



Canadian Cancer Society
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du cancer

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CCS Executive letter to the research community

September 1, 2011

Members of the research community,

This fall the Canadian Cancer Society Research Institute (CCSRI) will receive the first round of applications for our new research competitions. As we look forward to the promise these proposals represent, we wanted to address some issues raised in media reports earlier in the summer regarding our commitment to research funding and our fundraising expenses. While we have heard from many in the cancer community expressing support for the work that the Canadian Cancer Society (CCS) does, we have also heard some genuine concern about our fundraising costs, about the level of research funding over the past 10 years and about some of the changes that are taking place in our research program. Because of the value we place on our close association with you, as members of the research community, we thought it important to correspond directly about some of the issues raised.

As many of you will know, the mission of the Canadian Cancer Society is to eradicate cancer and improve the quality of life of people living with cancer. Our mission work, beyond funding research, includes raising awareness of cancer risk factors and working with Canadians to reduce those risks, advocating on behalf of Canadians for healthy policies, and providing much-needed programs, services and information for cancer patients and their families, such as lodges and transportation to cancer treatments.

We take great care to responsibly manage every single dollar we receive, and carefully evaluate our expenses to ensure that donors get the most from the generous contributions they make to help Canadians, cancer patients and their families. At all times, our fundraising activities are undertaken for one reason and one reason only – to raise money for our mission. In 2010/11 our fundraising expenses (excluding lotteries) were 32% while our administration costs were only 4%. Through these fundraising efforts, in 2010/11 we generated \$127.5 million to support CCS mission activities, of which \$48 million or 38% was directed to supporting research.

Research remains the single largest investment made by the CCS in our fight against cancer. In the last 10 years, we have invested \$450 million in important cancer research across Canada. We are in an increasingly competitive marketplace and there is a direct relationship between fundraising expenditures and revenue generation – in other words, we need to invest money to raise money. Without an emphasis on fundraising, our revenue would undoubtedly decline and less money would be directed to our entire mission, including research. The challenge of the last few years has been to maintain commitments to research in the face of an economic

downturn and increasing demands from other parts of the mission – including cancer support services, driven by an increase of approximately 40,000 newly diagnosed cancer patients since 2000. As a result of this growing need for other aspects of our mission, the percentage of CCS funding being directed to research has decreased compared to 10 years ago. Despite the demands of other mission work, however, we have maintained – and, in some years, grown – the funding of research in absolute dollars.

We also recognize that our newly redesigned research program may be causing you some concern; indeed, the changes we are making are not trivial ones. However, the cancer research funding environment has altered and grown over the past 10 years and it is important that we define the role of the CCS in this evolving landscape. Our redesigned research program is fully aligned with the CCS nation-wide strategic plan and will be financially sustainable over time. It was created through input from an extensive consultation process with many of you and with our senior leadership. The Advisory Committee on Research (ACOR) has recommended this new program and it has also been enthusiastically endorsed by the National Board of Directors of the Canadian Cancer Society.

We are absolutely committed to continuing to support excellent peer-reviewed research across the entire breadth of the cancer control spectrum, and it remains a core component of the mission of the CCS. We are excited about the potential for our redesigned research funding model to have significant impact on our understanding of cancer and tangible benefits for cancer patients now and in the future. With this more flexible, innovative research program we will engage donors in order to generate new funds targeted specifically for research.

We cannot overcome our shared challenges unless we work together in support of our common goals. The more we can work with all of you to communicate the critical importance of research to Canadians, the more excellent science we can fund, and the greater the impact we can have against cancer. We are grateful to you for your support, dedication and commitment to improving the lives of cancer patients across the country and welcome your thoughts, questions and concerns as we move forward.

Sincerely,

Betty Newson
Chair, National Board of Directors

Peter Goodhand
President and Chief Executive Officer

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