



## **\$5 Million Respiratory Research Funding for Firestone Institute Already Breathing Success**

GlaxoSmithKline's Five-year Research Funding Commitment  
Helps Drive Understanding and Treatment of Respiratory Disease

**Hamilton, ON (January 26, 2005)** – St. Joseph's Healthcare's Firestone Institute for Respiratory Health in Hamilton and GlaxoSmithKline Inc. (GSK) today formally recognized the significant research developments at the Institute enabled by a five-year, \$5 million commitment from GSK. The major funding donation is making a number of important research projects, particularly in asthma management, possible.

"Through the hard work and dedication of the world-class researchers at the Firestone Institute, we are seeing early results of research that will help shape how we approach asthma management in the future," said Paul Lucas, president and CEO of GlaxoSmithKline Inc. "GSK has been a leader in respiratory health for more than 30 years, and being part of Firestone's current research is a privilege."

One study already showing promising results is the Diary of Asthma and Viral Infection Study (DAVIS). DAVIS researchers are studying 200 Canadian children, two thirds with asthma and one third without, to determine how respiratory viral infections such as influenza and the common cold affect asthma symptoms. Eighty per cent of asthma exacerbations in children occur during viral infections. Researchers tracked the children on a day-to-day basis for an 18-month period to capture symptom information such as coughing and wheezing.

The DAVIS data are currently being analyzed to answer a key question: Do children with asthma actually contract more viral infections, or do asthmatic children simply respond more dramatically to infections? This unique research may also benefit all cold sufferers by closely examining how and when the cold virus strikes children, an understanding that may lead to public health proposals to help reduce virus transmission in the community.

"The longer we are involved with the study, the more we are learning about the relationships between asthma and colds," said Neil Johnston, epidemiologist at the Firestone Institute and lead DAVIS investigator. "Not only will the study results help children and adults with asthma, but it will also help their families. And ultimately, healthier families mean healthier communities."

The DAVIS Study is funded by a portion of the \$5 million GSK endowment, which will continue to provide funds through 2007. There are a number of other studies underway at the Firestone Institute as a result of the generous financial contribution, including research into chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, respiratory drug interactions, smoking and asthma.

"Without financial support, the vital research we do in so many facets of respiratory medicine would not be possible," said Dr. Paul O'Byrne, director of the Firestone Institute, professor of medicine and head of the division of respiratory medicine at McMaster University. "Not only has GSK's investment enabled us to continue in our quest to establish the Firestone Institute as a leading centre for the study of asthma and other respiratory diseases, but it has also opened doors to a better understanding of respiratory illness."

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## **\$5 Million GSK Respiratory Funding for Firestone Institute Cont'd /2**

Affecting more than three million Canadians, including an estimated 10 to 15 per cent of Canada's children, asthma is among the most common causes of emergency room visits and hospitalizations.<sup>1,2,3</sup> It is also the most common reason why children miss school. Approximately 500 Canadians die each year from asthma, and it is estimated that the majority of these deaths could be prevented with proper asthma education and treatment.<sup>4</sup>

"The research underway at the Firestone Institute rivals any in Canada, and GSK's significant contribution helps to expand the scope of research we are able to carry out," said Dr. Kevin Smith, president and CEO, St. Joseph's Healthcare Hamilton. "Each day we are increasing our knowledge and taking major strides in respiratory disease diagnosis, education and treatment. We look forward to the achievements still to come."

### **About The Partners**

The Firestone Institute for Respiratory Health was one of Canada's first initiatives in which a hospital and a university developed a major ambulatory care model for out-of-hospital investigation and treatment of patients with lung disease. This model is still in use today where Firestone's clinicians and allied health professionals are working to advance research that will eventually lead to innovations in the care and treatment of lung disease. In addition to focusing on research and teaching, more than 21,000 patients visit the Firestone Institute's clinics each year for leading-edge care. The Firestone Institute is part of St. Joseph's Healthcare Hamilton, a 600-plus bed acute care, teaching and research hospital affiliated with the Faculty of Health Sciences at McMaster University and Mohawk College.

GlaxoSmithKline Inc. – one of the world's leading research-based pharmaceutical and health-care companies – is committed to improving the quality of human life by enabling people to do more, feel better and live longer. In Canada, GlaxoSmithKline is a top 20 investor in Canadian research and development, contributing more than \$100 million annually. It is an Imagine Caring Company, and is recognized as one of the 50 best companies to work for in Canada.

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