

# Media Release

For Immediate Release

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## AllerGen and international partners join forces to fight allergic disease epidemic

Hamilton, ON – AllerGen NCE Inc., the Allergy, Genes and Environment Network, is strengthening its position as a world leader in the fight against the allergic disease epidemic through a new partnership initiative that will see the Network join forces with five international organizations in the pursuit of realizing its vision – to reduce the impact of allergic and related immune diseases nationally and globally.

The Networks of Centres of Excellence (NCE) program is investing \$828,000 in AllerGen under the NCE's new International Partnership Initiative (IPI). The Honourable Maxime Bernier, Minister of Industry and Minister responsible for the Networks of Centres of Excellence, made the announcement during a video conference held at AllerGen's host institution, McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario, and École Polytechnique in Montreal, Quebec.

Under this NCE initiative, AllerGen will also receive \$262,000 from the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) to support collaborations with investigators from low- and middle-income nations.

"This initiative will allow Canadian and international leaders in allergic and related immune disease research to foster new relationships in a spirit of global co-operation, leading to positive economic and social impacts in Canada and around the world," says Dr. Judah Denburg, AllerGen's Scientific Director and CEO. "The IPI will allow for the sharing of Canadian and international expertise in the battle against these chronic diseases."

According to the World Health Organization, 300 million people worldwide suffer from asthma and 255,000 died of the disease in 2005. In Canada, over 8% of Canadians, aged 12 and older, have asthma (Canadian Community Health Survey, 2005), creating a substantial burden on the health care system.

The NCE's International Partnership Initiative will enable collaborations between Canadian and international researchers that will lead towards the development of:

- new policies and tools aimed at reducing allergens in the home and improving indoor air quality;
- new drugs to treat asthma;
- a global consensus for the definition, diagnosis and management of allergic rhinitis and asthma; and
- new tools to improve the management of allergic disease.

AllerGen is partnering with:

- The Global European Allergy and Asthma Network (GA<sup>2</sup>LEN) in Belgium. GA<sup>2</sup>LEN is the only other allergic disease network in the world.
- The Karolinska Institute in Sweden.
- World Health Organization initiatives, Allergic Rhinitis and its Impact on Asthma (ARIA) and the Global Alliance on Respiratory Diseases (GARD), in France and Switzerland.
- The International Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung Disease in France.
- The Institute of Population Health and Clinical Research at the St. John's Research Institute in India.

AllerGen, a national 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.

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