

## **New GSK Chair in Airway Inflammation Established at University of Alberta**

GlaxoSmithKline Responds to Need for Continued Research and Understanding of Respiratory Illness with \$1 Million Endowment

**EDMONTON, AB (June 2, 2005)** – The University of Alberta and GlaxoSmithKline Inc. (GSK) announced today the establishment of the new *GSK Chair in Airway Inflammation*. Made possible by a \$1 million endowment from GSK, the new research position will advance the understanding and treatment of airway inflammation.

“We share a long history of collaboration with GSK and are pleased to partner with them on this latest initiative,” said Dr. Thomas Marrie, Dean of the Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry, University of Alberta. “The new *GSK Chair in Airway Inflammation* will further strengthen a key area of our research and will help us make important strides in the overall understanding of respiratory disease.”

Funding for the new *GSK Chair in Airway Inflammation* comes from the GlaxoSmithKline *Pathfinders Fund for Leaders in Canadian Health Science Research*, an initiative that encourages health science research and innovation in Canadian universities. The new research position represents one of many collaborations between the University of Alberta and GSK that have helped identify and improve healthcare solutions for Canadians.

“Respiratory diseases such as asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) significantly impact the quality of life for many Canadians, and funding for clinical and basic research in this area is critical,” said Dr. John Dillon, Vice-President, Research and Development and Chief Medical Officer, GlaxoSmithKline Inc. “We are extremely privileged to partner with the University of Alberta to continue to enhance the understanding of such conditions so that we can ultimately provide improved health outcomes for those who suffer from them.”

“The new *GSK Chair in Airway Inflammation* will enable us to continue to explore existing and develop new areas of study on the topic of airway inflammation,” said Dr. Redwan Moqbel, Director, Pulmonary Research Group at the University of Alberta. “I anticipate that the knowledge obtained will lead to more focused bench-to-bedside research, and to the development of new, individualized, evidence-based therapeutic strategies and diagnostic tools to treat those patients with asthma and COPD.”

The University of Alberta is currently in the early stages of recruitment for the new *GSK Chair in Airway Inflammation*. The specific topic of study will be formalized upon selection of the appropriate candidate.

### **About Asthma and Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD)**

Chronic respiratory diseases, including asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), are on the rise in Canada and account for nearly \$12 billion of healthcare expenditures.<sup>1</sup>

Asthma, one of the most commonly recognized respiratory illnesses, affects more than three million Canadians and causes recurrent attacks of breathlessness, chest tightness and or coughing.<sup>2</sup>

In Canada, asthma is among the most common causes of emergency room visits, hospitalizations and unscheduled doctor visits.<sup>3</sup> Approximately 500 Canadian adults 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>

COPD, also known as 'smoker's lung' is an irreversible and disabling lung disease that can result in death. COPD symptoms progress slowly over a period of years and include shortness of breath, cough and sputum production.<sup>5</sup>

In Canada, an estimated 750,000 Canadians suffer from COPD.<sup>6</sup> The disease is currently the fourth leading cause of death in the country.<sup>7</sup> By 2020, it is estimated that COPD will be the third leading cause of death worldwide.<sup>8</sup>

### **About the Partners**

The University of Alberta in Edmonton is one of Canada's premier teaching and research universities serving more than 35,000 students with 8,000 faculty and staff. The Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry is one of the University of Alberta's most research-intensive faculties, receiving more than \$120 million in sponsored research last year.

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 research and development, contributing more than \$130 million annually. GSK is an Imagine Caring Company, and is recognized as one of the 50 best companies to work for in Canada.

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### **References:**

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- 2 Asthma Society of Canada <http://www.asthma.ca/adults/about/whoGetsAsthma.php>. Accessed January, 2004.
- 3 The Lung Association. Asthma Facts and Statistics. [www.lung.ca/asthma/facts.html](http://www.lung.ca/asthma/facts.html) Accessed February 8, 2005.
- 4 Ibid.
- 5 Health Canada Respiratory Disease in Canada, 2001.
- 6 K.R. Chapman, J. Baourbeau and L.Rance. The burden of COPD in Canada: results from the confronting COPD survey. *Respiratory Medicine*. 2003; vol.97 (supplement c), S23-31.
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