

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **New research chair in chronic obstructive pulmonary disease**

**QUEBEC CITY, QUE. (January 30, 2009)** – Professor and respirologist François Maltais was today appointed Holder of Université Laval’s new GSK-CIHR Research Chair in Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD). The Chair has been created to improve the quality of care provided to people with chronic bronchitis or emphysema and, in so doing, to improve their quality of life. COPD affects close to 750,000 Canadians, causes about 10,000 deaths a year and generates nearly \$3 billions in costs annually. The event was attended by the Minister of Health and Social Services, Dr. Yves Bolduc, and the Minister Responsible for the National Capital Region, Sam Hamad.

COPD is a major and worrisome public health problem, even if smoking, its main cause, is losing adherents. Smokers and ex-smokers are the main victims of the disease. It manifests as shortness of breath on exertion, which becomes increasingly frequent as the disease progresses and, in the end, severely affects the patient’s quality of life. Although the disease attacks the lungs first, it often spreads to other organs, which contributes to the deterioration of the patient’s health. With the current state of medical knowledge, there is no cure for COPD. Smoking cessation remains the most important component of treatment, but physicians can also use bronchodilators to relieve the symptoms, and they usually recommend regular physical activity.

For Université Laval’s rector, Denis Brière, this announcement is proof that partnerships between granting agencies, private enterprise and the University, through one of its affiliated hospitals, permit major achievements. “Thanks to the new GSK-CIHR Research Chair in COPD, Dr. Maltais and his team at Hôpital Laval will be able to further deepen their understanding of the mechanisms that cause the disease and to propose even more effective treatment strategies to patients.”

“Today’s inauguration confirms and is recognition of the quality, rigour and impact of the research conducted by Dr. Maltais and his team of internationally renowned researchers. The work carried out thus far by the members of the research centre’s team, several of whose achievements can serve as models, is raising awareness of the Quebec City University Institute for Cardiology and Respirology (Hôpital Laval). We can be proud of this research centre, which is a key player in basic and clinical research and in health innovation,” said Madeleine Nadeau, the Institute’s Chairman of the Board.

“Pursuing research on chronic obstructive pulmonary disease is of prime importance. We hope that the new knowledge gained as a result of this partnership will lead to improved health and quality of life in COPD patients. We are very proud to support Dr. Maltais’s work through the Pathfinders Fund for Leaders in Canadian Health Science

Research, whose purpose is to promote health sciences research and foster innovation in Canadian medical schools,” declared Paul Lucas, GlaxoSmithKline’s president and chief executive officer.

“Funding this research chair reflects the CIHR’s strategy, which consists in supporting the most brilliant minds in our search for excellence in leading-edge research,” said Dr. Alain Beaudet, president of the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR).” “The focus of Dr. Maltais’s research is the interaction between drugs and other therapies, such as exercise, for the treatment of COPD, an area where Canadian researchers have already made a major impact at the international level. There is no question that the results generated by Dr. Maltais through this research chair will contribute substantially to advancing our knowledge in this area and to offering Canadians real health benefits”.

The GSK-CIHR Research Chair in Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease is receiving funding in the amount of \$1.3 million over a 5-year period, an investment divided between GlaxoSmithKline and the Canadian Institutes of Health Research. The Chair is one of the 100 chairs that Université Laval has pledged to create by 2013, for total funding of \$100 million.

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