



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The Arthritis Society announces new funding for research and training

February 8, 2011 (Toronto, ON) - Canada's largest non-government funder of arthritis research has announced more than \$3.5 million for new arthritis research and training.

The Arthritis Society will award \$1 million, during the next two years, to a training program for multi-disciplinary scientists administered by The Canadian Arthritis Network (CAN). The funds are available for graduate PhD students, research fellows and research scholars to acquire experience in basic science, clinical research, product services and development and industrial partnering. During the past decade, The Arthritis Society awarded more than \$4.5 million to this training program. (As of 2011, this training program has been renamed The Arthritis Society/CAN Training Program.)

"The Arthritis Society has been invaluable in its support of the Canadian Arthritis Network's training program," says Dr. Monique Gignac, co-scientific director of CAN. "Training and financially supporting the next generation of arthritis researchers and rheumatologists is a goal that we share and a priority, given the shortage Canada faces in this area."

In addition, The Arthritis Society recently committed \$150,000 to the Spondyloarthritis Research Consortium of Canada (SPARCC) for supplemental research into spondyloarthritis (a group of diseases characterized by chronic inflammation of the pelvic joints and spine) for one year. The Arthritis Society has already awarded \$2.5 million to the SPARCC research team led by co-principal investigators Drs. Dafna Gladman and Robert Inman (University of Toronto), Walter Maksymowych (University of Alberta) and Proton Rahman (Memorial University, Newfoundland), from 2005-2010.

"As the recipient of the first National Research Initiative awarded by The Arthritis Society, SPARCC is proud of the success it has achieved in significant advances in the understanding, diagnosis and treatment of spondyloarthritis," says Dr. Robert Inman, co-director, SPARCC and director, Ankylosing Spondylitis Clinic, University Health Network - Toronto Western Hospital.

"Research into the many types of arthritis to find a cure and improved treatments is a priority for The Arthritis Society," says Steven McNair, president and CEO, The Arthritis Society. "Without the generosity of donors and supporters, this critical work would not be possible."

In addition, The Arthritis Society recently issued a new call for operating grant applications which are due March 1, 2011, with funding starting October, 2011. Funding for this competition is \$2.4 million over three years. For more information, please visit www.arthritis.ca/research.

About The Arthritis Society

The Arthritis Society is Canada's principal health charity empowering the more than four million Canadians with arthritis to live their lives to the fullest through extensive programs and services. Since its founding in 1948, The Society has invested more than \$170 million in arthritis research to develop better treatments and, ultimately, find a cure.

About The Canadian Arthritis Network

The Canadian Arthritis Network (CAN) (www.arthritisnetwork.ca) is a not-for-profit organization, funded by the Government of Canada's Networks of Centres of Excellence (www.nce.gc.ca), to support arthritis research and development and to facilitate the commercialization of its Network Investigators' discoveries. CAN is the single point of contact that links over 200 leading Canadian arthritis researchers and clinicians, 45 Canadian academic institutions, The Arthritis Society, pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies, and government.

About Spondyloarthritis Research Consortium of Canada (SPARCC)

Spondyloarthritis Research Consortium of Canada (SPARCC) is a transdisciplinary national research program focusing on "Genetic and Pathogenesis Studies and Outcome Measures for Patients with Spondyloarthritis (SpA)", and is secured by a 5-year National Research Initiative (NRI) grant through The Arthritis Society who has provided the core funding.

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