



Contact:
Jennifer Kohm
Communications Director
Child & Family Research Institute
tel: 604.875.2401
cell: 604.992.6567
jkohm@cw.bc.ca

MEDIA RELEASE

November 27, 2008

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

New research facility stimulates BC's "brain gain"

(Vancouver – November 27, 2008) – Research efforts in British Columbia got a boost today with the opening of a new five-floor research building in Vancouver focused on health issues affecting children and their families and on mental health conditions across the age spectrum.

The 121,000-square-foot building at West 28th Avenue and Oak Street in Vancouver houses scientists dedicated primarily to childhood diabetes, infection, immunity, and inflammatory diseases, and mental health and addiction. Scientists in traditional "wet labs" study genes, molecules, and cells to discover the mechanisms of disease. In neighbouring "dry labs" down the hall, researchers will analyze patterns of health and disease in different communities with a view to identifying population needs.

The new building is a \$58.1-million expansion to the Child & Family Research Institute (CFRI) and home of the newly formed BC Mental Health & Addictions Research Institute.

"Over the past five years, our investigators have succeeded in major funding competitions and achieved new awards to set up labs, purchase specialized equipment, and bring in new talent," says Maurice Mourton, Chair of CFRI's Board of Directors. "But they were working in cramped facilities that couldn't accommodate their success. The new research building offers space to implement these awards and capacity to recruit new scientists."

Labs inside the new building are outfitted with sophisticated equipment funded by the Canada Foundation for Innovation (CFI) and the British Columbia Knowledge Development Fund. The technology enables scientists to sort and analyze the characteristics of immune cells, examine structures and molecules inside the insulin-producing cells of the pancreas, and study viruses, among other applications.

The new building is located adjacent to existing CFRI facilities on the site of BC Children's Hospital and BC Women's Hospital & Health Centre, agencies of the Provincial Health Services Authority (PHSA). Investigators, staff, and trainees working in the building are affiliated with the University of British Columbia.

"The new BC Mental Health & Addictions Research Institute in the translational research building brings together a core of nationally and internationally recognized researchers to conduct research that promises to change our understanding and the treatment of mental disorders such as bipolar disorder, psychosis, and complex addictions and concurrent disorders," says Dr. Patrick Smith, Vice President, Research, Networks & Academic Development, BC Mental Health & Addiction Services, an agency of the PHSA.

"The new translational research building will give researchers the tools and the environment they need to undertake leading-edge research and transform it into innovative ideas," said Dr. Eliot Phillipson, President and CEO of the CFI. "The advancements that this facility will enable are sure to have a real and positive impact on the lives of all Canadians."

"Investing in research is important to our province's future - especially when that research gives hope to young people whose lives are just beginning, or to families struggling with mental illness," said Ida Chong, B.C. Minister of Technology, Trade and Economic Development. "Facilities like this one give researchers the environment they need, and attract other scientists who will help in solving the physical and mental health issues facing B.C. children and their families."

The building's clinical trials unit and the fifth floor, housing investigators studying childhood infection, immunology, and inflammation, are expected to be completed in 2009.

Construction of the building and some equipment were funded primarily by BC Children's Hospital Foundation, which provided \$22.5-million, the Canada Foundation for Innovation and the British Columbia Knowledge Development Fund.

Additional funding for construction costs, laboratory fit out and equipment, and matching funds was provided by the Child & Family Research Institute, University of British Columbia, Canadian Diabetes Association, and other supporters. The commitment of the Provincial Health Services Authority was instrumental in securing long-term funding for the project.

The Child & Family Research Institute (CFRI) conducts discovery research, clinical investigation, and applied health research to benefit the health of children and families. It is the largest research institute of its kind in Western Canada. CFRI works in close partnership with BC Children's Hospital and Sunny Hill Health Centre for Children, BC Women's Hospital & Health Centre, and BC Mental Health & Addiction Services, agencies of the Provincial Health Services Authority; BC Children's Hospital Foundation; the University of British Columbia and Simon Fraser University. For more information, visit www.cfri.ca.

The **BC Mental Health & Addictions Research Institute (BCMARI)** is dedicated to conducting basic, clinical, and applied research across the four pillars of the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR). With support from BC Mental Health & Addiction Services (BCMHAS), an agency of the Provincial Health Services Authority (PHSA), BCMARI's objective is to improve the understanding and treatment of mental illness and substance use problems, to enhance the health of the population, and to ensure knowledge exchange in support of system-wide improvement. BCMARI works in close partnership with the University of British Columbia, Simon Fraser University, the University of Victoria, and other academic and research partners in the area of mental health and addictions. For more information visit www.bcmhas.ca/Research.

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. Since its creation in 1997, the CFI has committed \$4.4 billion in support of 5,800 projects at 129 research institutions in 64 municipalities across Canada.

Province of British Columbia: Since 2001, the Province has invested \$1.7 billion in research and innovation, which has leveraged another \$1 billion from other funding sources. Support for the expansion to the Child & Family Research Institute and home of the BC Mental Health & Addictions Research Institute was provided through the B.C. Knowledge Development Fund, which has invested nearly \$345 million in research equipment and facilities for public post-secondary institutions, teaching hospitals and affiliated non-profit agencies during the past seven years.

The **University of British Columbia** is one of Canada's largest and most prestigious public research and teaching institutions and consistently ranks among the top 40 institutes in the world. It offers a range of innovative undergraduate, graduate and professional programs in the arts, sciences, medicine, law, commerce and other faculties. UBC has particular strengths in biotechnology, ranks in the top 10 universities in North America and number one in Canada for commercializing research and for its patent activity in the Life Sciences.

The first authority of its kind in Canada, the **Provincial Health Services Authority (PHSA)** plans, manages and evaluates selected specialty and province-wide health care services across B.C., working with the five geographic health authorities to deliver province-wide solutions that improve the health of British Columbians. With more than 10,000 employees, the PHSA operates provincial agencies like BC Children's Hospital, plans and in some instances funds specialized health care services like trauma, critical care and thoracic surgery, and delivers a variety of specialized programs and services throughout the province. PHSA is one of the largest academic health organizations in Canada, with about 2,000 people involved in research activities supported by \$150 million in research funding each year.