

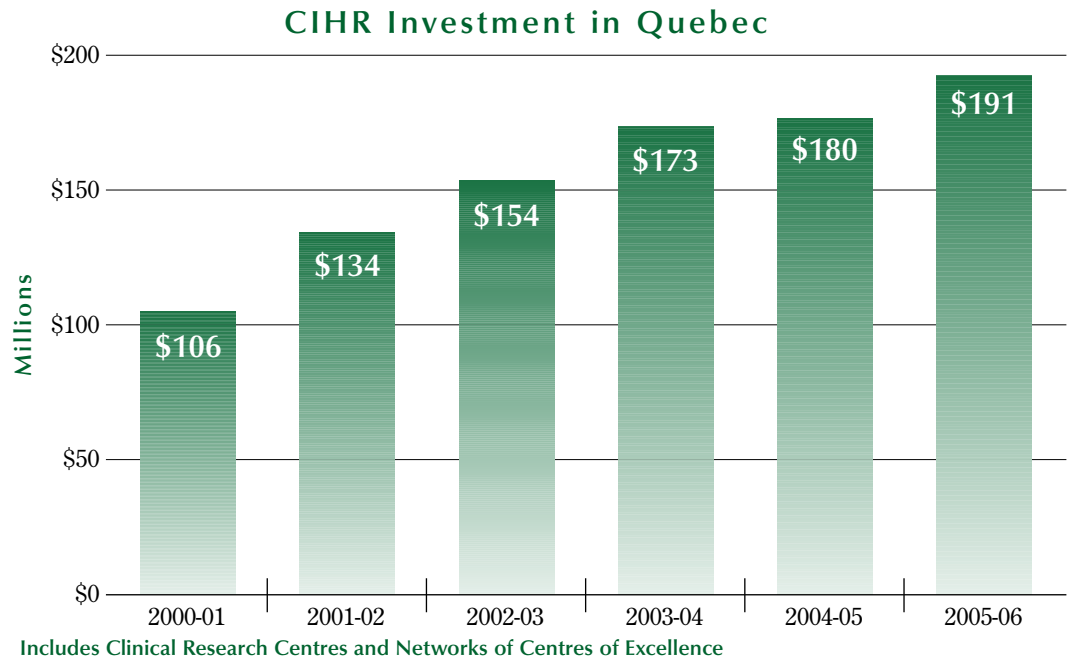
## Quebec at a Glance

Health researchers in Quebec universities and hospitals are among the world's best. CIHR awarded approximately \$191 million for health research in Quebec in 2005-06, an increase of more than 80% from 2000-01. This funding supports more than 2,310 projects by principal investigators in 26 funded institutions.

## About CIHR

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 healthcare system. Composed of 13 Institutes, CIHR provides leadership and support to more than 10,000 health researchers and trainees across Canada.

## The Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) Supports Health Research in Quebec



## Funding Excellence CIHR-Funded Health Research in Quebec

Universities in Quebec are known for their expertise and research achievements in a variety of areas. Here are some examples:

### **Building a Safer Blood Supply**

*Dr. Momar Ndao, McGill University, Montreal*

Research by Dr. Momar Ndao of McGill University will help make the blood supply safer. Dr. Ndao's lab has developed and is testing an inexpensive yet comprehensive blood test that will test for all major parasitic diseases and determine if the blood is safe. Current parasite detection methods are expensive and complex and, as a result, blood is seldom tested for parasites.

### **Increasing the Power of Cancer Killer Cells**

*Dr. André Veillette, Institut de recherches cliniques de Montréal*

So-called "natural killer" (NK) cells recognize and kill cancer cells. Health research teams have been trying for many years to find out how to increase NK-cell activity. Now, CIHR-supported researcher Dr. André Veillette, from the Institut de recherches cliniques de Montréal, has discovered that a protein called EAT-2 slows down the function of natural killer (NK) cells. If medications that suppress EAT-2 in humans can be developed, Dr. Veillette believes that NK cells will likely increase and work in conjunction with chemotherapy and radiotherapy to improve the effectiveness of cancer treatments.

### **The Power to Say No to Food**

*Dr. Louis Pérusse, Université Laval*

Having difficulty saying no to food is not just a matter of poor self control; it may have genetic causes as well. CIHR-funded researcher Dr. Louis Pérusse at Université Laval has identified a gene linked to eating behaviours and obesity. A mutated version of the gene is related to a lowered ability to stop eating, as well as a susceptibility to hunger. Over a six-year period, people with the mutation gained more than twice as much body fat as people without the mutation.

### **Addressing the Burden of Aboriginal Suicide**

*Dr. Gustavo Turecki, McGill University, Montreal*

Suicide rates in Aboriginal communities are almost ten times the national average. CIHR-supported researcher Dr. Gustavo Turecki of McGill University is leading a team to find out what, exactly, are the risk factors for suicide among Aboriginals. The team has begun conducting detailed, one-on-one interviews in communities across Nunavut with people who have survived a suicide attempt and with people who have had a family member or friend who has committed suicide. The team will also be talking to an equal number of people untouched by suicide. In the second part of the project, the team will interview only people who have attempted and survived suicide to learn more about what helped them overcome the threat of suicide and move on with life.

### **Testing the Effectiveness of Drugs to Prevent Blindness**

*Dr. Adriana Di Polo, Université de Montréal*

In North America, glaucoma ranks as the second leading cause of blindness in Caucasians and is the leading cause of blindness among African Americans. Dr. Adriana Di Polo of Université de Montréal has received commercialization funding to study the use of a drug approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration for Alzheimer's disease. She wants to see if it can also prevent the death of retinal ganglion cells, which normally die with glaucoma. The outcome of this research is essential towards the potential development of this drug for the treatment and prevention of glaucoma.

## **The Power of Volunteers – Quebec Researchers Helping to Build CIHR**

CIHR volunteers, drawn from Canada's research community, form the backbone of the organization. They ensure that only the best proposals receive funding, help set priorities and ensure CIHR meets its mandate.

### **Dr. Lucie Jeannotte, CIHR's Institute of Human Development, Child and Youth Health Advisory Board**

Dr. Jeannotte is a full Professor in the Department of Medical Biology at Université Laval. Her research focuses on understanding the molecular mechanisms responsible for the development of the mammalian embryo, with a particular emphasis on the involvement of members of the Hox gene family. Her understanding of the processes of human development lends an important dimension to the work of the Institute.

### **Dr. André Cantin, Chair, CIHR's Institute of Circulatory and Respiratory Health Advisory Board**

Dr. André Cantin is a Professor in the Department of Medicine, Respiratory Division, at the University of Sherbrooke. His research interests are in the areas of lung inflammation, oxidants and antioxidants in pulmonary fibrosis and cystic fibrosis. He is currently the Chair of the Medical and Scientific Advisory Board of the Canadian Cystic Fibrosis Foundation. As Chair of the Institute Advisory Board, he helps to set strategic priorities for health research and acts as a liaison to the wider respiratory and circulatory health research community.

### **Dr. Alain Lesage, CIHR's Institute of Neurosciences, Mental Health and Addiction Advisory Board**

Dr. Lesage is Research Professor in the Department of Psychiatry at the Université de Montréal as well as a Quebec national health researcher (Fonds de la recherche en santé du Québec). His primary research focus is an epidemiological and evaluative look at the care and service needs of people with serious mental disorders. He also directs an evaluative support module for the development of psychiatric services at Hôpital Louis-H. Lafontaine. As a member of the Institute Advisory Board, he plays an important role in helping shape priorities for strategic initiatives such as mental health in the workplace.