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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

BRAIN REPAIR CENTRE CLOSER TO OPENING NEW LAB THANKS TO DALHOUSIE MEDICAL RESEARCH FOUNDATION

HALIFAX, NS: 3 April 2003 - Thanks to a \$500,000 contribution from the Dalhousie Medical Research Foundation (DMRF), the Brain Repair Centre (BRC) is one step closer to setting-up a new laboratory and conducting an innovative \$5.5 million research project on the use of stem-cell lines in the treatment and repair of brain disorders.

Frank Sobey, Chairman of the Board of the Dalhousie Medical Research Foundation, Dr. Noni MacDonald, Dean of the Faculty of Medicine at Dalhousie University and 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, announced details of the contribution at a news conference today in Halifax. The Foundation's contribution assists the BRC in securing matching funds to leverage \$2.1 million in federal government support from the Atlantic Innovation Fund (AIF).

"The ability to generate knowledge reinforces itself," said Mr. Sobey. "DMRF is pleased to join other community partners in leveraging government funds to contribute to the growth and sharing of knowledge in our community by supporting the Brain Repair Centre."

The project will investigate the use of stem cell lines, with a special focus on adult sources. These lines could be used in the treatment and repair of brain disorders such as Parkinson's, Huntington's, multiple sclerosis and spinal cord injury. The project, in partnership with Dalhousie, builds on stem cell and molecular biology expertise and complements the existing neural transplantation program, unique in Canada and one of only four worldwide.

"I thank the Foundation and everyone who contributed to this year's Molly Appeal for their generosity and support," said Dr. Mendez. "Your vision is one of the reasons our community is a world leader in neuroscience research. Our goal with the AIF project is to build on this reputation for excellence by adding resources and advancing neuroscience research in several key areas."

Dalhousie Medical Research Foundation and the Queen Elizabeth II Foundation both committed funds to the project. The Foundation committed the proceeds from its annual Molly Appeal, developing a special campaign to raise funds and create awareness of the caliber of neuroscience research at the Faculty of Medicine. Maritimers responded generously to the appeal. In addition to the proceeds from the Molly Appeal, the Foundation is contributing funds

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from two bequests – one from the estate of Helen Maud Watson and a second from the estate of Olive V. Blair, a long-time Molly donor – bringing the total contribution to \$500,000.

“The AIF project is an excellent example of the community, government, and institutional partners coming together to nurture innovation and excellence,” said Dr. MacDonald. “This research project will increase the infrastructure and capacity of our neuroscience research community. Even more important, this project has the potential to make a difference in lives of people around the region and throughout the world.”

Dalhousie Medical Research Foundation was established in 1979 as an external granting agency and charitable organization. While the Foundation operates independent of Dalhousie University, its sole purpose is to support research excellence in the Faculty of Medicine. To date, the Foundation has an endowment of over \$42 million and has provided almost \$15 million to support local research efforts. (www.dmrf.org)

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