



Ottawa hosts Canada's leading regenerative medicine researchers

November 12, 2018 (OTTAWA, ON) – Stem cell advances, clinical innovation and the “right to try” will top the agenda over the next three days as leading Canadian and international stem cell and regenerative medicine researchers convene in Ottawa for the Till & McCulloch Meetings. Nearly 500 scientists, post-graduate students, industry experts, policy and legal scholars are expected to attend the Meetings, which opens today at the Westin Hotel. This will be the largest gathering in the event's history, which began in 2001 as a small annual conference of the Stem Cell Network. Since 2012, the event has been co-hosted by CCRM and the Stem Cell Network.

Notable presentations during the conference include tomorrow's (November 13) presentations of the Till & McCulloch Award to Dr. Fabio Rossi, Canada Research Chair in Regenerative Medicine at the University of British Columbia, and the Drew Lyall Award of Excellence to Dr. Zakaria Orfi, a postdoctoral fellow at the Research Center of the Sainte-Justine University Hospital. Both are receiving awards based on the excellence of their research. Coincidentally, both Dr. Rossi and Dr. Orfi have made advances in understanding the mechanisms that control muscle stem cell regeneration and could have impact on future therapies for neuromuscular disorders.

“Scientific progress in this field has been exponential in the past decade, and increasingly we are seeing research entering early phase clinical trials,” notes Stem Cell Network Scientific Director, Dr. Michael Rudnicki. “Such advancements are a testament to the strength of research in this country and the dedication of many who believe regenerative medicine will revolutionize medicine and improve health outcomes.”

The 2018 Meetings will cover a robust scientific program, as well as address current challenges and innovations in cell manufacturing, commercialization and clinical translation that will spur future growth in the sector. Such interests are being fueled by the increase in translational research and by a thriving biotech sector in Canada.

“Canada's expertise and leadership in stem cell research and bioengineering is well-known,” says Dr. Michael May, President and CEO of CCRM. “More recently, we're seeing new Canadian companies being launched and more established ones having success in Canada and abroad. We're pleased to have so many industry representatives attending the 2018 Meetings so we

can tackle challenges and bottlenecks as a community to support the continued growth of the Canadian regenerative medicine industry.”

Canada’s leadership also extends into research related to ethical, legal and social issues surrounding regenerative medicine and several sessions will delve into current topics such as patients’ “right to try” unapproved treatments, and policy reforms to incorporate recent technological breakthroughs such as genome editing.

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About the Till & McCulloch Meetings

The Till & McCulloch Meetings is Canada’s premier stem cell research event. It is an annual gathering of Canada’s leading stem cell scientists, clinicians, bioengineers and ethicists, as well as representatives from industry, government, health and NGO sectors from around the world. The 2018 conference is co-hosted by the Stem Cell Network and CCRM from November 12-14, in Ottawa, Ontario.

About the Stem Cell Network

Building Canada’s stem cell and regenerative medicine research sector has been the *raison d’être* of the Stem Cell Network (SCN) since its inception in 2001. In just over 17 years, SCN has forged a national community that has transformed stem cell research and pushed basic research towards translational outcomes for the clinic and marketplace. SCN has catalyzed 18 clinical trials, 17 regenerative medicine start-up companies and leveraged a \$100 million in partner contributions. SCN has invested over \$100 million into research, which has benefitted 170 world-class research groups and more than 2,500 trainees from across Canada. stemcellnetwork.ca

About CCRM

CCRM, a Canadian not-for-profit organization funded by the Government of Canada, the Province of Ontario, and leading academic and industry partners, supports the development of regenerative medicines and associated enabling technologies, with a specific focus on cell and gene therapy. A network of researchers, leading companies, investors and entrepreneurs, CCRM aims to accelerate the translation of scientific discovery into new companies and marketable products for patients, with specialized teams, dedicated funding, and unique infrastructure. CCRM is the commercialization partner of the Ontario Institute for Regenerative Medicine and the University of Toronto’s Medicine by Design. CCRM is hosted by the University of Toronto. Visit us at ccrm.ca.

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