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## ALS RESEARCH IN CANADA RECEIVES HISTORIC \$15 MILLION DOLLAR INVESTMENT

Investments in ground-breaking research will support vision of making ALS treatable by 2024

Montreal (November 19, 2015) — On the anniversary of the announcement of the 2014 ALS Ice Bucket Challenge results and partnership between ALS Canada and Brain Canada, the ALS Societies across Canada and the ALS Canada Research Program in partnership with Brain Canada, are pleased to announce the final recipients of the 2015 grant competitions. In one year, \$15 million has been invested in the exciting ALS (amyotrophic lateral sclerosis) research in Canada, representing a ten-fold increase over historical annual commitments.

“We are committed to funding the most promising research through the ALS Canada Research Program, to make ALS a treatable disease,” said Tammy Moore, CEO of the ALS Society of Canada. “Never before have we had the financial resources to be able to fund multi-collaborative research projects across leading academic institutions to the extent we can today, it is because of the generosity of Canadians who embraced the ALS Ice Bucket Challenge and the investment from the federal government’s Canada Brain Research Fund through Brain Canada. This important research brings hope to the 3,000 Canadians living with ALS today, and the people who will be diagnosed in the future.”

“Brain Canada is proud to partner with the ALS Societies of Canada on their research program,” said Inez Jabalpurwala, President and CEO, Brain Canada Foundation. “Through this partnership, we have been able to attract researchers from different disciplines and institutions whose expertise covers a range of neurodegenerative diseases. This will accelerate our understanding of ALS, and bring us closer to improved diagnosis, treatment, prevention and ultimately a cure for this devastating disease.”

A total of nine competitive calls were put out for grants ranging from \$75,000 to \$2.9 million, the portfolio of projects were selected through a highly competitive process, reviewed by national and international panels of ALS research experts, with the applications judged for work that would significantly move the field of ALS research forward. In total the 34 projects being funded through the announcements in one year represent 56 investigators at 15 universities in seven provinces. Of the \$15 million invested in the past year, the largest allocation is the 2015 \$10.15 million Arthur J. Hudson Translational Team Grants (Hudson Grant), awarded to five teams of researchers spanning academic institutions across Canada:

- Investigation into the potential therapeutic benefits preventing the inflammation in the body that causes motor neurons to die - \$2.48 million  
[Principal investigator: Dr. Jean-Pierre Julien, Université Laval]
- Exploration of new high-powered MRI techniques that may be able to diagnose ALS earlier, monitor disease progression and determine treatments’ efficacy - \$2.94 million  
[Principal investigator: Dr. Sanjay Kalra, University of Alberta]
- Understanding the impact of toxic proteins on motor neurons - \$1.44 million  
[Principal investigator: Dr. Peter St George-Hyslop, University of Toronto]
- Research into the removal of a toxic protein through a simple injection into the bloodstream rather than an injection into spinal fluid - \$1.60 million  
[Principal investigator: Dr. Jiming Kong, University of Manitoba]
- Research on how stress granules form abnormally in ALS patients that impact their motor neurons and understanding how this may help to slow disease progression - \$1.69 million  
[Principal investigator: Dr. Christine Vande Velde, Université de Montréal]

Learn more about all research projects funded as part of the \$15 million investment at <http://als.ca/en/news/awareness/als-canada-research-program-announcements>.

“Through funding from the ALS Canada Research Program and Brain Canada partnership, our research community can work together and tackle many different aspects of ALS to accelerate the discovery of treatments for ALS patients,” said Dr. Christine Vande Velde, Scientist, University of Montreal Hospital Research Centre (CRCHUM) and associate professor, University of Montréal. “ALS research has come a long way in the past decade, and these research investments can only help further explore answers to this complex disease.”

While this year’s landmark investment in research is a critical step forward, it’s recognized that ongoing investments are essential to make ALS a treatable, not terminal disease. “We are pleased to be able to make these historical investments today, but it is critical to continue to raise significant funds in 2016 to support the ALS

Canada Research Program so we can build on the momentum of discoveries we expect from these projects,” states Tammy Moore. “Canada is positioned as a leader in ALS research, consistently in the top five countries for ALS discoveries and the ALS Canada Research Program has been a critical contributor to that success.”

“Being given a diagnosis of ALS was devastating to myself and my family,” said Carol Skinner, an advocate who was diagnosed with ALS in 2013 at the age of 41. “I felt frightened and alone. But seeing the tidal wave of support from our community through the Ice Bucket Challenge, and the potential of significant discoveries from the outcomes of the research projects announced today, inspires me to have faith that ALS will become a treatable, instead of terminal illness.”

Along with the funds allocated to research, an additional \$4.4 million raised by the 2014 Ice Bucket Challenge was invested to support the day-to-day care of Canadians living with ALS. Approximately 2,500 to 3,000 Canadians are living with ALS today, and the average cost for caring for one person with ALS is between \$150,000 and \$250,000.

For more information regarding the investments for ALS research or to donate, please visit [www.als.ca](http://www.als.ca).

#### About ALS Canada Research Program

The ALS Canada Research Program aims to accelerate research impact through a comprehensive national program focused on translating scientific discoveries into treatments for ALS and fostering Canada’s strong and networked ALS research community to build capacity and collaboration. Support for the ALS Canada Research Program is made possible by the generosity of donors, the ALS Societies across Canada, Brain Canada and the federal government’s Canada Brain Research Fund.

#### About Brain Canada and the Canada Brain Research Fund

Brain Canada is a national non-profit organization that enables and supports excellent, innovative, paradigm-changing brain research in Canada. For more than one decade, Brain Canada has made the case for the brain as a single, complex system with commonalities across the range of neurological disorders, mental illnesses and addictions, brain and spinal cord injuries. Looking at the brain as one system has underscored the need for increased collaboration across disciplines and institutions, and a smarter way to invest in brain research that is focused on outcomes that will benefit patients and families.

The Canada Brain Research Fund is a public-private partnership designed to encourage Canadians to increase their support of brain research, and maximize the impact and efficiency of those investments. Brain Canada has committed to raising \$100 million from private and non-governmental sources, which will be matched by government on a 1:1 basis. The Fund was announced in federal budget 2011, which proposed to “allocate up to \$100 million to establish the Canada Brain Research Fund, which will support the very best Canadian neuroscience, fostering collaborative research and accelerating the pace of discovery, in order to improve the health and quality of life of Canadians who suffer from brain disorders.”

For more information about Brain Canada and the Canada Brain Research Fund please go to: [www.braincanada.ca](http://www.braincanada.ca).

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