

# Research Canada **UPDATE**

Summer 2014

NEWS FOR PARLIAMENTARIANS ON CANADIAN HEALTH RESEARCH

## NEW RESEARCH PROVIDES HOPE FOR THOSE WITH PARKINSON'S



*Doug Curtis finds hope in new treatment for Parkinson's*

It only takes a few minutes. A wave of symptoms washes over Doug Curtis and the funny, vibrant Calgary playwright shuts down right in front of your eyes, consumed by the disease he has been fighting for over a decade – Parkinson's.

Doug was first diagnosed with Parkinson's at the young age of 39. A trip to Prague with his wife Heather started the whole process. Doug was forever tripping on the cobblestone streets; and while at first it was chalked up to clumsiness, in the end Doug and Heather knew something wasn't quite right.

"I knew something was wrong when it took two minutes for him to butter toast," said Heather.

Two years after their trip Doug was diagnosed with early onset Parkinson's disease, a progressive brain disease that attacks the central nervous system. There is no way to slow the progression of the disease – medication only treats the symptoms which progress over time.

Parkinson's is a chronic degenerative neurological disease caused by a loss of dopamine in the brain.

It is estimated that over 100,000 Canadians have Parkinson's.

While the average is 65 years, Canadians as young as 25 years are being diagnosed. Those diagnosed under age 40 are known as "Young-Onset" and their numbers are increasing.

Direct costs for Parkinson's (hospital and physician care and drugs) total approximately \$86.8 million.

Source: Parkinson Society Canada  
[www.parkinson.ca](http://www.parkinson.ca)

What started with a slow stiffening of his legs progressed to Doug being bed-ridden and unable to communicate.

"We could have lost Doug for sure," said Heather. "There's a number of symptoms that can advance and cause death."

Doug was fortunate to be able to participate in a clinical trial at the University of Alberta that would provide a new and better way for his body to absorb his medication. The results of the first treatment were astounding and within 24 hours Doug was up and talking for the first time in a long time.

"It was like I had just woken up," said Doug. "I was able to walk and interact again."

Although the medication isn't a cure, the new, more effective therapy has given Doug his life back and offers hope to people living with advanced Parkinson's. "I would give anything to get Parkinson's out of my system," said Doug. "The hope is always there, it's not going to go away."

## SAVE THE DATE!

### Health Research Caucus Medical Device Technologies

Monday,

**October 6, 2014**

4 p.m. to 7 p.m.

**Room 256 S, Centre Block  
Parliament Hill**

Healthcare cannot be delivered without medical devices. With aging populations and emerging economies, the demand for innovative medical devices is going to increase.

Medical device technologies, which range from simple thermometers to sophisticated diagnostic imaging equipment, represent one of the world's fastest growing economic sectors. With over 1.5 million devices already on the market, and 3,000 new ones entering it every year, it's closing in on annual revenues of \$1 trillion.

Please join us on October 6th, 2014 and meet the researchers and companies that have forged innovative partnerships, which are reinventing health care, saving lives and building a prosperous health innovation industry in Canada.

### STAY IN TOUCH

@ResearchCda



[www.rc-rc.ca](http://www.rc-rc.ca)

## CANADA IS A GREAT PLACE TO INVEST IN R&D. LET'S KEEP IT THAT WAY

With its talented scientists and world-class research institutions, Canada is a great place to conduct R&D – but there are things we need to improve if we are to reach our full potential in this area.

That's the message I delivered to the Health Research Caucus on Diabetes Research and Innovation in Canada on May 12. I welcomed this opportunity to speak on behalf of Sanofi – one of Canada's top investors in biopharmaceutical R&D – to so many of our nation's decision-makers.

Since the discovery of insulin by Banting and Best nearly 100 years ago, Canada has contributed proudly to advances in diabetes research and care. We have built an international reputation based on respected scientists, quality data, top-notch institutions and a diverse population appropriate for many kinds of clinical trials.

Despite these strengths, Canada has lost ground in recent years – in the numbers of clinical trials, participating sites and patients enrolled. Why? Because other countries are improving the quality of their work even as they outperform us in terms of efficiency and cost-effectiveness.



*Franca Mancino, VP, Medical and Regulatory Affairs, Sanofi Canada addresses Health Research Caucus Diabetes Kiosk event, May 12, 2014*

At Sanofi Canada we are working hard to reverse this trend. Our global parent company invests close to 5 billion euros every year in R&D, and our aim is to attract more of this investment to Canada. We are working with research partners and our industry association to improve our country's clinical trial competitiveness.

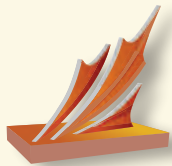
We also look to CETA to deliver on its promise of a level playing ground in terms of intellectual property protection. This is essential to ensuring that Canada remains

an attractive place to conduct world-class R&D.

I work every day with inspiring people who are committed to improving patients' lives through research. It is my responsibility to do all I can to enable their contribution. To that end, I appreciate meeting all of you.

*Franca Mancino  
Vice-President, Medical and Regulatory Affairs  
Sanofi Canada*

### CALL FOR NOMINATIONS!



#### Research Canada Leadership Award

The new Research Canada Leadership Award has been created to honour champions of health research advocacy. This year's Award will be presented in Toronto on November 19th, at the Prix Galien and HRF Medal of Honour Award Ceremony. If you know someone or are familiar with an organization deserving of this recognition, please visit:

<http://www.rc-rc.ca/advocacy/research-canada-leadership-award>.

### OVER 30 YEARS OF EXCELLENCE: A PROUD FUNDING TRADITION

It is only in the last few decades that science has acquired the techniques and instruments necessary to begin to understand the most complex organ in the human body – the brain. Since then there have been dramatic advances in our knowledge of Parkinson's disease and important breakthroughs in treatment.

Every advance and breakthrough has its foundation in earlier scientific investigation – the knowledge gained from researchers exploring a wide variety of possible leads never before tried. This initial stage – or discovery research – is essential to the international effort to improve the lives of people living with Parkinson's disease and to eventually find a cure.

In 1981, Parkinson Society Canada began funding discovery research. Through over 425 awards, fellowships, and grants, researchers working in Canada have been



able to explore promising leads in the aetiology and the progression and treatment of Parkinson's disease. These researchers are currently working at hospitals, universities and throughout the medical community – participating in further research, training new generations of researchers and treating patients.

The future of Parkinson's research in Canada depends on a solid foundation of discovery research. As a direct result of its National Research Program, Parkinson Society Canada has invested in several Canadian researchers at the start of their careers who have advanced to establish their own research facilities and clinics.

*Parkinson Society Canada is a member of Research Canada.  
[www.parkinson.ca](http://www.parkinson.ca)*