
NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Health
BC Cancer Foundation
Provincial Health Services Authority

Funding positions B.C. as a leader in breast cancer research

VICTORIA – Health Minister Terry Lake today announced \$2 million for the BC Cancer Foundation to support world-leading genomic research to improve outcomes for breast cancer patients and save lives.

“We recognize October as breast cancer awareness month, to bring to light a disease that affects over 3,000 British Columbians and their families each year,” said Lake. “By supporting innovation like the work of these cutting edge researchers at the BC Cancer Agency, B.C. is helping change the outcome of devastating diagnoses and improving the quality of life for future generations.”

The funding will support the Breast Cancer Research Initiative with its bold goal to customize treatment for every breast cancer patient in British Columbia. Under the leadership of world-renowned scientist, Dr. Samuel Aparicio, head of breast and molecular oncology, BC Cancer Agency, a multidisciplinary team of scientists and clinicians aims to genomically sequence every breast cancer patient’s tumour at the time of diagnosis, provincewide, and to follow the evolution of disease over time.

This work builds on several groundbreaking discoveries from Dr. Aparicio’s work over the last decade, the world first sequencing of a breast cancer and metastasis, the discovery of 10 subtypes of breast cancer and the decoding of breast cancer evolution in avatars of breast cancer.

“Our goal is to understand breast cancer evolution in patients, to develop personalized strategies and unique combinations of therapies based on the genomic structure of each subset of the disease to improve survival outcomes for women diagnosed with breast cancer,” said Dr. Aparicio.

The BC Cancer Foundation is the direct fundraising partner of the BC Cancer Agency and has committed to fully support this five-year, \$15 million research program.

“Research is working. We see this each day as more and more people survive a cancer diagnosis,” said Lou Del Gobbo, interim president and CEO, BC Cancer Foundation. “This investment from the B.C. Ministry of Health will propel the life-saving work happening in Dr. Aparicio’s lab with incredible long-term impacts on families across B.C. and the world as personalized cures enter the clinic.”

Each day, breast cancer specialists stand face to face with patients whose cancers have resisted treatment, reoccurred or metastasized. By sequencing their tumours at the time of diagnosis, oncologists will be able to give these patients a much better chance at survival and a healthy

life after cancer.

The funding will help the BC Cancer Agency research team to:

- Match genomic mutations with known or new combinations of therapies.
- Expand patient outcomes research to understand at the genomic level why some breast cancer patients relapse when others do not.
- Use new technology to rapidly identify and analyze genes and proteins that influence cell behaviour.
- Test and develop tailor-made cancer drugs targeted for each patient's unique cancer.
- Recruit and develop experts to develop pharmaceutical agents that will lead into clinical trials.

The BC Cancer Foundation is the bridge that connects philanthropic support and research breakthroughs in cancer knowledge. As the fundraising partner of the BC Cancer Agency and the largest funder of cancer research in this province, the foundation enables donors to make contributions to leading-edge research that has a direct impact on improvements to cancer care for patients in British Columbia.

The BC Cancer Agency, an agency of the Provincial Health Services Authority, is committed to reducing the incidence of cancer, reducing the mortality from cancer and improving the quality of life of those living with cancer. British Columbia is a national leader in cancer prevention and treatment, with one of the lowest rates of breast cancer and the second-lowest mortality rate for women who do get breast cancer.

British Columbia is a leading centre for world-class research on genomics, brain health, cardiovascular disease and infectious disease. Today's announcement supports government's priority to strengthen the province's life sciences sector, grow and diversify the economy and improve medical treatments to save lives. According to a recent report from LifeSciences BC, the sector contributes \$14.4 billion to British Columbia's gross domestic product (GDP) and employs around 180,000 individuals.

Learn more:

The BC Cancer Foundation: To make a donation or to learn how you can make a difference in the lives of those affected by cancer, visit: www.bccancerfoundation.com

The BC Cancer Agency: www.bccancer.bc.ca

The Life Sciences Sector in BC: Economic Impact Now and in the Future:
<https://www.pwc.com/ca/en/healthcare-public-sector/assets/2015-10-LifeSciencesBCSectorReport.pdf>

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