

Partnership Formed Between NSERC and Two Leaders of Montreal's Pharmaceutical Chemistry Sector

(Montreal, Quebec) - Tom Brzustowski, President of NSERC (the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada), announced today a \$915,000 grant towards the establishment of the NSERC - Merck Frosst - Boehringer Ingelheim Industrial Research Chair in pharmaceutical chemistry at the Université de Montréal.

"This Chair exemplifies the partnership approach the federal government is encouraging to increase Canada's capacity for innovation," said the Honourable Brian Tobin, Minister of Industry and minister responsible for NSERC. "It also demonstrates the Government of Canada's commitment to funding research in important sectors of our economy, such as pharmaceutical chemistry."

The inauguration of the Industrial Research Chair took place at the Université de Montréal. In attendance were Dr. Brzustowski, André Charette, holder of the chair and an eminent chemist at Université de Montréal, Robert C. Young, Vice President of Medicinal Chemistry Research at Merck Frosst Canada Inc., and Michael Boes, Director of the Chemistry Department at Boehringer Ingelheim (Canada) Ltd.

The partnership between André Charette, the recipient of a prestigious 2000 NSERC E.W.R. Steacie Memorial Fellowship, and two leaders of the Canadian pharmaceutical industry, bodes well for important discoveries in public health.

"André Charette is a distinguished and competent researcher. I am confident that numerous applications will flow from the shared knowledge of researchers at the Université de Montréal and these two key Montreal-area companies," declared Dr. Brzustowski. "In particular, the reduction of the side effects of medications is an important issue for the Canadian public. To this end, funds invested in this research chair will benefit the health of many Canadians. The investment will also allow the Montreal area to consolidate its leading position in the pharmaceutical sector."

The Industrial Research Chair in pharmaceutical chemistry will study the stereoselective synthesis of medications, working to improve chemical processes that will produce more efficient medications with fewer side effects. The work is expected to lead to the improvement of many medications, including those used to fight AIDS.

This research chair is one of many chairs that NSERC supports through its Research Partnerships Program. This program supports high-quality research of societal or industrial relevance, and the transfer of the results to Canadian-based organizations.

The funding of these chairs is determined by a rigorous peer review process in which the merits of research proposals are carefully assessed.

NSERC is the principal federal agency charged with making investments in people, discovery and innovation. It supports both basic university research through research

grants and project research through partnerships between universities and industry, as well as the advanced training of highly qualified people.

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