as part of a \$665-million federal government investment announced today in Ottawa. A total of 133 projects in 41 institutions across Canada were awarded funding under three programs – the Leading Edge Fund, the New Initiatives Fund and the Infrastructure Operating Fund.

The Canada Foundation for Innovation (CFI) is an independent corporation created by the Government of Canada to fund research infrastructure. The CFI’s mandate is to strengthen the capacity of Canadian universities, colleges, research hospitals, and non-profit research institutions to carry out world-class research and technology development that benefits Canadians.

CFRI conducts discovery, clinical and applied research to benefit the health of children and families. It is the largest institute of its kind in Western Canada. CFRI works in close partnership with the University of British Columbia, BC Children’s Hospital and Sunny Hill Health Centre for Children, BC Women’s Hospital & Health Centre, agencies of the Provincial Health Services Authority, and BC Children’s Hospital Foundation. CFRI has additional important relationships with BC’s five regional health authorities and with BC academic institutions Simon Fraser University, the University of Victoria, the University of Northern British Columbia, and the British Columbia Institute of Technology. For more information, visit www.cfri.ca

BC Children’s Hospital, a PHSA agency, provides expert care for the province’s most seriously ill or injured children, including newborns and adolescents. Sunny Hill Health Centre for Children, part of BC Children’s, offers specialized services to children with disabilities and their families from across the province. BC Children’s is an academic health centre affiliated with CFRI, UBC, and SFU. It is located next to BC Women’s Hospital & Health Centre, also a PHSA agency, which is one of the country’s busiest and largest obstetrical centres with 7300 deliveries each year. For more information, please visit www.bcchildrens.ca and www.bcwomens.ca

The University of British Columbia is one of Canada’s largest and most prestigious public research and teaching institutions. It is consistently ranked among the world’s 40 best universities, one of only two Canadian universities in this category. UBC offers more than 45,000 students a range of innovative undergraduate, graduate and professional programs in the arts, sciences, medicine, law, commerce and other faculties. It is ranked within the top 10 North American universities in the number of U.S. life sciences patents, including spin-off company creation. For more information, visit www.ubc.ca

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