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**Mission**

The mission of the Heart and Stroke Foundation is to improve the health of Canadians by preventing and reducing disability and death from heart disease and stroke through research, health promotion and advocacy.
MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

For 50 years, the Heart and Stroke Foundation (HSF) has been leading the way towards greater understanding of the root causes of heart disease and stroke. The Foundation is one of Canada’s largest funders of cardiovascular and cerebrovascular research, and we offer several types of funding to researchers across the country. We are committed to supporting a broad spectrum of research to accelerate the translation of scientific knowledge into better treatments and health information for patients and their families.

As yet another means to explore innovative new research opportunities, we created the Heart and Stroke Foundation Research Fund. Through the Fund, the Foundation supports innovative multidisciplinary research in strategically important areas and builds research capacity in emerging and under-supported areas.

This report highlights some of the outstanding work currently supported by the Foundation through the Fund, in areas of critical importance to the health of Canadians, such as obesity, training the next generation of cardiovascular specialists, and increasing the quality and efficiency of health care service delivery.

A fundamental component of all HSF Research Fund projects is co-operation with other funding agencies, research organizations and the private sector. It is only with the support of these partners that the Fund’s initiatives have come to fruition.

The Fund’s initial years have been a time of development, innovation and growth. Through the Fund, the Foundation has already dedicated $24 million to support a wide range of research initiatives. An independent external review of the HSF Research Fund will be conducted in the coming months to evaluate its accomplishments to date. This review will help guide our decisions on the direction of the Fund in 2004 and beyond.

I am proud that, during my term as Chair, the Foundation’s reputation as a key player in collaborative research funding has been solidified through the innovative approach of the HSF Research Fund.

Carolyn Brooks
Chair, Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada
THE HEART AND STROKE FOUNDATION RESEARCH FUND

In October 2000, the Heart and Stroke Foundation (HSF) created a new strategic fund to further support heart and stroke research in Canada. Through the HSF Research Fund, the Foundation is leveraging donor dollars to fund innovative research projects in new fields of exploration. By working with other health agencies, we are accomplishing more than a single organization could alone.

During the three years since the Fund’s creation, the HSF has invested in numerous groundbreaking projects. Through training awards and capacity building, the Fund supports large research programs and developmental initiatives that will mobilize the research community and foster the next generation of outstanding Canadian researchers.

The Fund supports research across the four health research themes/pillars:

- Basic biomedical
- Clinical
- Health systems and health services
- Societal, cultural, and environmental influences on health and the health of populations

With the aim of advancing knowledge creation and translation, the Fund encourages the development of multidisciplinary teams across the research community. Eight strategic areas have been identified for support: arrhythmia/sudden death, atherosclerosis/thrombosis, congenital heart disease, congestive heart failure, diabetes, hypertension, obesity, and stroke.

Our Partners

We are pleased to work with a range of organizations that share common priorities in health research, including:

- Alzheimer Society of Canada
- Canadian Diabetes Association
- Canadian Lung Association
- Canadian Stroke Network
- The Kidney Foundation of Canada
- CIHR Institutes of:
  - Aging
  - Cancer Research
  - Circulatory and Respiratory Health
  - Gender and Health
  - Human Development, Child and Youth Health
  - Musculoskeletal Health and Arthritis
  - Neurosciences, Mental Health and Addiction
  - Nutrition, Metabolism and Diabetes
  - Population and Public Health

Also critical to the success of our collaborative programs is the support from the private sector:

- AstraZeneca Canada Inc.
- Merck Frosst Canada Ltd.
- Pfizer Canada
The Research Policy and Planning Advisory Committee (RPPAC)

Under the guidance of the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada’s Research Policy and Planning Advisory Committee (RPPAC), the HSF Research Fund has become a fundamental component of the Foundation’s research enterprise. This committee, whose membership includes both lay and scientific volunteers, oversees and advises all Fund-related decisions.

