



## CCRM turns 10: What does this mean for cell and gene therapy in Canada?

June 14, 2021 (Toronto, ON) – When the Centre for Commercialization of Regenerative Medicine (CCRM) launched in June 2011, the global market for regenerative medicine was US\$3.6B with conservative estimates suggesting it would exceed US\$11B within the decade. Ten years later, it is valued at US\$38.7B<sup>1</sup> and Canada's only regenerative medicine translation centre has been growing as quickly as the industry it serves. CCRM's 10-year anniversary provides an opportunity to reflect on its accomplishments and how it has helped catalyze an industry in Canada. In the next decade, Canadians can expect to see growth in the manufacturing and delivery of cell and gene therapies for Canadians and people around the world.

"I'm very proud of the networks and teams we have developed, the specialized infrastructure we have built, and the 14 Canadian companies we have helped launch or support in collaboration with our academic partners," says Dr. Michael May, President and CEO of CCRM. "However, there are even more exciting projects in our future. We want to make Canada a go-to destination for cell and gene therapy manufacturing. This is Canada's moment."

Canada's leadership in the science goes back to 1961 when Drs. James Till and Ernest McCulloch identified stem cells while conducting research at the Ontario Cancer Institute at Princess Margaret Hospital in Toronto. That discovery has led to an industry with

1,085 gene, cell and tissue-based therapeutic developers worldwide and over 1,200 clinical trials underway globally.<sup>2</sup>

The volume of clinical trials puts pressure on manufacturers to scale-up the production of cells and viral vectors needed for therapies – an area where CCRM is concentrating its resources. Health Canada has approved five gene therapies (Kymriah, Yescarta, Spinraza, Luxturna and Abecma) and there are more in the pipeline. In fact, based on the numbers of clinical trials in progress, there could be 10-20 gene therapy products approved every year for the next few years.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.prnewswire.com/in/news-releases/regenerative-medicine-market-worth-3870-billion-usd-by-2021-613404273.html>

<sup>2</sup> <https://alliancerm.org>

Recognition of the importance of domestic supply chain and biomanufacturing for Canada's economic and health security was brought home by the coronavirus pandemic. In fact, 2020 was a record year for investment in the field. The sector attracted US\$19.9 billion in financing, compared to the previous record of US\$13.5 billion.<sup>2</sup>

"Cells are the drug of the future and Canada can be a leader in this space' was what we thought, back in 2010, when Michael May and I applied to the federal government to run a centre of excellence to commercialize regenerative medicines," explains Dr. Peter Zandstra, Chief Scientific Officer and Co-Founder of CCRM, Director of the School of Biomedical Engineering and the Michael Smith Laboratories at the University of British Columbia. "Since then, we've watched cell and gene therapies get approved to treat a variety of patient conditions, and cures are no longer the stuff of science fiction. Our industry has moved from asking 'will this work' to asking, 'how can we develop these medicines to make them broadly accessible and effective in a wide range of indications?' That's very exciting progress."

Allen Eaves, President and CEO of STEMCELL Technologies and a member of CCRM's inaugural Board of Directors, recognizes CCRM's role in the Canadian ecosystem as follows: "CCRM has, over the last 10 years, helped Canada see the value of emerging cellular therapies and how they can benefit our country through the formation of companies that will in the long-term revolutionize medical care globally."

CCRM is grateful to its funders, committed advisors and partners like Cytiva, University Health Network, the University of Toronto and others who have understood the importance of its mission and supported its vision.

Regenerative medicine, including cell and gene therapy, harnesses the power of (stem) cells, biomaterials, molecules and genetic modification to repair, regenerate or replace diseased cells, tissues and organs.

### **About CCRM**

CCRM is a global, public-private partnership headquartered in Canada. It receives funding from the Government of Canada, the Province of Ontario, and leading academic and industry partners. CCRM 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, strategic investors and entrepreneurs, CCRM accelerates the translation of scientific discovery into new companies and marketable products for patients, with specialized teams, funding, and infrastructure. CCRM is the commercialization partner of the University of Toronto's Medicine by Design. CCRM is hosted by the University of Toronto. Visit us at [ccrm.ca](http://ccrm.ca).

[Link to 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary video](#)

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