



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**From The Lab Bench To The Bedside:
Guiding Researchers Across The Valley of Death**

Green Light for Centre for Drug Research and Development

VANCOUVER, BC April 19 2007: The Centre for Drug Research and Development, a unique hybrid organization that helps health researchers collaborate, refine their discoveries and develop them for commercial use, is the recipient of a \$25 million funding grant from the Province of British Columbia. Premier Gordon Campbell made the announcement at the 2007 British Columbia Biotech Awards last night.

This funding gives CDRD the green light to act on its plans to bridge the gap between research and the successful development of new medicines. One of the first priorities is to hire key personnel. To date, the not-for-profit centre has raised almost \$50 million to build that bridge.

CDRD is Canada's first hybrid organization of its kind that brings together researchers, institutions and industry. On one side it provides a collaborative research infrastructure that advances and amplifies discoveries – and on the other side it's an entrepreneurial mechanism that assists with commercialization, financing and bringing those discoveries to market.

"The B.C. government is to be recognized for its bold and timely support of an initiative that is leading the health sciences industry in Canada, and will enhance B.C.'s reputation as a crucible for discovery and commercialization of breakthrough medicines" said CDRD founder and CEO Natalie Dakers. "Many new ideas are created in the research stage that do not advance because of a lack of expertise and resources for early stage development. By evaluating promising research and providing connectivity between disciplines, we can address this problem."

Dr. Sandra Dunn, a cancer investigator who is affiliated with UBC's Departments of Pediatrics, Experimental Medicine and Medical Genetics located at the Child & Family Research Institute, was one of the first beneficiaries of the CDRD. A little more than a year ago, Dr. Sandra Dunn's promising research stalled. Dunn, a PhD in molecular biology had identified a protein that cancer cells absolutely require to survive.

But her methodology for inhibiting this cancer cell "supply line" wasn't working optimally and therefore her grant application to take the studies further was not funded. While not an unusual set back for scientists like Dr. Dunn; in many cases it prevents technologies at this stage from moving forward.

Then she was introduced to CDRD where experts first helped Dr. Dunn over her research obstacle by devising a different method to deliver the cancer-cell inhibitor, which led to a re-application and awarding of the grant by the same agency that six months prior had rejected her application. Then they showed her how to prepare a plan to further develop her research.

As a result, Dr. Dunn -- whose research focuses on discovering new treatments for cancers ranging from those that effect the breast and prostate to malignancies that impact children -- has filed two patent applications, and earlier this month met with representatives of a large pharmaceutical company regarding further potential funding to bring her research to the pharmaceutical testing stage.

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“I was facing a real obstacle in moving this research forward,” Dr. Dunn says. “CDRD really jump-started that portion. And then their business coaching helped create a path to potential commercialization. I really believe that, without them, my research wouldn’t have developed as quickly.”

To bring a drug from the lab bench, or discovery stage, to commercial viability requires significant capital, which puts enormous pressure on researchers looking for solutions to medical problems. At the same time, attempts to prematurely commercialize research discoveries are increasingly less likely to attract investment. The CDRD addresses the “commercialization gap” that has grown because of these high costs and pressures by identifying and advancing promising early stage health-related discoveries along the commercialization path.

Not only will CDRD aid drug discovery, design and synthesis, screening, testing, and drug formulation and evaluation, it will create a new research and training model that will broaden the B.C. pool of biotech entrepreneurs working on drug discovery and development.

About the Centre for Drug Research and Development

CDRD is a unique hybrid organization that brings together researchers, institutions and industry to bridge the gap between primary research and the successful development of new medicines. CDRD includes two separate bodies: The Drug Research Institute(s) (DRI) is an academic research infrastructure that enables B.C. researchers in universities and hospitals throughout the province to focus and amplify their drug discovery and development efforts; DDI Drug Development Inc. assists the commercialization of drug therapies by driving drug development projects and bringing the technology to market either by creating companies or licensing to an existing company. CDRD founders have a strong track record in commercializing early stage technology.

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