

OIRM

Ontario Institute for Regenerative Medicine

New Ontario Institute to Tackle Costly Diseases of Aging
OSCI and CCRM to form the Ontario Institute for Regenerative Medicine

November 25, 2014 (Toronto, ON) -- Ontario is a leader in regenerative medicine research. To support advances in this field and to address the staggering costs of chronic and degenerative diseases affecting Ontario's aging population, the Government of Ontario has awarded new funding to the [Ontario Stem Cell Initiative](#) (OSCI) and the [Centre for Commercialization of Regenerative Medicine](#) (CCRM) to establish the Ontario Institute for Regenerative Medicine (OIRM) – a research, development and commercialization institute dedicated to the translation of stem cell research into curative therapies for major degenerative diseases.

"Ontario is thrilled to support this collaborative initiative, which holds the promise to help treat, manage and cure some of the world's most devastating diseases while offering significant economic benefits. Stem cells were first discovered in Ontario and this new institute will help secure Ontario's leadership position in the critical field of regenerative medicine," says Reza Moridi, Minister of Research and Innovation.

"The OIRM allows us to leverage Ontario's leading-edge research capacity in stem cells and regenerative medicine to transform the future treatment of degenerative diseases," says Janet Rossant, Interim Director, OIRM and Peter Zandstra, Co-director, OIRM. "Ontario is the birthplace of stem cell discovery; it's wonderful to be able to continue this legacy."

"This institute builds on the commercialization efforts that CCRM began when it launched three years ago," says Michael May, President and CEO, CCRM. "Today we're in a strong position to move Ontario's discoveries through the pipeline and into clinical trials through our advanced manufacturing facilities, and have a significant impact on the health of Canadians and the huge burden overwhelming the health-care system."

Regenerative medicine harnesses the power of stem cells, biomaterials and molecules to repair, regenerate or replace diseased cells, tissues and organs. It has the promise to treat, manage and perhaps cure some of the most devastating and costly diseases in the world today.

OSCI and CCRM offer essential elements to the leadership of OIRM. OSCI brings together Ontario's most accomplished stem cell researchers, tissue engineers and clinicians, and connects their expertise in a coordinated fashion that will encourage success in reaching OIRM's scientific goals. CCRM's commercialization focus and strong network of industry partners will offer the translation expertise necessary for shepherding academic discoveries through to clinical trials to benefit patients.

With a focus on high priority diseases to the Ontario health-care system, the OIRM will fund three Disease Challenge Teams to build on existing leading-edge research already ongoing across Ontario:

- Fixing damaged hearts with heart muscle derived from stem cells;
- Restoring vision in macular degeneration through stem cell therapies; and
- Developing novel stem cell strategies for immunotherapy.

CCRM will provide support for these research projects through specialized platforms focused on stem cell generation, advanced manufacturing and industry engagement. OIRM funding will also go towards training, discovery grants and, through CCRM, company creation along with technology and business development platforms, ensuring a pipeline of scientific discovery and commercialization. The OIRM's institutional partners include: McMaster University, University of Ottawa, University of Toronto and Western University and its affiliated research hospitals.

About the Ontario Stem Cell Initiative

[OSCI](#) is a network of over 145 stem cell and regenerative medicine programs across nine centres in Ontario, including stem cell biologists, biomedical engineers, and translational clinicians. OSCI's mission is to enhance excellence in stem cell and regenerative medicine research in Ontario, promote research partnerships and alliances around the world and lead the translation of scientific discoveries into improved health and economic growth in Ontario. OSCI launched as a provincial initiative in June 2011.

About the Centre for Commercialization of Regenerative Medicine

[CCRM](#), a Canadian not-for-profit organization funded by the Government of Canada's Networks of Centres of Excellence program and six academic partners, supports the development of technologies that accelerate the commercialization of stem cell- and biomaterials-based technologies and therapies. A network of academics, industry and entrepreneurs, CCRM aims to translate scientific discoveries into marketable products for patients. CCRM launched in Toronto's Discovery District on June 14, 2011. CCRM is hosted by the University of Toronto.

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