RPPAC members have diverse expertise and represent all regions of the country and the four research pillars. The Committee Chair is Mr. Robert Brooks, Senior Executive Vice-President of Treasury and Operations at the Bank of Nova Scotia, and a long-time volunteer with the Foundation. The scientific Vice-Chair is Dr. Gary Lopaschuk from the University of Alberta, former chair of the Foundation’s Scientific Review Committee.

RPPAC Members 2002/2003:

- Mr. Robert Brooks (Chair)
  Bank of Nova Scotia
  Toronto, Ontario

- Dr. Gary Lopaschuk (Vice-Chair)
  University of Alberta
  Edmonton, Alberta

- Dr. Brian Ayotte
  Lake General Hospital
  Salmon Arm, British Columbia

- Dr. Robert Côté
  Hôpital-Général de Montréal
  Montréal, Quebec

- Mr. Bill Dashwood
  Enterprise Saint John
  Saint John, New Brunswick

- Dr. Dexter Harvey
  University of Manitoba
  Winnipeg, Manitoba

- Mr. Denis Leguerrier
  Hull, Quebec

- Dr. Colin McMillan
  Riverside Medical Centre
  Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island

- Dr. Duncan Stewart
  St. Michael’s Hospital
  Toronto, Ontario

- Dr. Jeff Weitz
  McMaster University
  Hamilton, Ontario

- Dr. Roy West
  Memorial University
  St. John’s, Newfoundland
Leadership, Innovation and Collaboration

The Heart and Stroke Foundation (HSF) prides itself on leadership, innovation and collaboration. As one of the country's largest funding agencies dedicated to supporting and advancing heart and stroke research, the Foundation is committed to knowledge creation and translation:

- The HSF led an initiative to optimize peer review in Canada. The Foundation brought together Canadian research funding agencies to develop strategies to address issues such as reviewer fatigue, technology developments, peer review across the four research pillars, and conflict of interest. As a result, the HSF and the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) are piloting a joint peer review panel on Nutrition, Food and Health for the 2004/2005 grant competition.

- The HSF is a member of the Cognitive Impairment and Aging Partnership led by the Institute of Aging of the CIHR. As a result of this collaboration, the Foundation has taken a leadership role with the Alzheimer Society of Canada and the CIHR to support operating grants in the area of Vascular Health and Dementia.

- The HSF is committed to supporting research capacity building in Canada and is a partner in the May 2004 Young Investigators Forum (Winnipeg) led by the Institute of Circulatory and Respiratory Health.

- The HSF supported a workshop entitled “Behavioural and Social Sciences Health Research in Canada: Building an Integrated Future”. This workshop was the first phase of an initiative focused on developing effective strategies, processes and structures to promote and coordinate transdisciplinary behavioural and social sciences health research. A second meeting is planned for January 2004.

- The HSF and the Canadian Stroke Network received the inaugural CIHR Partnership Award for the Focus on Stroke personnel awards, a joint funding initiative aimed at increasing stroke research capacity in Canada. Focus on Stroke is a team effort of the Foundation, the Canadian Stroke Network and the CIHR, and is also supported by AstraZeneca Canada Inc.

- The HSF is committed to ensuring investments in research make a difference. The Foundation is playing a leadership role in developing mechanisms for regular program evaluation.
NEW RESEARCH SUPPORTED THROUGH THE HSF RESEARCH FUND

The HSF Research Fund invests in three primary areas:

1) Training and capacity building
2) Research programs
3) Developmental initiatives

These areas cover a broad spectrum of activities, from increasing the number of heart and stroke researchers in Canada, to developing large research programs and networks that allow investigators to combine expertise despite the distance that may separate them.

1) Training and Capacity Building

Training the next generation of heart and stroke researchers is of primary importance to the Foundation. Each year through its core programs, the Foundation invests over $5.7 million in personnel support at several levels, from young scientists pursuing PhD degrees to post-doctoral fellows, nurse researchers and investigators in the early years of faculty appointments. The Heart and Stroke Foundation Research Fund has supported both individual personnel awards in strategic areas, like stroke and obesity, and large Strategic Training Program Grants for networks of trainees and mentors across the research pillars.

