

KANGBUK SAMSUNG HOSPITAL IN SOUTH KOREA PARTNERS WITH TORONTO'S BANTING & BEST DIABETES CENTRE TO ADDRESS GROWING DIABETES EPIDEMIC AT HOME

(TORONTO, May 8th, 2015) The Banting & Best Diabetes Centre (BBDC) at University of Toronto and University Health Network have entered into a first-of-its kind partnership with the Kangbuk Samsung Medical Centre in Seoul, South Korea to help them become Asia's top centre for diabetes treatment, research and education. The BBDC was selected from a pool of leading diabetes centres from around the world.

"For such an important and ambitious project, we conducted an extensive review process of all the major centres focused on diabetes from around the globe," said Dr. Ho Cheol Shin, President & CEO of Kangbuk Samsung Hospital. "Our search committee's decision was unanimous because of the Banting & Best Centre's remarkable track record of discovery, exceptional patient care and its experience in training the next generation of diabetes specialists. We had the pleasure to visit the Centre and were impressed with what we saw."

In the first phase of the partnership, Kangbuk Samsung Hospital is providing a maximum of \$3 million to establish an international fellowship program in which post-doctoral research fellows recruited by the hospital will be hosted at the BBDC. Beginning in 2016, fellows from South Korea will travel to Toronto to receive hands-on training under the guidance of BBDC's world-renowned researchers. Fellows will then take this knowledge back to Kangbuk Samsung Hospital to help establish an advanced diabetes program there.

"This is a win-win for both organizations, and both countries really," said Dr. Gary Lewis, Director of the Banting & Best Diabetes Centre. "Kangbuk Samsung Hospital has the opportunity to develop Asia's top diabetes program; while for the BBDC, we will be able to advance our own research projects with the help of these exceptional recruits who will be joining us in our laboratories. We have many promising research endeavours underway, and the more hands on deck we have to push them through to discovery and into improved patient care, the better."

Like many countries around the world, rapid economic development, improved living standards, an aging population, and a Westernized lifestyle have caused diabetes rates to skyrocket in South Korea. In a recent study the prevalence of diabetes in South Korea was shown to have increased six- to seven-fold (from 1.5 per cent to 9.9 per cent of the population) in the past 40 years. The International Diabetes Federation has estimated that the prevalence of diabetes will rise to 11.4 per cent by 2030.

This mirrors increasing rates in Canada, where almost 3 million people are believed to be living with diabetes. In addition to the impact on quality of life on individuals and their families, it is estimated that the global health expenditure on diabetes in 2010 was approximately 500 billion dollars (Canadian).

“This speaks to what an incredible resource we have here in Toronto – one that carries on the proud tradition of discovery and patient care established by Drs. Banting and Best over 90 years ago,” said Dr. Alison Buchan, Vice-Dean, Research and International Relations, University of Toronto. “In addition to helping to achieve an organizational goal of global impact, the funds received from Kangbuk Samsung Hospital will support Banting & Best Diabetes Centre’s other strategic initiatives and facilitates our expansion and growth.”

Recruitment of South Korean PhDs will begin in the coming weeks, with the first fellows expected to arrive in Toronto early in 2016. This first phase is planned to run until 2019.

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 Kangbuk Samsung Hospital

Kangbuk Samsung Hospital is a leader in medical care and science, with state of the art facilities, aspiring to be a global leader of patient-centered treatment and total health care.

Kangbuk Samsung Hospital was established at the site of historic Kyounggyo Mansion in 1968. Since its inception, it has provided quality care to the community for almost and has been one of the most trusted institutions, in Korea.

Kangbuk Samsung Hospital established the first total healthcare centre (Health Promotion Centre), in Korea, and is dedicated to successfully operating it to better serve the community as a whole, in addition to their individual patients.

About University Health Network

University Health Network (UHN) consists of Toronto General Hospital, Toronto Western Hospital, Princess Margaret Hospital and Toronto Rehabilitation Institute. The scope of research and complexity of cases have made UHN a national and international source for discovery, education and patient care. It has the largest hospital-based research program in Canada with major research in cardiology, transplantation, neurosciences, oncology, surgical innovation, infectious diseases, and genomic medicine. UHN is a research hospital affiliated with the University of Toronto. www.uhn.ca.