



News Release

Life sciences and health technologies should be the focus of Quebec's next research and innovation policy

Montreal, April 11, 2013 — Just a few days ahead of the Quebec government's conference on research and innovation (*Assises nationales sur la recherche et l'innovation*), which will take place on April 15 and 16, the main players in Québec's life sciences and health technologies (LSHT) sector wish to acknowledge the initiative of the Minister of Higher Education, Research, Science, and Technology and capitalize on the momentum to highlight the strategic importance of a sector that is key to Quebec's social and economic future.

"At a time when Quebec faces numerous challenges from its aging population and ever-increasing healthcare needs, innovation in the life sciences and health technologies and its integration into the healthcare system are an integral part of the solution," said Nathalie Ouimet, acting CEO of Montréal InVivo. "In a context of limited resources, we feel it is essential to choose our battles as a society and focus on sectors with the greatest social, economic, and environmental potential. That is why we suggest making life sciences and health technologies a key priority of Quebec's research and innovation policy," added Diane Gosselin, president and CEO of the Quebec Consortium for Drug Discovery.

Appropriate support and the creation of a competitive environment for the LSHT sector would generate many tangible benefits for Quebec, notably:

- Improved health for Quebecers
- Efficiency gains in the healthcare system (an improvement of only 1% represents nearly \$300 million in savings)
- Economic impacts across Quebec. Compared to the average of all Quebec's productive sectors, Quebec's LSHT sector, with its 45,000 jobs, creates 27% more added value, offers salaries that are 66% higher, and generates 48% more tax revenues per job.

According to Génome Québec president and CEO Marc LePage, "the LSHT sector is multidisciplinary and strategic in many regards. Each player is an important link in the chain that underlays Quebec's very own innovation process, a distinctive value that we must protect and enhance. There is already a consensus on certain issues that should be discussed further at the upcoming conference because to date, we have been able to lay the groundwork for a strong, internationally recognized sector. In times of structural change, it is in our interest to join forces to find creative, beneficial solutions for the future and competitiveness of our society."

At the Life Sciences Forum held on June 1, 2012, the entire LSHT community reached a consensus on several points for the future of this sector, including:

- Competitively investing in research and innovation and focusing on a small number of niches of excellence (including personalized healthcare) and on human capital
- Improving the technology development process in place at our universities and hospitals
- Offering businesses suitable funding at every key step of their development
- Implementing measures that help promote use of new technology (diagnostic tests, screening, medication, medical equipment, etc.) by the healthcare system

"A consensus was reached at the Life Sciences Forum on issues concerning the generation and transformation of innovation and its integration into the healthcare system. Now it's

time to take action and turn Quebec's research and innovation policy into a major lever to meet these challenges," noted Consortium MEDTEQ president and CEO Diane Côté. "Innovation is an investment that must be at the center of decisions in the healthcare system in order to reap all the expected benefits," added MEDEC vice president Benoit Larose.

To ensure scientific progress is in line with social progress, it is imperative that basic discoveries be turned into technological or applied innovations. "The government should establish an evaluation and implementation process for innovative technologies that acknowledges and values the fact that 21st century innovation in the life sciences and health technologies will be radical, but also incremental, multidisciplinary, and directed toward personalized medicine," said Sherbrooke Innopole CEO Pierre Bélanger.

"Quebec's next research and innovation policy has to include support for Quebec business startups as well as measures to develop new technologies coming out of Quebec universities, and thus promote the creation of innovative businesses in the life sciences and medical technologies sector," added BIOQuébec CEO Mario Lebrun.

According to Jacques Turgeon, director of the University of Montreal Hospital (CHUM) Research Centre, "Quebec's next research and innovation policy should promote partnerships between private and public stakeholders, including the *Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux*. This new business model, where pharmaceutical and medical technology firms are increasingly forging partnerships with universities, hospitals, research centers, and SMEs, offers worthwhile opportunities for Quebec's healthcare network."

"Research and innovation are the main—and sometimes the only—tools our societies have to build the world of tomorrow. That's where our focus should be and that's what Quebec must build on, in keeping with its fundamental need. There is no doubt that the health of Quebecers and the efficiency of the healthcare system are part and parcel of that," pointed out Russell Williams, president of Rx&D (Canada's Research-Based Pharmaceutical Companies).

"For the past 20 years, Quebec has sought to build an economy based on knowledge and innovation, and we hope that the discussions at Quebec's conference on research and innovation, as well as the resulting policy, will lay the groundwork to help Quebec achieve excellence in life sciences and health technologies," concluded Vassilios Papadopoulos, executive director of the Research Institute of the McGill University Health Centre (MUHC).

The main players in Quebec's LSHT sector reiterate that they will fully cooperate with the Quebec government to pursue a constructive dialogue to develop Quebec's next research and innovation policy.

-30-

For more information:

Frank Béraud
Montréal InVivo
514-987-9389
fberaud@montreal-invivo.com