Focus on Stroke Personnel Awards

Building on the success of the first Focus on Stroke personnel awards competition in 2001, the Foundation, the Canadian Stroke Network and CIHR, together with AstraZeneca Canada Inc., launched a second competition to award over $450,000 per year to Fellows, doctoral students and New Investigators working in the area of stroke. This strategic initiative will build greater capacity for stroke research in Canada.

Two Focus on Stroke personnel award recipients received other prestigious HSF awards in recognition of their outstanding scholarship in the 2003/2004 competition:

The McDonald Scholarship, given to the highest-rated applicant in the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada’s annual New Investigator Award competition, was presented to Dr. Fang Liu, a research scientist at Toronto’s Centre for Addiction and Mental Health. Dr Liu has recently expanded her work to encompass stroke in light of the increasing importance of cerebrovascular research.

Heart and Stroke Foundation Research Fund
Building Capacity for Cardiovascular Nursing Research in Canada

A unique training program to develop cardiovascular nursing research capacity in Canada led by Dr. Heather Arthur, a nurse scientist at McMaster University, will help increase the number of nurse researchers in Canada focused on cardiovascular disease. Currently, there are only a handful of qualified nurse-scientists in this discipline. Nursing research offers a perspective focused on patient care and health, and concentrates on education, illness prevention and early intervention. The program will be national in scope, involving a dozen universities across Canada.

IMPACT (Integrated and Mentored Pulmonary and Cardiovascular Training) Program

Dr. Peter Paré, a clinical respirologist at the McDonald Research Laboratories/iCAPTURE Centre at the University of British Columbia, is teaming up with Dr. Grant Pierce, a biomedical researcher specializing in cardiology, based at the University of Manitoba to implement this new program at their respective universities.

The IMPACT (Integrated and Mentored Pulmonary and Cardiovascular Training) program unites young heart and lung researchers from biomedical and clinical backgrounds and allows them to work side by side. It offers a multidisciplinary training environment where students can learn from each other’s expertise in the biomedical and clinical worlds. “This type of partnership is essential to translating scientific advances into tangible results that will improve patient health and quality of life,” says Dr. Paré.

Strategic Training Program Grants 2003

The Foundation and the Institute of Circulatory and Respiratory Health (ICRH) jointly supported five Strategic Training Programs in 2002 and six programs in 2003. The Foundation’s total investment in this initiative is more than $2 million over six years. Strategic Training Program grants support innovative transdisciplinary training programs that link small and large centres and provide world-class training opportunities for young researchers.

Dr. Liu is focusing on preventing brain cell death in ischemic stroke patients. High levels of post-stroke glutamate are thought to harm cerebral tissue, and Dr. Liu will investigate ways to reduce such damage. Expanding upon existing knowledge of protein interaction in the brain, she will test her hypothesis that dopamine can prevent glutamate-induced brain cell death. Dr. Liu’s work could eventually lead to drugs to enhance the recovery of ischemic stroke survivors.

Shayna Rosenbaum is the recipient of the Barnett Research Award, which recognizes research excellence in the area of stroke. Ms. Rosenbaum is examining how stroke impairs emotional and cognitive function. While stroke causes obvious physiological damage, it also leaves survivors with other subtler, yet equally devastating mental deficits—such as the inability to use feelings to make inferences. Ms. Rosenbaum will conduct an innovative neuroimaging study to investigate interactions among regions of the brain responsible for these functions and how stroke affects them. Her findings could lead to new rehabilitation techniques to help stroke survivors lead emotionally and socially fulfilling lives.

