

**Banting & Best Diabetes Centre Receives \$1 Million Investment from AstraZeneca Canada**

*Funds will support research and knowledge translation programs to improve care for patients with diabetes*

**Toronto, ON, December 10, 2014** – Today, the Banting & Best Diabetes Centre (BBDC), Canada’s leading centre of excellence for innovation in diabetes research, education and clinical care, announced a \$1 million investment by AstraZeneca Canada in two projects that aim to improve diabetes patient care. A portion of the investment – \$750,000 – will establish the AstraZeneca Impact Challenge, providing grants for research into the relationship between heart disease and diabetes at BBDC and the Heart and Stroke/Richard Lewar Centre of Excellence in Cardiovascular Research. A further \$250,000 will support the Knowledge Translation and Optimizing Care Models Program, which provides pharmacists with education and tools to more effectively support their diabetes patients.

“The impact of diabetes and the unmet need for patients is great – and only growing,” said Dr. Gary Lewis, Director and Chair, BBDC. “We are pleased to partner with AstraZeneca Canada to help us accelerate some of our most important areas of activity in research and healthcare professional knowledge translation.”

**Partnering to Address Cardiovascular Disease and Diabetes**

The new AstraZeneca Impact Challenge will provide three, \$250,000 research grants to address a significant health issue – the prevalence of cardiovascular disease in patients with diabetes. It will build on the partnership established in 2013 between the BBDC, Heart and Stroke/Richard Lewar Centre of Excellence in Cardiovascular Research and the Faculty of Medicine at the University of Toronto; a partnership that will be matching the \$750,000 for a total of \$1.5 million in available research grant funds in 2015.

“It is very clear that diabetes, and the issue of heart disease in those living with diabetes, is a major public health concern.” said Elaine Campbell, President, AstraZeneca Canada Inc. “That’s why we’re partnering across Canada with leading research organizations like the Banting and Best Diabetes Centre and the Richard Lewar Centre of Excellence in Cardiovascular Research to address the medical and societal impact of diabetes in our communities.”

To inspire the next generation of scientific leaders, preference for the grants will be given to faculty within the first 5 to 10 years of their first academic appointment. The grants will provide the recipients with vital seed funding for research through proof of principle stage towards more comprehensive study.

**Helping Pharmacists Help Patients**

AstraZeneca Canada is also investing \$250,000 in the BBDC’s Knowledge Translation and Optimizing Care Models Program. The program’s primary focus is to identify the care gaps that could best be addressed by pharmacists and find ways to help them improve outcomes for people with diabetes. The funds will support the BBDC Pharmacists Network website ([www.diabetespharmacistsnetwork.ca](http://www.diabetespharmacistsnetwork.ca)), the development of tools for the transfer of scientific knowledge and best practices, and a national network for pharmacists specializing in diabetes to foster mentorship, idea-sharing, advocacy and collaboration.

“People with diabetes see pharmacists more than any other health care provider, and they help people make decisions about their diabetes management every day,” said Dr. Lori MacCallum, BScPhm, PharmD, Program Director, Knowledge Translation and Optimizing Care Models, Banting & Best Diabetes Centre. “It’s critical that this important group understands the latest scientific information and best practices, and that they can learn from each other.”

**About BBDC**

The Banting & Best Diabetes Centre (BBDC) was established in 1978 in the Faculty of Medicine at the University of Toronto with the primary objective of advancing diabetes research, education, and patient care.

**About the Heart and Stroke/Richard Lewar Centre of Excellence in Cardiovascular Research (HSRLCE)**

HSRLCE is a multi-disciplinary, multi-sited research centre at the University of Toronto that is dedicated to tackling the most pressing issues in cardiovascular research. The Centre spans four pillars of basic, translational, clinical trials and population health research and is home to some of Canada’s most renowned investigators. HSRLCE is uniquely qualified to address questions of discovery, innovation and public health both locally and internationally. For more information please visit the Centre’s website: <http://hsrlce.utoronto.ca/>

**About AstraZeneca**

AstraZeneca is a global, innovation-driven biopharmaceutical business with a primary focus on the discovery, development and commercialization of prescription medicines for gastrointestinal, cardiovascular, neuroscience, respiratory and inflammation, oncology and infectious disease. AstraZeneca operates in over 100 countries and its innovative medicines are used by millions of patients worldwide. AstraZeneca’s Canadian headquarters are located in Mississauga, Ontario. For more information, please visit the company’s website at [www.astrazeneca.ca](http://www.astrazeneca.ca).

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