LAWSON
HEALTH RESEARCH INSTITUTE

Media Advisory

For Immediate Release December 11, 2017

Lawson Health Research Institute receives funding from Neurofibromatosis Ontario to support epigenetics research

Epigenetics may lead to new treatments for neurofibromatosis

LONDON, ON – Neurofibromatosis (NF) is a genetic disorder that causes tumours to grow along nerves and can affect the development of non-nervous tissues such as bones and skin. The worldwide incidence of NF1 (the most common of the three types of NF) is one in 2,500 to one in 3,000 individuals. Many patients inherit NF1 but it is estimated that about 50 per cent of cases occur as a result of spontaneous gene mutations.

There are currently few approved therapies for NF tumours, but funding provided by Neurofibromatosis Ontario (NFON) will enable researchers at Children's Health Research Institute (CHRI), a program of Lawson Health Research Institute (Lawson), to explore using epigenetics to develop new treatments.

NFON will fund a study led by epigenetics researcher and CHRI scientist, Dr. David Rodenhiser, and conducted at Children's Hospital, London Health Sciences Centre (LHSC).

"Epigenetics research aims to understand factors that influence the activity of genes. Over the past few years, new technologies have been developed at Lawson to map epigenetics changes across the entire genomes of patient and tumour DNA. We can use these technologies to identify methylation signatures, which show genes that are wrongly turned on or off," says Dr. Rodenhiser. "With this generous funding, we will identify methylation signatures in tumours from NF1 patients. Our goal is to determine specific targets for therapies already available for treating cancer and to develop new NF1-specific therapies."

Media are invited to attend a cheque presentation and tour of CHRI:

Date: Tuesday, December 12, 2017
Time: 1:00 p.m.
Location:
Zone B, Atrium (Basline Rd. Entrance)
London Health Sciences Centre
Victoria Hospital
800 Commissioners Rd. E.
Please park in visitor parking garage off of Baseline Road and follow signs to Zone B 1st floor

Dr. Rodenhiser; Dr. Chris Pin, Chair and Scientist, Division of Genetics & Development, CHRI; and representatives from NFON will be available for photos/videos and interviews.

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Lawson Health Research Institute: As the research institute of London Health Sciences Centre and St. Joseph's Health Care London, and working in partnership with Western University, Lawson Health Research Institute is committed to furthering scientific knowledge to advance health care around the world. www.lawsonresearch.ca

Neurofibromatosis Ontario: Neurofibromatosis Ontario (NFON) supports individuals and families affected by neurofibromatosis (NF), and educates members, health professionals, and the general public about NF for earliest recognition, identification, diagnosis, monitoring and treatment of NF and related complications. We also help fund research into the cause, control, treatment and prevention of NF and its complications. Our vision is a world without NF. www.nfon.ca

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