Dr. Fang Liu
Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, Toronto

Shayna Rosenbaum, University of Toronto

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Training Program in Transfusion Science
Researchers from the University of British Columbia, University of Alberta, McMaster University, Queen’s University, University of Toronto, Hema-Quebec and the University of Washington, as well as Canadian Blood Services researchers in Vancouver, Edmonton, Hamilton and Toronto, have set up a nation-wide network to train researchers in transfusion science. This Strategic Training Program, led by Dr. Ross MacGillivray, a University of British Columbia professor, will train investigators through research to improve the processing and storage of blood products—thereby decreasing the need for donated blood essential to many medical procedures, including cardiac surgery.

Training Program in Cardiovascular Membrane Proteins
Through Dr. Larry Fliegel’s training program, students from across Canada and around the world will receive first-class training in the complex inter-relationships among chemistry, molecular biology, and physiology. Researchers across disciplines at the University of Alberta are working together to offer this innovative training program.

2) Research Programs
Supporting research programs of groups of investigators across Canada is another primary focus for the Foundation. These large programs engage researchers from different disciplines and across the research pillars. A number of new funding programs are being used to support research in different ways. These programs include:

- New Emerging Teams
- Interdisciplinary Health Research Teams
- Interdisciplinary Capacity Enhancement Teams
Dr. Robyn Tamblyn from McGill University and her team—with experts in medicine, marketing and information management—are developing information technology to improve healthcare service delivery and communication among medical professionals and their patients.

Obesity, a risk factor for heart disease and stroke, is another priority area for the Heart and Stroke Foundation. The Foundation and the CIHR Institute of Nutrition, Metabolism and Diabetes supported two NET grants focused on obesity and healthy body weight.

Dr. Kim Raine, a University of Alberta researcher, is studying how behavioural, environmental and social factors contribute to obesity. Dr. Raine and her team will investigate ways to promote healthy body weights at the individual, interpersonal, institutional, community and policy levels.

McMaster University’s Dr. Arya Sharma is examining the relationship among societal, environmental and biological causes of obesity and cardiovascular disease. This project will specifically focus on the role of adipose tissue in the cardiovascular consequences of obesity.

The Heart and Stroke Foundation and the Institute of Circulatory and Respiratory Health (ICRH) supported three new NET grants in 2003:

- Dr. Jolanta Gutkowska at the CHUM Hôtel-Dieu de Montréal and her team of five researchers with diverse expertise in physiology, anaesthesiology and other disciplines are studying the role of oxytocin in heart development. This research may lead to new heart failure treatments.

- Dr. Graeme Smith and his team are investigating ways to diagnose pre-eclampsia early in a pregnancy in order to identify and treat women at risk. The research, based at Queen’s University, involves researchers across disciplines in Kingston and Ottawa.

- Dr. Robyn Tamblyn from McGill University and her team—with experts in medicine, marketing and information management—are developing information technology to improve healthcare service delivery and communication among medical professionals and their patients.

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- McMaster University’s Dr. Arya Sharma is examining the relationship among societal, environmental and biological causes of obesity and cardiovascular disease. This project will specifically focus on the role of adipose tissue in the cardiovascular consequences of obesity.
3) Developmental Initiatives

The New Frontiers Program was first launched in 2000 by the Heart and Stroke Foundation and the ICRH to support workshops, consensus conferences and other related activities to mobilize the research community. The program supported 17 initiatives in various areas that included stroke recovery, functional foods, and the reduction of tobacco use in aboriginal communities.

In 2003, several groups received extension grants that allowed them to continue existing projects and build upon their accomplishments. Funding enabled teams like those led by Dr. Heather Arthur (McMaster University) and Dr. Kathryn King (University of Calgary) to acquire a Strategic Training Program Grant that provided funding to build cardiovascular nursing research capacity in Canada.

