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MEDIA RELEASE

Backgrounder: ImageTech Lab to advance Innovation Boulevard's impact in brain/body diagnostics, treatment

First of its kind in Western Canada, Surrey Memorial Hospital lab led by SFU will draw on science/tech strengths to generate "fastest possible advances in our largest healthcare challenges"

May 19, 2015

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Photos: <http://at.sfu.ca/hbuass>

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A world-class medical imaging lab—designed to further translational brain research and focus on advanced diagnostics and treatment monitoring in neurology, mental health and addictions care—is being established by Simon Fraser University and the City of Surrey, in partnership with Fraser Health.

Western Economic Diversification (WD) is providing \$3.6 million in federal investment into Innovation Boulevard's growing technology test-bed to support ImageTech Lab, considered "one of its crown jewels." The announcement was made today by the Hon. Michelle Rempel, Minister of State for WD.

The lab, representing many firsts, brings together a partnership between SFU, UBC, Philips Healthcare and CTF MISL to ensure B.C. continues to be globally competitive in advanced brain imaging.

ImageTech is home to a new state-of-the-art 3.0 Tesla whole body magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) machine and an upgraded 275-channel magnetoencephalography (MEG) machine—with the MEG being a long-established, SFU-driven medical technology advance.

"Our longstanding MEG partnership with the Down Syndrome Research Foundation has grown into a much larger opportunity," says SFU neuroscientist and project lead Dr. Ryan D'Arcy. "Now, such tools will enable the region's top health innovators to bring rapid advances in the treatment for devastating brain disorders and diseases, like brain tumours, epilepsy, dementia, depression and brain injury.

"Combining advanced MRI and MEG offers the best possible window into the brain in action. The Surrey Memorial ImageTech Lab positions B.C. for global leadership. When you include the MEG capability in particular, there is nothing like it in Western Canada."

One of Canada's best examples of medical technology innovation success is the CTF MEG spin-off technology from SFU, which are now distributed worldwide through the Vancouver-based company MISL Ltd.

Access to the latest MEG capabilities for debilitating conditions such as epilepsy will "immediately and profoundly impact our region's children and families," says Dr. D'Arcy, noting that it will now be possible to realize breakthroughs in treatments for brain cancer, stroke, dementia and other serious brain conditions, across the lifespan.

ImageTech is the latest embedded addition into the Innovation Boulevard network. Others include Surrey Memorial's NeuroTech Lab, SFU's Digital Health Hub, the Innovation Centre for Healthy Aging driven by Retirement Concepts, and the recently opened HealthTech Innovation Hub led by Dianne Watts. Future planned growth includes embedded labs for addictions recovery and mental health, and other key priorities that target B.C.'s biggest healthcare challenges.

The investment by Western Economic Diversification is further augmented by a recent \$1 million investment from the Canada Foundation for Innovation (CFI) and the \$36.6 million investment into AGE-WELL, a Canadian Network of Excellence in healthy aging innovations, co-led by SFU.

QUOTES:

SFU PRESIDENT ANDREW PETTER

"This funding from Western Economic Diversification Canada will support the development of medical technologies that grow the economy and improve patient care," says SFU President Andrew Petter. "Our partnership with the City of Surrey is an important part of SFU's innovation strategy, and is helping to position British Columbia as a leader in health technology."

VP RESEARCH JOY JOHNSON

"This first-of-its-kind facility in Western Canada will create technology waves that will profoundly alter the health care landscape in British Columbia, and position Canada for global leadership in health technology innovation."

SFU NEUROSCIENTIST AND PROJECT LEAD DR. RYAN D'ARCY:

"As an active participant in Innovation Boulevard," says Dr. D'Arcy, "SFU leaders are translating our university capacity and capabilities directly into benefits that innovate our healthcare services and accelerate our economic growth."

FAST FACTS:

- Some of the bright minds behind Image Tech include:

SFU and affiliates:

Engineering science professor Dr. Carlo Menon, acquired brain injury and rehabilitation;
Mechatronics Systems Engineering (MSE) professor Carolyn Sparrey, spinal cord injury research;
Engineering science professor Dr. Faisal Beg, who studies early stages of dementia;
Dr. Sylvain Moreno, mental health and NeuroDevNet, a Canadian Network of Centres of Excellence (NCE);
Dr. Sam Doesburg, who studies pediatrics and Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD);

UBC:

Dr. Alex McKay, MRI Research Centre team leader

BC Children's Hospital:

Dr. Bruce Bjornson, Neurology and pre-surgical brain mapping

BC Cancer Agency:

Dr. Kirpal Kohli, medical physics applications in cancer

Fraser Health Authority:

Dr. John Diggle, Surrey Memorial Hospital, clinical neurology;
Dr. Xiaowei Song, Surrey Memorial Hospital, aging and dementia (and the newly established AGE-WELL initiative);
Dr. William Siu, Royal Columbian Hospital, neuroradiology and medical imaging;
Dr. James Bond, Surrey Memorial Hospital, thoracic surgery and body MRI applications, and
Dr. Teresa Cheung, Surrey Memorial Hospital, MEG pediatric applications such as epilepsy

- Among recent research endeavours, Dr. D'Arcy has developed a portable brain scanner and, using MEG technology, has

been developing a new way to help surgeons more accurately plan for surgical treatment of epilepsy.

- The goal of Innovation Boulevard partners, including SFU, the City of Surrey, KPU, Fraser Health and Surrey Memorial Hospital, is to focus on B.C.'s technology sector to become a global leader of healthcare innovation.

As Canada's engaged university, SFU is defined by its dynamic integration of innovative education, cutting-edge research and far-reaching community engagement. SFU was founded almost 50 years ago with a mission to be a different kind of university—to bring an interdisciplinary approach to learning, embrace bold initiatives, and engage with communities near and far. Today, SFU is a leader amongst Canada's comprehensive research universities and is ranked one of the top universities in the world under 50 years of age. With campuses in British Columbia's three largest cities—Vancouver, Surrey and Burnaby—SFU has eight faculties, delivers almost 150 programs to over 30,000 students, and boasts more than 130,000 alumni in 130 countries around the world.

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