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*For immediate release*

### **Canadian Research Well Represented at HIV Prevention Conference**

***International conference in Cape Town attracts world-class research from Canada***

Winnipeg — A robust contingent of Canadian researchers will present their work this week at the HIV Research for Prevention (HIV R4P) Conference in Cape Town, South Africa.

The conference to be held from Oct. 28 to 31 is expected to attract up to 1,500 global leaders in HIV prevention, research, programs and policy. HIV R4P is the world's first and only scientific meeting dedicated exclusively to biomedical HIV prevention research.

Twenty nine oral and poster presentations will be made by Canadian researchers, 10 of whom received scholarships from the conference to present their work at HIV R4P. Presentation topics include: subject selection in HIV vaccine trials; the role of hormones in natural protection against HIV-1 in the Kenyan HIV-exposed seronegative cohort; and gay men involved in HIV — their concerns and hopes about pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP).

"The sample of Canadian research at HIV R4P is something we can celebrate," says Dr. Allan Ronald, senior scientific advisor of the Canadian HIV Vaccine Initiative (CHVI) Research and Development Alliance Coordinating Office (ACO). "It is also a testament to the ongoing international collaborations Canadian investigators have with researchers in other countries."

Among the Canadian presenters is Dr. Ken Rosenthal, a large team grant principal investigator whose work on innate, adaptive, and mucosal immune responses in HIV-1 exposed uninfected infants in South Africa is funded through the CHVI.

"The HIV R4P Conference is essentially looking at research for prevention, and Canada really has an important role to play in bringing HIV under control," says Rosenthal, who is also the first Visiting Scientist at the Cape Town HIV Vaccine Trials Network (HVTN) Immunology Laboratory. The state-of-the-art South African HIV vaccine research facility is supported by the Hutchinson Center Research Institute of South Africa (HCRISA), and funding for the laboratory's recent renovation was received from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation through the CHVI.

"The CHVI really is a driver for a number of reasons," Rosenthal says. "It builds linkages with investigators in developing countries which opens doors for Canadian research collaborations with colleagues in a global fashion."

Ronald adds that the CHVI has achieved some important outcomes since it started in 2007. "It has assisted with building regulatory capacity in low and middle-income countries, secured funding with the

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Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) and the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development (DFATD) for five collaborative scientific teams of Canadians with African colleagues, and facilitated with the Canadian private sector advances in the development of an HIV vaccine," he says.

*The CHVI brings together five Government of Canada Departments/Agencies and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to advance progress on HIV vaccine research and development efforts. It also contributes to the prevention of mother-to-child transmission. The establishment of the ACO at the International Centre of Infectious Diseases in Winnipeg in 2011 has facilitated information exchange, collaboration and coordination across diverse national and international research efforts.*

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