The New Frontiers Program grants awarded in 2002/2003 by the HSF and ICRH include:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Project Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Heather Arthur, PhD</td>
<td>McMaster University</td>
<td>Building capacity for cardiovascular nursing in Canada.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kathryn King, PhD</td>
<td>University of Calgary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dale Corbett, PhD</td>
<td>Memorial University</td>
<td>Short course on animal stroke models and functional recovery.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lorraine Greaves, PhD</td>
<td>British Columbia Centre of Excellence for Women's Health</td>
<td>Teen girls and smoking: research proposal development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malcolm King, PhD</td>
<td>University of Alberta</td>
<td>Aboriginal community consultation: building a tobacco misuse framework.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duncan Stewart, PhD</td>
<td>St. Michael's Hospital</td>
<td>Gene and cell-based therapies for cardio-respiratory diseases.</td>
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Other Developmental Initiatives

- The Foundation is also supporting an international initiative led by Dr. Marie Beland, Director of Pediatric Cardiology at the Montreal Children's Hospital. The International Nomenclature for Congenital Heart Disease project will allow international representatives to develop a common language for the cardiovascular community that will facilitate research in this area.

- The Heart and Stroke Foundation (HSF) was a member of the steering committee for the Canadian Tobacco Control Research Summit, a joint initiative of the CIHR and the Canadian Tobacco Control Research Initiative. The summit’s goal was to develop an evidence-based framework for tobacco research, discuss theme areas for investment and identify opportunities for cooperation in research capacity building and knowledge translation. The summit’s report led to collaboration among HSF and numerous organizations on “Advancing the Science to Reduce Tobacco Abuse and Nicotine Addiction”.

- The Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada is a member of the World Heart Federation (WHF), which sponsored the WHF Epidemiology Council International Teaching Seminar that took place in summer 2003. The HSF supported this event that trained physicians and scientists in the epidemiology and prevention of cardiovascular disease and established international scientific collaborations.
NEW/RECENT INITIATIVES

The following initiatives were launched by the Heart and Stroke Foundation, with the organizations listed below, during the summer of 2003. Funding will begin in 2004.

### Initiative

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<th>Initiative</th>
<th>Partners</th>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;Focus on Stroke&quot; personnel awards</td>
<td>Canadian Stroke Network CIHR/Rx&amp;D and AstraZeneca Canada Inc. CIHR Institute of Circulatory and Respiratory Health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Target Obesity&quot; personnel awards</td>
<td>CIHR Institutes of: - Cancer Research - Gender and Health - Human Development, Child and Youth Health - Nutrition, Metabolism and Diabetes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental Approaches to Physical Activity, Healthy Eating, and Healthy Body Weight</td>
<td>CIHR Institutes of: - Musculoskeletal Health and Arthritis - Nutrition, Metabolism and Diabetes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada-United States Collaboration in Circulatory and Respiratory Health Research</td>
<td>CIHR Institute of Circulatory and Respiratory Health National Institutes of Health</td>
</tr>
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</table>

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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Advancing the Science to Reduce Tobacco Abuse and Nicotine Addiction</td>
<td>CIHR Institutes of: - Aboriginal Peoples’ Health - Cancer Research - Child and Youth Health - Circulatory and Respiratory Health - Gender and Health - Human Development - Neurosciences, Mental Health and Addiction National Cancer Institute of Canada and Canadian Cancer Society Canadian Lung Association in partnership with the Association pulmonaire du Québec Under the coordination of the Canadian Tobacco Control Research Initiative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender and Sex Determinants of Circulatory and Respiratory Disease</td>
<td>CIHR Institutes of: - Circulatory and Respiratory Health - Gender and Health Canadian Lung Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reducing Health Disparities and Promoting Equity for Vulnerable Populations</td>
<td>CIHR Health Canada National Institutes of Health National Secretariat on Homelessness Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council</td>
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</table>
FOR MORE INFORMATION:

For more information on the Heart and Stroke Foundation’s research enterprise or the Heart and Stroke Foundation Research Fund:

• Please visit: www.hsf.ca/research

• Send a message to research@hsf.ca to join our monthly e-notice with regular updates on Heart and Stroke Foundation programs

To learn more about the Heart and Stroke Foundation, please visit www.heartandstroke.ca