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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Cancer Scientists from around the Globe meet in Halifax, Nova Scotia to Tackle Cancer's Complexity

HALIFAX, NS, August 7th, 2013 – Researchers who are part of a global initiative called “The Halifax Project” start to arrive in Halifax, Nova Scotia today to tackle cancer’s complexity using a unique task force approach. Overall, the project involves more than 350 cancer scientists from prominent research institutions in 31 countries, roughly one-third of whom will attend the workshops in Halifax as part of a year-long initiative that is being spearheaded by Getting to Know Cancer, a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) based in Nova Scotia.

Within the initiative, one task force will take what has been learned about cancer’s complexity to design an entirely new approach to therapy, while the other will assess whether or not everyday exposures to mixtures of commonly encountered chemicals have a role to play in cancer causation. Twelve cross-functional teams of scientists (each focused on a different aspect of cancer biology) within the first task force will spend the next year reviewing what we now know about cancer’s complexity to review the risks associated with everyday exposures to mixtures of commonly encountered chemicals. “This is really a unique approach to a very complex problem”, said Dr. Paola Marignani, a cancer scientist at Dalhousie University who is in the Faculty of Medicine. “The high incidence rate of cancer in Atlantic Canada is troubling, as it is in the rest of Canada, so we hope that this research will help us better understand the various influences in the environment that may be contributing to all cancer types” she added.

A second task force that is also comprised of twelve teams will take a similar approach and use what we now know about cancer’s complexity to design a ground-breaking “broad-spectrum” therapeutic approach that will be aimed at many prioritized targets simultaneously. “We are very pleased that so many of the scientists are able to come to Atlantic Canada to push this initiative forward” said Leroy Lowe, the President of Getting to Know Cancer. “We are crowd-sourcing a solution for cancer by drawing modest contributions from a great number of researchers to create a truly holistic solution that will hopefully help us address the problem of therapeutic resistance and disease relapse”, he added. “Cancer is a complex disorder with multiple defects, so an innovative, multi-pronged and multi-targeted approach to treatment is essential,” said Keith I. Block, M.D., the Medical and Scientific Director of the Block Center for Integrative Cancer Treatment in Skokie, Illinois. “The “Halifax Project” represents the first global initiative that involves the collaboration of a large number of the very best cancer scientists and researchers from around the world and we are hoping that they will be able to further evolve a comprehensive treatment model that is less toxic and more effective” Block said.

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About Getting to Know Cancer

Getting to Know Cancer Cooperative Ltd, is a public-interest, non-profit organization based in Truro, Nova Scotia, Canada that was launched in 2011 with a mission is to instigate applied integrative cancer research. The organization’s inception was inspired by a number of cancer-related deaths in the families of the two cofounders, who have since been focused on finding ways to address a number of systemic barriers that they believe are slowing down the progress of cancer research.

For more information, please visit the organization’s website www.gettingtoknowcancer.org

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