

Bell Canada donates \$2 million to upgrade and expand Douglas Institute Brain Bank in Montreal

Montreal, Wednesday, February 1, 2012 – Thanks to an unprecedented \$2 million gift from Bell Canada, the Douglas Mental Health University Institute will be able to improve facilities and expand recruitment and research activities for its brain bank. Part of the Bell *Let's talk* mental health initiative, this financial support represents one of the largest donations ever made in Quebec to a university-affiliated mental health institute. The only brain bank of its kind in Canada and one of a select few worldwide, the facility will be called the **Douglas-Bell Canada Brain Bank**.

Jane Lalonde, President of the Douglas Foundation, thanked Bell for the generous donation: "On behalf of the Douglas Institute Foundation, I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to Bell. This significant gift will greatly facilitate our researchers' work and produce innovative advances in mental health research - good news for individuals living with mental illness."

"The Douglas Institute plays a leading role in mental health research and treatment and we are proud to welcome the organization as our newest partner in the Bell *Let's Talk* mental health initiative," said **George Cope, President and CEO of Bell Canada and BCE**. "Aligned directly with our initiative's research pillar, the work that the Douglas is undertaking here in Montréal will grow our understanding of the causes and effects of mental illness."

"Bell *Let's Talk* embraces a range of mental health partners in Québec and across Canada, from major institutions such as the Douglas to the many grassroots organizations that are part of the Bell *Let's Talk* Community Fund," said **Martine Turcotte, Bell's Vice Chair, Québec**. "As we prepare for Bell *Let's Talk* Day a week from today, on February 8, we are pleased to begin this new partnership with the Douglas Institute team as they work both to enhance research into mental illness, and to underline the need for and value of brain donation."

“Mental health research has made great strides in recent decades. Much work, however, remains to be done. This Bell donation will allow us to take another great leap forward in gaining a better understanding of mental illnesses, and how to treat and prevent them. It will also allow us to further strengthen our leadership role in mental health research. Thank you, Bell, for your commitment.” **Lynne McVey, inf., M.Sc., director general, Douglas Mental Health University Institute.**

A one-of-a-kind brain bank

Established in 1980 and holding an archive of close to 3,000 brains, it is considered Canada's oldest brain bank and the only one of its kind in the country:

- It operates around-the-clock, every day of the year;
- One brain can support dozens of research projects;
- The Douglas-Bell Canada Brain Bank provides high-quality brain tissue samples to scientists all across Canada and in countries such as Japan, France, and the United States, thus enabling them to increase their understanding of mental and neurodegenerative illnesses and develop better prevention, treatment and recovery strategies;
- Comparing healthy brain tissue samples with those of individuals who had a mental illness is the best way to understand the causes of it such as schizophrenia, depression, and bipolar disorders.

Bell Canada's donation will go towards:

- Attracting and retaining highly qualified individuals to coordinate the brain bank's operations;
- Creating a Bell senior research fellowship in mental health;
- Upgrading existing technology and purchasing state-of-the-art equipment;
- Improving and expanding laboratories and storage facilities.

Brain donation: the ultimate gift to help advance mental health research

Naguib Mechawar, PhD, Director of the Douglas-Bell Canada Brain Bank, took the opportunity to emphasize the immense value of a brain donation: “Pledging your brain to science is an opportunity to make a lasting contribution to mental health research. All it takes is a few minutes to complete and sign our consent form. Although it's a simple process, very few people have heard about it. We desperately need healthy brains, for comparative purposes, as well as brains affected by neurological or psychiatric disorders.”

In Quebec, the organ donor sticker that is signed and affixed to the health insurance card covers all organs except the brain. To learn more about brain donation and how it supports mental health research, go to:

<http://www.douglas.qc.ca/page/donating-your-brain>

IN A NUTSHELL – The Douglas-Bell Canada Brain Bank

- The only operational brain bank in Canada
- Contains close to 3,000 human brains;
- Operates around-the-clock, every day of the year;
- One brain can support the work of dozens of researchers;
- A brain cannot be donated even if the Quebec health insurance card has a signed organ donor sticker;
- The oldest brain tissue bank in Canada, established 30 years ago.

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Additional information

Major discoveries thanks to donated brain tissue

In 2009, studies conducted by Gustavo Turecki, MD, PhD, and his colleagues at the Brain Bank found that child abuse permanently modifies the stress response genes.

In 1993, Judes Poirier, PhD, and his team discovered the ApoE4 gene, the most important genetic risk factor for the sporadic form of Alzheimer's disease. Two years later, they noted that individuals with Alzheimer's who carried this gene responded rarely or not at all to treatment.

About the Douglas – www.douglas.qc.ca

The Douglas is a world-class institute, affiliated with McGill University and the World Health Organization, which treats people suffering from mental illness, and offers them hope and cures. Its teams of specialists and researchers continually advance scientific knowledge, integrate it into patient care, and share it with the community to increase awareness and thus eliminating stigma around mental illness.

About Bell

Headquartered in Montréal, Bell is Canada's largest communications company, providing consumers and business with solutions to all their communications needs: Bell Mobility wireless, high-speed Bell Internet, Bell Satellite TV and Bell Fibe TV, Bell Home Phone local and long distance, and Bell Business Markets IP-broadband and information and communications technology (ICT) services. Bell Media is Canada's premier multimedia company with leading assets in television, radio and digital media, including CTV, Canada's #1 television network, and the country's most-watched specialty channels.

The Bell Mental Health Initiative is a multi-year charitable program that promotes mental health across Canada via the Bell Let's Talk anti-stigma campaign and support for community care, research and workplace best practices. The initiative is highlighted by Bell Let's Talk Day, taking place in 2012 on February 8. To learn more, please visit Bell.ca/LetsTalk.

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