

---

## NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release  
2012HLTH0066-000877  
June 19, 2012

Ministry of Health

### **B.C. invests \$39 million in life sciences**

BOSTON/VANCOUVER – British Columbia will invest \$39 million in life science that will improve the lives of British Columbia families and support jobs in the life science sector.

“British Columbia is recognized as a leader in life sciences research in part because of our government’s support,” said Health Minister Michael de Jong. “\$29 million will be invested at The Centre for Drug Research and Development to make a difference to British Columbians and beyond as development in drug therapies can have worldwide benefits. As well, \$10 million will go toward Genome British Columbia to support cutting-edge genomics research right here at home.”

De Jong made the announcement while attending the BIO International Convention in Boston. This convention is regarded as a highlight on the biotechnology community calendar, bringing together more than 15,000 biotechnology companies and academic institutions from Canada, the United States and around the globe.

The funding includes \$29 million for The Centre for Drug Research and Development (CDRD), which builds on a previous investment of \$25 million in the centre. The funding will support the centre’s five-year plan and its goal of bringing new drug therapies to the market, benefiting patients and families.

It also includes \$10 million for Genome BC, which will be directed specifically to health-related research projects. Specific projects will be determined by an internationally peer-reviewed competitive process – only the best applications get funded. The B.C. government has provided a total of \$187.5 million to Genome BC since 2001 including the funding announced today.

“The provincial government has always been a critical and very supportive partner for us, and this investment will further help us advance the work we do in translating academic health research into viable investment opportunities for the private sector, and ultimately into new therapies for patients,” said Karimah Es Sabar, CDRD president and CEO. “On behalf of CDRD, I would like to thank the B.C. government for their continued support.”

“Research is crucial in making health advances and moving health care forward, and this funding will make a major impact,” said Alan E. Winter, president and CEO of Genome BC. “I’m pleased that we are able to continue our positive relationship with the Province, and am excited to see what additional discoveries are made as a result of this funding.”

The funding for Genome British Columbia will go to genomics projects that will demonstrate health applications, support B.C.'s scientific community and benefit people here in British Columbia and all over the world.

"Investments in research and development are necessary to keep on the cutting-edge of life sciences here in British Columbia. The funding we are announcing today will ensure that these two organizations continue to innovate and add value to health care in the province," said Dr. Margaret MacDiarmid, Minister of Labour, Citizens' Services and Open Government.

"These one-time grants are great news for the future of B.C.'s economy," said Jobs, Tourism and Innovation Minister Pat Bell. "Not only do government investments in health research and innovation create jobs and attract foreign investment, but much more importantly, they help medical professionals save lives."

The B.C. government is committed to investing in health research which will benefit future generations. Since 2001, the provincial government has demonstrated this commitment with an investment of more than \$850 million in organizations such as the Vancouver Prostate Centre, the Michael Smith Foundation for Health Research, six Leading Edge Endowment Fund chairs, Genome BC, and the Centre for Drug Research and Development.

A backgrounder follows.

Media Contacts:

Ryan Jabs  
Media Relations Manager  
Ministry of Health  
250 952-1887 (media line)

Barry Gee  
Director, Communications  
The Centre for Drug  
Research and Development  
604 619-4805 (cell)  
[bgee@cdrd.ca](mailto:bgee@cdrd.ca)

Sally Greenwood  
Vice President,  
Communications  
Genome BC  
604 512-5118  
[sgreenwood@gencomebc.ca](mailto:sgreenwood@gencomebc.ca)

# BACKGROUND

For Immediate Release  
2012HLTH0066-000877  
June 19, 2012

Ministry of Health

## **Province announces \$39 million for life sciences**

### **The Centre for Drug Research and Development**

- CDRD plays a critical role as a bridge between academia and the private sector.
- This includes attracting foreign investment, greater commercialization of B.C. and Canadian innovation, as well as an increase in the number of national and international technologies that are brought to the province.
- Since being founded in 2006, the centre has created about 2,209 direct and indirect jobs in the health-research sector and over the next five years expects to create an additional 2,300 jobs.
- To date, the CDRD has undertaken over 100 drug development projects stemming from the work of approximately 75 principal investigators from across Canada.
- These projects aim to find new therapies for a broad range of diseases.
- An example is the work being done around methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MSRA). Dr. Neil Reiner at the University of British Columbia and Dr. Robert Young at Simon Fraser University are working in collaboration with CDRD and have identified a possible MSRA drug target which could give health-care professionals another treatment option against infection.

### **Genome BC**

- Genome BC is a research organization that invests in and manages large-scale genomics and proteomics research projects focused on areas such as human health, forestry, bioenergy and the environment.
- Previous projects have included an internationally recognized tuberculosis study and a drinking water safety study which have already demonstrated very positive results.
- Both studies were initiated with previous funding provided by the Ministry of Health. Since 2001, the provincial government has contributed \$187.5 million to Genome BC.
- Funding from the provincial government is leveraged four-to-one to enable cutting-edge genomics research that aims to solve challenges in these areas.
- Other health-related projects undertaken by Genome BC include using biomarkers to assist in organ transplants, an investigation into the genomics of childhood brain cancer and the use of clinical biomarkers to prevent severe adverse drug reactions.
- Genomics is the scientific discipline concerned with the study of organisms' genomes. This field of molecular biology includes efforts to determine the entire DNA sequence of organisms and how genes interact with each other and the environment.

Media Contacts:

Ryan Jabs  
Media Relations Manager  
Ministry of Health  
250 952-1887 (media line)

Barry Gee  
Director, Communications  
The Centre for Drug  
Research and Development  
604 619-4805 (cell)  
[bgee@cdrd.ca](mailto:bgee@cdrd.ca)

Sally Greenwood  
Vice President,  
Communications  
Genome BC  
604 512-5118  
[sgreenwood@genomebc.ca](mailto:sgreenwood@genomebc.ca)

Connect with the Province of B.C. at: [www.gov.bc.ca/connect](http://www.gov.bc.ca/connect)