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MEDIA RELEASE

Working towards a world-class Canadian centre for HIV/AIDS research

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Photo: <http://at.sfu.ca/KudKNO>

CANOC news release: <http://at.sfu.ca/YZEjaV>

National collaborative network, led by SFU health scientist Robert Hogg, awarded \$2.7 million to expand its policy-relevant research.

Simon Fraser University's Faculty of Health Sciences dean and VP, Research are delighted that a one-of-a-kind national HIV/AIDS study, led by SFU health scientist **Robert Hogg**, is getting new funding to expand its mandate.

The Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) is injecting \$2.7 million in new money during the next five years into the **Canadian Observational Cohort** (CANOC). It is the country's only longitudinal study of more than 10,000 HIV-positive individuals accessing antiretroviral therapy (ART) in Canada.

Hogg will use the new grant to establish the CANOC Collaborative Research Centre. It will expand the cohort and generate policy and practice recommendations to improve health outcomes for people living and aging with HIV across Canada.

In his role as a research scientist with **B.C. Centre for Excellence in HIV/AIDS** (BC-CfE), Hogg has been overseeing CANOC's exploration of ART's efficacy in B.C., Ontario and Quebec since 2008, when the network was created.

The national research team studies many clinically relevant topics, including regional differences in viral load testing between provinces, issues of co-infection with HIV and hepatitis C, and factors associated with late initiation of anti-retroviral treatment.

The new funding will help the team launch projects aimed at addressing a gap it has identified in national active surveillance of HIV disease and co-morbid conditions. The projects will assess the impact of HIV on aging-related co-morbidities, including cancer and diseases that affect the heart, kidneys and liver.

"The **Faculty of Health Sciences** is very proud of Dr. Robert Hogg's success with securing a grant to establish a national centre to expand longitudinal studies of people with HIV/AIDS in an effort to improve treatment outcomes and prevent further infections," says SFU Faculty of Health Dean **John O'Neil**.

"Dr. Hogg is one of Canada's foremost scientists working to reverse the HIV/AIDS epidemic. His work over the past several decades has been instrumental in improving the lives of many thousands of people suffering from this deadly disease."

Adds Joy Johnson, SFU VP, Research: "We are grateful to the Government of Canada, which through CIHR is enabling SFU to build upon its previous work with the BC-CfE to foster policy-relevant research in HIV therapeutics, population and public

health.

“With the establishment of the CANOC Centre, SFU, BC-CfE and its partners will foster and integrate research across the country to help Canadians better address the challenges presented by the disease, its treatment, and their intersection with other health factors such as aging.”

“CANOC is well-situated to respond to future research questions related to the Canadian HIV/AIDS epidemic,” says Hogg. “Our large and productive team of researchers will continue to monitor the impact and outcomes of modern ART on individuals living with HIV in Canada, while exploring co-morbidities associated with aging on ART.”

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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