

## **OICR invests \$1 million in the further development of two new cancer treatments**

Toronto – March 11, 2010. Dr. Tom Hudson, President and Scientific Director of the Ontario Institute for Cancer Research (OICR) today announced an investment of \$1 million towards the development of two new promising cancer therapies.

The recipients of the awards are:

- **Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre**, for Kullervo Hynynen's low-cost focused ultrasound system. This system can find and destroy tumours without surgery, increasing quality of life and lowering the cost of treatment for patients with inoperable bone and liver cancer.
- **OncoTek Drug Delivery Inc.**, for Joseph Elliot's preclinical development of PoLi-PTX, an intraperitoneal ovarian cancer therapy invented by Drs. Christine Allen and Micheline Piquette-Miller at the University of Toronto, which would deliver localized cancer killing agents to the abdominal cavity with fewer side effects than traditional systemic chemotherapy.

"Both these therapies promise to provide patients and physicians with new tools to treat cancer that are less expensive or more effective than traditional treatments while vastly improving patients' quality of life," said Hudson. "This investment will help to make both therapies a reality."

"Our government is focused on finding better solutions for health care today and more sustainable care for the future," said John Milloy, Ontario's Minister of Research and Innovation. "By supporting researchers in the development of their ideas, we help them succeed, and ultimately provide major health and economic benefits for all Ontarians."

OICR will actively participate in efforts to commercialize the selected projects by providing additional expertise and resources and working collaboratively with the recipients and their scientists.

OICR is a new centre of excellence, moving Ontario to the forefront of discovery and innovation in cancer research. OICR is making Ontario more effective in knowledge transfer and commercialization, to maximize health and economic benefits of research findings for the people of Ontario. For more information, please visit the website at [www.oicr.on.ca/commercialization](http://www.oicr.on.ca/commercialization)

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## Backgrounder

### **Dr. Kullervo Hynynen, Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre**

Low-cost focused ultrasound system

Non-invasive cancer treatments offer two major benefits over traditional surgery: they reduce the cost of care while also increasing the quality of life for patients undergoing treatment. Several years ago, Dr. Hynynen successfully pioneered a new way to treat bone and liver cancer using MRI imaging technology to guide tumour-destroying ultrasound waves. This treatment proved effective in the clinic, but remained costly due to the expense of using MRI technology. Hynynen's new system builds on his previous treatment by using ultrasound phased arrays to control tissue temperature exposure, eliminating the need for MRI and greatly reducing the costs of the procedure. Ultrasound phased arrays are ultrasound applicators that use multiple small transducer elements that are independently driven by controllable radio frequency signals. Hynynen will use the investment from OICR to develop a complete prototype and perform pre-clinical testing of the new system.

### **Dr. Joseph Elliot, OncoTek Drug Delivery Inc.**

Preclinical development of PoLi-PTX, intraperitoneal ovarian cancer therapy

Drs. Christine Allen and Micheline Piquette-Miller at the University of Toronto have developed a localized method to treat ovarian cancer. Traditional ovarian cancer treatments use surgery to remove tumours and then complex chemotherapy regimens administered intravenously to make sure any remaining cancer cells are killed. Their new technology places anti-cancer agents such as docetaxel or paclitaxel directly at the tumour site using an intraperitoneal delivery system placed inside the body. The drugs are then released over one to two months, destroying the residual tumour and any remaining cancer cells in the area. The delivery system biodegrades completely, eliminating the need for surgery to remove it. Intraperitoneal treatments of ovarian cancer are increasingly common yet are limited by difficult delivery methods and side effects. Ontario-based Receptor Therapeutics has licensed this technology through its subsidiary OncoTek Drug Delivery Inc. and plans to use this investment from OICR to focus on achieving pre-clinical requirements for Health Canada and the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) that will allow the company to initiate clinical trials.