



BRAIN REPAIR CENTRE POSITIONS ATLANTIC CANADA AS WORLD LEADER IN NEUROSCIENCE RESEARCH

Brain Imaging Technology Will Advance Research, Benefiting
Millions of Canadians with Brain Disorders



Capital Health

HALIFAX, NS: 11 June 2002 - Premier John Hamm joined Senator Jane Cordy and representative from the National Research Council Canada (NRC), Capital Health, Dalhousie University and the Brain Repair Centre (BRC) today to announce funding for advanced new brain-imaging infrastructure, affirming Halifax's status as a pioneer in the field of brain repair research. The investment will enhance the regions' world-class neuroscience research cluster. It will build upon areas of unique expertise, including the neurotransplantation program, the only one in Canada and one of only four centre worldwide.

The \$8.45 million investment is earmarked for the development of a state-of-the-art 4.0 Tesla magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) system or magnet and accompanying research facilities. In addition to providing the \$4.2 million MRI system, NRC will provide an additional \$3.0 million to fund several research and technical positions, plus operating costs, ensuring the sustainability of the project. The Province of Nova Scotia will fund a \$1.25 million facility for the MRI, to be built on land adjacent to the Halifax Infirmary site of Capital Health. The investment supports the province's economic growth strategy, *Opportunities for Prosperity*, which encourages commercialization of research and innovation in the life sciences. Construction is slated to begin August 2002 and be completed by March 2003, in time for installation of the magnet.



DALHOUSIE
University

The ultra high-field MRI and functional imaging center will bring a range of health and economic benefits to Nova Scotia and the region. The project will lead to new research discoveries that could benefit people around the world and foster significant commercial potential, including the development of surgical and medical devices, pharmaceutical products, innovative imaging technologies and related software, and stem cell technologies.

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"In addition to the positive economic impact, this project will attract new researchers and clinicians, ensuring that our province and Atlantic Canadians have access to the best neurological resources and treatments worldwide," noted Premier Hamm. "Whether it is the physical well-being of a patient or the economic well-being of an entire province—we want to see improvement from one day to the next. With the Brain Repair Centre and today's announcement, we are doing both."

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NOVA SCOTIA

“The Brain Repair Centre initiative promises to make Halifax a powerful force in the field of neurosciences and, of course, the specific technologies related to brain repair,” said Senator Jane Cordy on behalf of Allan Rock, Minister of Industry and Minister responsible for the National Research Council. “This collaboration will advance the medical community’s understanding and treatment of disease while at the same time contributing to the growth of a world-class life sciences cluster in Halifax.”

“The research performed at the BRC will improve the diagnosis and treatment of neurological disorders affecting millions of Canadians,” said Dr. Arthur Carty, NRC President. “NRC is pleased to be part of this collaboration which is not only essential to development of the Halifax Life Sciences cluster, but will also bolster regional economic prosperity and contribute to the quality of life of all Canadians.”

The neurological disorders that will benefit from research conducted at the BRC include Parkinson’s, Huntington’s, Alzheimer’s diseases, multiple sclerosis, epilepsy, cancer, spinal cord injury, vision disorders, stroke and serious mental illness.

“The addition of this leading-edge MRI technology is a major piece of infrastructure for Atlantic Canada’s Brain Repair Centre,” said Capital Health CEO Bob Smith. “Capital Health is pleased to be a partner in this initiative that will ultimately help to recruit staff, bring new opportunities to our region, and benefit patient care and medical science through the efforts of our world-class researchers. This is good news for everyone.”

This new MRI facility is an essential step forward in making possible the mission of the Brain repair Centre,” said Dr. Sam Scully, Vice President, Academic and Provost, Dalhousie University. “The BRC offers an opportunity to span areas ranging from graduate training and basic scientific research through to client care and wider applications. This range of activities clearly supports the objective of the National Research Council, Capital Health and Dalhousie – three organizations that have partnered in turning the concept of the BRC into reality.”

“The BRC research cluster is one of the strongest and most comprehensive research partnerships in Atlantic Canada and the state-of-the-art MRI technology will make it even stronger,” remarked Dr. Ivar Mendez, head of the Division of Neurosurgery at Dalhousie University, director of Research for the Department of Surgery, Queen Elizabeth II Health Sciences Centre and chair of the BRC. “From the beginning, we envisioned the BRC as a collaboration of the best researchers and physicians with strong institutional and commercial partners sharing their expertise and resources to advance the field of brain repair. The partners represented today demonstrate the effectiveness and the success of this model.”

The BRC is a multidisciplinary collaboration linking more than 100 world-class researchers and physicians specializing in the field of brain repair. They range from surgeons who replace tissue in the human brain to recover lost capability, to scientists in the field of imaging, stem cell neurobiology, pharmacology, psychiatry,

ophthalmology, neurology and cognitive neuroscience. The MRI project will add to the growing infrastructure of the Life Sciences Research Village, a virtual and actual research community including researchers, entrepreneurs, industry, technology professionals and organizations that support the life sciences sector in the region.

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<u>Contact:</u>	Brain Repair Centre 902-473-3358	National Research Council 204-984-4890
	Office of Economic Development 902-424-7437	Capital Health 902-473-7020
	Faculty of Medicine Dalhousie University 902-494-1900	