

Prominent neurobiologist Dr. Samuel Weiss appointed Scientific Director of the CIHR Institute of Neurosciences, Mental Health and Addiction

Dr. Samuel Weiss (CNW Group/Canadian Institutes of Health Research)

Dr. Weiss credited with discovery of adult neural stem cells, opening the door to possible new treatments for brain diseases

OTTAWA, May 4, 2017 /CNW/ - Dr. Roderick McInnes, Acting President of the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR), along with CIHR's Governing Council, announced today the appointment of Dr. Samuel Weiss as the new Scientific Director of the CIHR Institute of Neurosciences, Mental Health and Addiction (INMHA). This appointment will be effective July 1, 2017.

Since 2004, Dr. Weiss has served as the inaugural Director of the Hotchkiss Brain Institute at the University of Calgary, where he leads a team of 127 faculty members, over 300 neuroscience trainees and 350 professional staff. He is also a tenured professor at the University of Calgary's Cumming School of Medicine.

Dr. Weiss is well known for his discovery of neural stem cells in the brains of adult mammals in 1992, which suggests that the adult brain can generate new cells. This research has opened the door to potential new treatments for brain diseases and a better understanding of brain cancer. His current work is focused on finding new ways to treat high-fatality brain tumours.

Dr. Weiss has had a long association with CIHR, having been awarded a post-doctoral fellowship by CIHR's predecessor, the Medical Research Council of Canada, in 1983. More recently, he was the co-lead of the Stand Up to Cancer Canada Cancer Stem Cell Dream Team, which received \$11.7M in funding from CIHR and other partners to study the cancer stem cells that drive the growth of tumours.

As the Scientific Director of CIHR-INMHA, Dr. Weiss will work with the Canadian neurosciences, mental health and addiction communities to identify research priorities, develop research funding opportunities, build partnerships and translate research evidence into policy and practice to improve the health of Canadians and people around the world. Finally, as a member of CIHR's leadership team, he will participate in setting and implementing CIHR's strategic direction.

Quotes

"I'm delighted to welcome Dr. Sam Weiss to CIHR as the new Scientific Director of the Institute of Neurosciences, Mental Health and Addiction. Amongst many other contributions, Dr. Weiss was the discoverer of brain stem cells. He has been a greatly respected leader as Director of the Hotchkiss Brain

Institute at the University of Calgary. The CIHR community will benefit from his leadership in supporting research on scientific and government priorities such as mental health, dementia, and opioid addiction."

*Roderick McInnes, CM, MD, PhD, FRSC
Acting President, Canadian Institutes of Health Research*

"I'm humbled and thrilled to be taking up this exciting opportunity with CIHR and follow in the footsteps of my colleagues Drs. Remi Quirion and Tony Phillips. They have done so much to support the impactful research the Canadian neuroscience and mental health communities are doing in vital areas such as dementia, brain injury, autism, addiction and depression. I look forward to doing my own part to advance the Canadian national agenda for neuroscience, mental health and addiction."

*Dr. Samuel Weiss
Incoming Scientific Director, CIHR Institute of Neurosciences, Mental Health and Addiction*

"Dr. Weiss' contributions to the University of Calgary's *Eyes High* goals have been tremendous. As the inaugural Director of the Hotchkiss Brain Institute and leader of the university's brain and mental research strategy, he has been key in establishing UCalgary as a leader in brain and mental health research and education. We are excited that he has been recognized for his outstanding leadership and will continue to contribute to brain and mental health research on a national scale."

*Dr. Ed McCauley
Vice President (Research), University of Calgary*

Quick Facts

- CIHR is comprised of 13 Institutes, each led by a Scientific Director responsible for championing specific areas of health research, establishing and nurturing partnerships, and promoting the use of research evidence to inform policies that support better health for Canadians.
- The CIHR Institute of Neurosciences, Mental Health and Addiction's overall objective is to ensure a more integrated approach to patient care, emphasis on brain health across the health care spectrum from biomedical to clinical, to health systems and services, and to the social, psychosocial, cultural and environmental factors that affect the health of populations.

At the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR), we know that research has the power to change lives. As Canada's health research investment agency, we collaborate with partners and researchers to support the discoveries and innovations that improve our health and strengthen our health care system.

The Hotchkiss Brain Institute (HBI) at the University of Calgary consists of more than 120 scientists and clinician-scientists who are dedicated to advancing brain and mental health research and education. The Institute's research strengths, in the areas of Brain & Behaviour, Neural Injury & Repair and Healthy Brain Aging, are leading to new treatments for neurological and psychiatric disorders, aimed at improving quality of life and patient care.

The University of Calgary is a global intellectual hub located in Canada's most enterprising city. In our spirited, high-quality learning environment, students thrive in programs made rich by research, hands-on experiences and entrepreneurial thinking. Our strategy drives us to be recognized as one of Canada's top five research universities, engaging the communities we both serve and lead. This strategy is called *Eyes High*, inspired by the university's Gaelic motto, which translates as 'I will lift up my eyes.' For more information, visit ucalgary.ca/eyeshigh.

SOURCE Canadian Institutes of Health Research

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