

For Immediate Release

Government of Canada and AllerGen NCE Inc. Invest \$12 Million to Improve the Health of Children Suffering from Asthma and Allergies

Hamilton, ON – June 6, 2008 – Mike Wallace, Member of Parliament for Burlington, announced today, on behalf of the Honourable Tony Clement, Minister of Health, a joint investment of \$12 million over six years for a research project that will investigate the genetic and environmental factors that influence the development of asthma and allergies in children. This project, known as the CHILD study, is co-funded by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) and AllerGen NCE Inc. CIHR and AllerGen are investing \$6 million each over six years.

“Asthma and allergies are serious issues for hundreds of thousands of children and their parents, and we are committed to ensuring that we provide healthy environments for our children to live in,” said Mr. Wallace.

Dr. Peter Liu, Scientific Director at the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, said, “This research will gather greatly needed information on air quality and genetics. We hope this research will help us reduce the number of Canadian children suffering from asthma, allergies and respiratory diseases.”

Dr. Malcolm Sears, Professor of Medicine at McMaster University and Research Director of the Firestone Institute for Respiratory Health is leading the study, which will follow 5,000 Canadian children from pregnancy through early childhood and investigate the roles of indoor and outdoor environmental exposure, infections, nutrition and genetics in the development of asthma and allergies. Expectant mothers will be recruited for the study in four regional centres across the country — Vancouver, Edmonton, Winnipeg and Toronto.

“This study will help us understand why allergies and asthma are common problems in children, and it will help develop new therapies, medications, prevention and management strategies to control these chronic illnesses,” explained AllerGen Scientific Director Dr. Judah Denburg, Professor of Medicine at McMaster University.

“Almost one in five Canadians suffers from asthma and one in three have allergies. The incidence of asthma and allergic disease have steadily grown over the past 30 years,” Dr. Denburg said.

“The CHILD study will not only benefit the treatment and control of asthma and allergies,” explains Dr. Sears, “but the home-based environmental assessments of indoor air quality may well influence future home construction regulations.”

“This unprecedented study will examine the beginnings of diseases that cause so much distress to many Canadians,” said Dr. John Kelton, Dean and Vice-President of the Faculty of Health Sciences at McMaster University. “At McMaster we’ve had a focus on respiratory and allergy conditions for more than 40 years, so we’re glad to host AllerGen and be the headquarters for this important research.”

The Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) is the Government of Canada’s agency for health research. CIHR’s mission is to create new scientific knowledge and to catalyze its translation into improved health, more effective health services and products, and a strengthened Canadian health-care system. Composed of 13 Institutes, CIHR provides leadership and support to more than 11,000 health researchers and trainees across Canada. www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca

AllerGen NCE Inc., the Allergy, Genes and Environment research network, is funded through the federal Networks of Centres of Excellence program. The Networks of Centres of Excellence Canada is a joint initiative of the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council, the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, and Industry Canada. www.allergen-nce.ca

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