

**MaRS Innovation selects umbilical cord stem cell technology from Samuel Lunenfeld Research Institute of Mount Sinai Hospital as its first commercialization opportunity**

TORONTO (June 29, 2009) - MaRS Innovation and the Samuel Lunenfeld Research Institute of Mount Sinai Hospital are pleased to announce that they have entered into an agreement to collaboratively initiate commercialization of an umbilical cord stem cell technology for potential treatment in cardiovascular disease, diabetes and neurological disorders.

"With the Toronto area identified as a world-leading cluster in stem cell research, we are extremely excited to have identified this technology as our first commercialization opportunity," said Dr. Rafi Hofstein, President and CEO of MaRS Innovation.

The technology - invented by Mount Sinai scientists Dr. Ian Rogers and Dr. Robert Casper - offers a proprietary method to create multi-potent stem cells (MPSCs) from human umbilical cord blood. With preclinical data demonstrating efficacy of MPSCs in diabetes, peripheral vascular disease (a complication of diabetes that can lead to amputation) and neurological conditions, the technology has significant potential to address multiple unmet medical needs.

MaRS Innovation, along with the inventors and Mount Sinai, will initially focus on the diabetes application for the technology, as research has demonstrated that these cells uniquely secrete insulin in response to glucose, thereby mimicking the "normal" physiological state. Although there are other technologies currently being developed for diabetes treatment, very few have the potential to replace insulin injections like the MPSC technology developed at Mount Sinai.

"The great advantages of stem cells from umbilical cord blood are their abundance worldwide," explained Dr. Rogers, Scientist, Samuel Lunenfeld Research Institute of Mount Sinai Hospital. "Transferring this knowledge to the clinic could mean a feasible alternative to insulin injections and treatment for peripheral vascular disease."

"We are delighted to be collaborating with the MaRS Innovation team on this exciting project," said Terry Donaghue, Mount Sinai's Director, Technology Transfer & Industrial Liaison, noting that safety studies are the next step toward receiving regulatory approval for clinical studies. "With Drs. Rogers and Caspers' research, we knew there was a significant opportunity to potentially develop innovative therapies for patients. With MaRS Innovation's participation, we are optimistic we will succeed."

Dr. Jim Woodgett, Director, Samuel Lunenfeld Research Institute of Mount Sinai Hospital, underscored the Institute's drive to improve patient care. "Mount Sinai is focused on translating discoveries into technologies that will improve patient care," Dr. Woodgett said. "Our partnership with MaRS Innovation on developing methods for using stem cells for diseases such as diabetes will allow us to work towards advancing care for these critical conditions."

With the launch of this first exciting opportunity, MaRS Innovation has embarked on a journey to transform the Toronto-based research enterprise into a successful commercialization cluster.

Furthermore, today's announcement demonstrates that MaRS Innovation is building its own internal infrastructure to support intellectual property and market due diligence to identify the most promising commercial opportunities. MaRS Innovation is dedicated to converting the outstanding science of its member institutions into products and services, making a significant contribution to Canada's future economic outlook and the quality of life for Canadians and others around the world.

"We are deeply committed to creating a powerful engine for commercialization that brings together an experienced team to identify and validate market opportunities, develop technologies to market requirements and build the linkages that will advance the exceptional research of all of our institutional members," added Dr. Hofstein. "We look forward to announcing additional technologies to add to our pipeline over the next several weeks."

**About MaRS Innovation:**

MaRS Innovation ([www.marsdd.com/mars-innovation](http://www.marsdd.com/mars-innovation)) provides an integrated commercialization platform that harnesses the economic potential of the exceptional discovery pipeline of 14 leading Toronto academic institutions. MaRS Innovation is a non-profit organization with an independent industry-led Board of Directors, funded through the Government of Canada's Networks of Centres of Excellence and contributions of its member institutions.

For more information please contact Susan McGovern, Vice President MaRS Innovation, at [smcgovern@marsinnovation.com](mailto:smcgovern@marsinnovation.com) or 647-260-7878.

**About the Samuel Lunenfeld Research Institute of Mount Sinai Hospital:**

The Samuel Lunenfeld Research Institute of Mount Sinai Hospital ([www.lunenfeld.ca](http://www.lunenfeld.ca)), a University of Toronto affiliated research centre established in 1985, is one of the world's premier centres in biomedical research. Thirty-four principal investigators lead research in diabetes, cancer biology, epidemiology, stem cell research, women's and infants' health, neurobiology and systems biology.

For more information please contact Melissa McDermott, Media Relations, at [mmcdermott@mtsinai.on.ca](mailto:mmcdermott@mtsinai.on.ca) or 416-586-4800 ext 8306.

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# MaRS Innovation

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Designed to enhance the commercial output of Toronto's outstanding scientific research cluster, MaRS Innovation will make a significant contribution to Canada's economic outlook and the quality of life for Canadians and others around the world.

Supported by the Government of Canada through the Networks of Centres of Excellence and its 14 member institutions, MaRS Innovation is a partnership that is truly transformational and will focus on turning research strengths into real economic opportunities. MaRS Innovation, with support from MaRS Discovery District and BioDiscovery Toronto, will advance commercialization through industry partnerships, licensing and company creation. The Board of Directors, which includes academic and business leaders from across Canada and the U.S., has the targeted expertise to direct MaRS Innovation to work together with its members, build a diverse portfolio of assets, and harness the economic and job creation potential of the best opportunities for Toronto, Ontario and Canada.

The MaRS Innovation mission is to put Canada on the global innovation stage, by better connecting research with industry and strengthening Canada's competitive capacity in knowledge based businesses - in short, to launch a new generation of robust, high-growth Canadian companies that will become global market leaders.

## MaRS Innovation Member Institutions:

- Baycrest Centre for Geriatric Care
- BioDiscovery Toronto
- Bloorview Kids Rehab
- Centre for Addiction and Mental Health
- MaRS Discovery District
- Mount Sinai Hospital
- Ontario College of Art and Design
- Ontario Institute for Cancer Research
- Ryerson University
- St. Michael's Hospital
- Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre
- The Hospital for Sick Children
- The New Women's College Hospital
- Toronto Rehabilitation Institute
- University Health Network
- University of Toronto

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