

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**BUDGET COMMITMENT A TURNING POINT FOR RESEARCH AND TREATMENT OF
BRAIN DISORDERS**

***Federal Commitment of \$100 Million will Match Private Funds to Address
Diseases Affecting 1 in 3 Canadians***

March 22, 2011 – Montreal, Quebec –Today is a landmark day for the millions of Canadians who are affected by brain disorders, following Finance Minister Jim Flaherty's announcement to allocate up to \$100 million in matched funding to support Brain Canada's efforts to advance brain research in Canada. The funds will establish a public-private partnership known as the Canada Brain Research Fund, and will encourage Canadians to increase their support of brain research.

The partnership will be led by Brain Canada, along with Neurological Health Charities Canada and the Canadian Association for Neuroscience, and will fund some of the most excellent and innovative research in the world – using a uniquely Canadian model of interdisciplinary, multi-institutional collaboration that has already produced important breakthroughs in brain research. The Canada Brain Research Fund will focus on applying funds strategically and in ways that will accelerate the process of translating basic research into new diagnostics, treatments and ultimately cures.

"I believe people will look back years from now and recognize today as a turning point for neuroscience in Canada," said Rupert Duchesne, Chair, Brain Canada. "We congratulate the government for making this investment in an area that is critical to the well-being of all Canadians. The funding partnership involving government, the private sector, the voluntary sector and Canadian scientific leaders, is crucial to advancing treatment and finding cures for diseases that are such a huge burden in our country and around the world."

Disorders of the brain account for a broad spectrum of conditions, affecting people of all ages, encompassing mental illness and psychiatric disease, neurological disorders such as ALS, multiple sclerosis and Alzheimer's disease, brain and spinal cord injuries, concussion and stroke.

"Neurological Health Charities Canada applauds the Government for accelerating neuroscience research in Canada. Today's announcement offers real hope for better support, more effective treatments and one day, a cure for debilitating brain conditions," commented Joyce Gordon, Chair of Neurological Health Charities Canada.

The Whole is Greater than the Sum of its Parts

Brain research funding in Canada has traditionally supported individual scientists pursuing research in specific disciplines in individual laboratories. Recent experience indicates, however, that a collaborative approach to research, which complements the traditional approach, can accelerate how knowledge is translated into treatment. A key development is a focus on the brain as a single complex system rather than a "parts list" or a collection of distinct diseases.

"This is wonderful news for brain research in Canada, and should lead to great discoveries," said Dr. Brian MacVicar of the Canadian Association for Neuroscience.

Canada is a leader in the field of neuroscience with many of the most important discoveries made by a Canadian researcher or lab. Canada also excels at collaboration and at making the most of our funding – an area in which we outpace American and European colleagues. The Canada Brain Research Fund will facilitate the creation of teams consisting of the best brain researchers in Canada working together to discover commonalities between brain disorders, and take advantage of this knowledge to develop breakthroughs and new treatments.

Brain Disorders: The Health Challenge of the 21st Century

When direct costs and costs linked to disability are combined, the economic burden of brain disorders is estimated at \$60B, or about 38 per cent of the total burden of disease.

"The impact of disorders of the brain exceeds that of cancer and cardiovascular disease combined – yet funding for brain research lags behind that of other diseases relative to the burden of disease," concluded Mr. Duchesne. "Given Canada's demographics, the impact on the economy and society will continue to accelerate."

Brain disorders impact one in three Canadians – more than 11 million people – and are the leading cause of disability creating a lifelong burden for individuals, families and society. While some brain diseases respond to treatment, there are no cures. People with a brain disorder may live for years with their condition; with some conditions, people will slowly degenerate, lose function and no longer be able to care for themselves, which has a dramatic impact on families and on society.

The Canada Brain Research Fund

With appropriate funding, involving private, public and voluntary sectors, Canada can turn the challenge of brain disorders and their enormous economic burden on our economy and society into an opportunity for global leadership.

The Canada Brain Research Fund is an initiative of Brain Canada in partnership with Neurological Health Charities Canada, a collective of voluntary health organizations that represent individuals with progressive brain diseases and their families, and the Canadian Association for Neuroscience, which represents all of Canada's brain researchers. The Fund brings together the private sector, the voluntary sector, scientific leaders and government to significantly increase operational funding for brain research and maximize the impact and efficiency of those investments.

Brain Canada

Brain Canada is a national, charitable organization with the goal of funding research aimed at unlocking the mystery of the brain, and developing diagnostics, treatments and ultimately cures for brain disorders. Brain Canada raises funds from private sources, partners with charities and foundations with similar goals, and seeks matched Government funding for neuroscience research.

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For more information, please contact:

Inez Jabalpurwala
Brain Canada
514-989-2989

inezj@neurosciencecanada.ca

Elisabeth Mozel-Jury/Jane McCoubrey
NATIONAL Public Relations
416-848-1420 / 416-848-1397

emozel-jury@national.ca / jmccoubrey@national.ca