

## **Canada's First Occupational Cancer Research Centre Launched** *World Renowned Scientist Leading New Research Centre*

**TORONTO (March 5th, 2009)** - Today health and workplace safety organizations, businesses, and labour groups joined forces with a common goal of reducing workplace cancer, and officially launched Canada's first centre dedicated solely to research in occupational cancers. The Occupational Cancer Research Centre will be charged with improving knowledge and evidence to help identify, prevent and ultimately eliminate exposures to cancer-causing substances in the workplace.

"I congratulate and thank the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board, Cancer Care Ontario, the Canadian Cancer Society, Ontario Division, and the United Steelworkers for working together to launch this world-class research centre," says Peter Fonseca, Minister of Labour.

"We believe that the best way to prevent occupational cancers that devastate so many families every year is to join together and invest in research to find solutions," says Steven Mahoney, Workplace Safety and Insurance Board Chair. "The Centre's work will be key to helping us achieve our vision of the elimination of all workplace injuries, illnesses and fatalities in Ontario."

While there is convincing evidence that a number of products, and processes used in the workplace cause cancer, the relationship between cancer and many carcinogens at low levels of exposure is much less clear. And some workplace substances that are suspected of being carcinogenic have never been adequately evaluated. To get a better understanding of the risks of occupational exposures, Ontario needs to develop a comprehensive surveillance strategy and undertake greater research in this area.

"The 2008–2011 Ontario Cancer Plan's goal is to transform the province's already good cancer system into a great system that can significantly reduce the incidence of cancer, and improve outcomes through early detection," said Terrence Sullivan, president and CEO, Cancer Care Ontario. "A key initiative of this plan includes working with our partners to develop this Centre to bolster our knowledge base about cancer and the workplace, and translate these research findings for the benefit of workers, their families, and Ontarians."

"As part of our mission to eradicate cancer, the Canadian Cancer Society is pleased to support research into occupational cancers through this innovative partnership," says Peter Goodhand, CEO, Ontario Division, Canadian Cancer Society. "The new occupational research centre will add an important component to the prevention research currently funded by the Society. We're helping lead the way thanks to the generous help of our supporters."

The establishment of the centre represents a crucial step forward in the larger fight against cancer. It is already garnering international attention with the appointment of renowned expert in occupational and environmental epidemiology, Dr. Aaron Blair, as Interim Director. Dr. Blair is a world-class leader in occupational studies, and has made a number of outstanding contributions to environmental epidemiology.

“The establishment of the Occupational Cancer Research Centre is a major step in identifying carcinogens in the workplace and initiating preventive actions,” said Dr. Blair.

The Centre is a joint undertaking funded by Cancer Care Ontario, the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board, and the Canadian Cancer Society’s Ontario Division, and developed in collaboration with the United Steelworkers. It represents an innovative and unique partnership, bringing together health, workplace safety, labour and industry groups. This partnership will bring the results of the research to the workplace and turn evidence into education, action and help to improve the health of Ontarians.

It will be housed at Cancer Care Ontario, and initial research priorities include reviewing current occupational cancer prevention efforts and their effectiveness; identifying gaps in occupational cancer research including minorities and rare cancers, and expanding and enhancing ongoing activities.

### **The Workplace Safety and Insurance Board**

Ontario’s Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) plays a key role in the province’s occupational health and safety system. The WSIB administers no-fault workplace insurance for employers and their workers and is committed to the prevention of workplace injuries and illnesses. The WSIB provides disability benefits, monitors the quality of healthcare, and assists in early and safe return to work for workers who are injured on the job or contract an occupational disease. For more information visit [www.wsib.on.ca](http://www.wsib.on.ca).

### **The Canadian Cancer Society**

The Canadian Cancer Society is a national community-based organization of volunteers whose mission is the eradication of cancer and the enhancement of the quality of life of people living with cancer. It is the largest national charitable funder of cancer research in Canada. Last year, the Society contributed \$49.5 million to leading-edge research projects across the country. When you want to know more about cancer, visit [www.cancer.ca](http://www.cancer.ca).

### **Cancer Care Ontario**

Cancer Care Ontario is the provincial agency responsible for continually improving cancer services. As the government’s cancer advisor, Cancer Care Ontario works to reduce the number of people diagnosed with cancer, and make sure that patients receive better care every step of the way. For more information visit: [www.cancercare.on.ca](http://www.cancercare.on.ca).

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