

Defence Therapeutics and CQDM Fund the Development of a New Cancer Vaccine Platform

Montreal, Quebec--(Newsfile Corp. - February 2, 2023) - In celebration of World Cancer Day, Defence Therapeutics and CQDM are proud to announce the launch of a collaborative research project between Université de Montréal (UdeM), the Lady Davis Institute of the Jewish General Hospital and Defence Therapeutics, a Quebec-based biotechnology company specialized in the development of next-generation vaccines. The funding of this study, totalling \$1,359,851, was made possible through a \$601,938 grant from the Ministère de l'Économie, de l'Innovation et de l'Énergie (MEIE) and a financial contribution of \$757,913 from Defence Therapeutics.

"By conducting collaborative research, such as that done by Dr. Rafei's team, new therapeutic strategies and new vaccines can be developed. We will continue to support researchers and organizations that work tirelessly to find innovative treatments to improve Quebecers' quality of life," says Pierre Fitzgibbon, Minister of Economy, Innovation and Energy, Minister Responsible for Regional Economic Development and Minister Responsible for the Metropolis and the Montreal Region.

"CQDM is pleased to contribute to the efforts of the biotechnology company Defence Therapeutics by supporting the development of an all-new vaccine approach that promotes more effective presentation of tumour antigens to immune effector cells," said Véronique Dugas, Vice President of Scientific Affairs at CQDM. "This is an innovative immunotherapy strategy that could be applied to the treatment of a wide range of cancers and improve the lives of many patients."

"The versatility of Accum technology is what continually drives Defence Therapeutics to be on the cutting-edge and to excel in the development of novel innovative strategies to successfully fight against several types of cancer," said Sébastien Plouffe, president of Defence Therapeutics. "We sincerely thank Mr. Fitzgibbon and the MEIE, as well as CQDM, for their financial support, with a strong potential for success, in collaboration with Université de Montréal and the Jewish General Hospital in order to advance this project under development into the clinical phase for the potential benefit of patients diagnosed with cancer."

Cancer vaccines are based on a promising immunotherapy strategy that has been extensively studied over the past decade. To date, these vaccines have failed to meet clinical expectations. Generating an effective and safe immune response is a major challenge that this new initiative aims to address.

To meet the challenge, the research team led by UdeM professor Moutih Rafei, in collaboration with Prof. Nicoletta Eliopoulos and Dr. Philippe Lefrançois of the Lady Davis Institute of the Jewish General Hospital, aims to develop and test a novel cancer vaccine using AccumTM technology, a biological platform originally designed to improve the delivery of biologics into target cells. Preclinical studies have shown that this approach enables the conversion of mesenchymal stem cells into potent antigen-presenting cells capable of activating the patient's immune defence against cancer. In this project, Prof. Rafei and his collaborators plan to finalize their preclinical studies, establish the vaccine's manufacturing protocol, and conduct a Phase I trial in patients diagnosed with melanoma. It is expected that this technology will be simpler and less expensive to produce compared with other approaches now in development.

"This project is a major step forward in our fight against cancer and may significantly transform the field of cellular vaccination by targeting other tumour types in the future," said Prof. Moutih Rafei.

This collaborative project will allow Defence Therapeutics to validate the efficacy of the AccumTM platform as a therapeutic option against cancer while developing new innovative vaccine strategies,

which could contribute to increasing its attractiveness to local and international investors. Due to its versatility, the Accum™ technology, that is also being studied in the context of infectious diseases, could be applied to a broad range of cancers and have a significant positive impact on a large number of patients in Quebec and around the world.

About CQDM

CQDM is a biopharmaceutical research consortium whose mission is to fund the development of innovative technologies and tools to accelerate the discovery and development of safer and more effective drugs. It provides a hub where major global pharmaceutical companies, several Canadian biotechnology companies, the best researchers from the public and private sectors, as well as the governments of Quebec and Canada converge. CQDM's collaborative approach allows it to meet the needs for innovation funding in the academic and private sectors, particularly in the early stages of research. Information-Website: cqdm.org, LinkedIn and Twitter.

About Defence Therapeutics

Defence Therapeutics is a publicly-traded biotechnology company working on engineering the next generation vaccines and ADC products using its proprietary platform. The core of Defence Therapeutics platform is the ACCUM™ technology, which enables precision delivery of vaccine antigens or ADCs in their intact form to target cells. As a result, increased efficacy and potency can be reached against catastrophic illness such as cancer and infectious diseases.

About Université de Montréal

Deeply rooted in Montreal and dedicated to its international mission, Université de Montréal ranks among the top universities worldwide. With its affiliated schools, Polytechnique Montreal and HEC Montreal, UdeM attracts over \$500 million in research funding every year, making it one of Canada's top university research hubs. UdeM has close to 70,000 students, 2,300 professors and researchers, and an active global network of 450,000 alumni. Website: umontreal.ca

About the Jewish General Hospital

Since 1934, the Jewish General Hospital has been a mainstay of superior medical care for generations of patients of all backgrounds. One of Quebec's largest and busiest acute-care hospitals, the JGH is committed to improving the quality of healthcare for all Quebecers in partnership with the provincial healthcare network. The Jewish General Hospital is committed to providing patients the best possible care in a clean, safe and human-centered environment. The JGH is able to deliver pioneering, innovative medical services by strengthening its role as a McGill University teaching hospital, by expanding and upgrading its facilities, and by pursuing cuttingedge research at the Lady Davis Institute for Medical Research. Website: jgh.ca

About the Lady Davis Institute for Medical Research

The Lady Davis Institute for Medical Research (LDI) opened its doors in 1969, some 30 years after the founding of its parent institution, Montreal's world-renowned Jewish General Hospital (JGH). The LDI is an integral part of JGH and has strong academic links to McGill University. All basic science and clinical investigators at the LDI have university appointments. The LDI boasts more than 200 researchers, 100 administrative and support staff, and about 175 post-graduate students and post-doctoral fellows who receive their research training at the Institute yearly. Special areas of interest include Cancer Therapeutics, Molecular Oncology, Cell and Gene Therapy, AIDS/HIV, Aging, Hypertension and Cardiovascular Disease, Clinical Epidemiology, and Psychosocial Aspects of Disease. The LDI is one of the most productive hospital-based research institutes in Canada in terms of peer-reviewed grant funding per square feet. Website: ladydavis.ca.

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