



The W. Garfield Weston Foundation Announces the Weston Brain Institute
Established with \$50 million fund aimed at neurodegenerative diseases of aging

TORONTO, May 15, 2014 – The W. Garfield Weston Foundation today announced the Weston Brain Institute, Canada’s largest privately funded national initiative aimed at accelerating breakthrough discoveries for the treatment of neurodegenerative diseases of aging, including Alzheimer’s, Parkinson’s and amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS).

Currently, there are no treatments to stop or even slow these diseases. The \$50 million Weston Brain Institute fund will directly support Canada’s world-class neuroscience research community and focus on high-risk, high-reward research, using an innovative and flexible fast-track granting model.

“With the creation of the Weston Brain Institute, the Foundation is fully committed to being a catalyst in a transformational new chapter in the fight against neurodegenerative diseases of aging,” said W. Galen Weston, Chairman and President of The W. Garfield Weston Foundation.

In 2013, approximately 2.9 million Canadians were directly impacted by these conditions, either as patients or caregivers. In one generation, this number is estimated to grow to 16.4 million Canadians, while the economic impact of these diseases to Canada balloons from \$28 billion to \$215 billion per year.

“There is a profound need to help patients with these diseases,” said Alexandra Stewart, Executive Director, Weston Brain Institute. “Meeting this challenge requires pioneering approaches to accelerating treatments. To that end, we have already begun to support the best and brightest scientists in Canada to help address these diseases.”

In 2010, the Institute began assembling a team of world-class scientific advisors (<http://westonbraininstitute.ca/about-us/scientific-advisory-committee/>) who provide overall guidance to the Institute and are the core of the peer review process.

“Brain disorders are some of the most challenging areas in medicine to address. We are at an exciting moment in time when we have the technology and understanding to drive forward breakthroughs in neuroscience research,” said Mr. Weston.

Thirteen million dollars from the fund has already been awarded, including through collaborations with Brain Canada, the Alzheimer’s Drug Discovery Foundation – Canada, and The Michael J. Fox Foundation. Individual projects receive up to \$1.5 million each.

The most recent grantees to receive funding are from the Institute’s 2013 Transformational Research program, including:

Dr. Isabelle Aubert and Dr. Kullvervo Hynynen – Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre, University of Toronto, with collaborators from McMaster University, The Research Institute at Nationwide Children’s Hospital, Queen’s University, University of Göttingen, McGill University/Lady Davis Institute-Jewish General Hospital, Shantou University Medical



College and Rutgers University. Drs. Aubert and Hynnen were awarded \$1.1 million to investigate the efficacy of treating Alzheimer's disease by delivering anti-amyloid vaccines directly to the brain using focused ultrasound.

Dr. Kullervo Hynnen, Dr. Isabelle Aubert, and Dr. Sandra Black – Sunnybrook Health Science Centre, University of Toronto. Drs. Hynnen, Aubert and Black were awarded \$1.0 million to develop a focused ultrasound device specialized to induce localized, controlled and repeated opening of the blood-brain barrier for the treatment of neurodegenerative diseases.

Dr. Jacques Montplaisir, Dr. Ronald B. Posthuma, and Dr. Jean-Francois Gagnon – Université de Montréal; Hopital du Sacré-Coeur de Montréal; Montreal General Hospital; University Institute of Geriatrics of Montreal, McGill University; Neurologic Institute of Montréal; The Feinstein Institute for Medical Research, Université du Québec à Montréal; Starlab Barcelona S. I. Drs. Montplaisir, Posthuma and Gagnon were awarded \$1.3 million to track clinical markers in patients with sleep behaviour disorders that correlate with the development of neurodegeneration to identify early risk factors of neurodegeneration and to predict disease onset.

Dr. Marco Prado, Dr. Boyer Winters, and Dr. Robert Bartha – University of Western Ontario; Robarts Research Institute; University of Guelph; University of Toronto; UBC; Northwestern College of Arts and Sciences. Drs. Prado, Winters, and Bartha were awarded \$1.3 million to create a higher-throughput method of testing therapeutics on mice using touch screens to better test and quantify behaviour.

The Weston Brain Institute continues The W. Garfield Weston Foundation's long history of supporting medical research, which has ranged from funding the Banting and Best Institute in the 1960's to establishing the first Canadian Chair of Nutrition at McGill University in the 1980s and more recently, the Weston Fellows at the Centre for Research in Neurodegenerative Diseases at the University of Toronto.

The Weston Brain Institute's funding focuses on translational research that accelerates the development of treatments for neurodegenerative diseases of aging. Within this focus, the Institute runs a variety of funding programs, including:

Rapid Response: Fast-tracked seed funding of up to \$150,000 for novel, high-risk, high-reward research;

Transformational Research: Longer, larger grants of up to \$1.5m for researchers to further develop work with outstanding early results and to enable collaboration with international experts; and

Targeted Topic: Support focused on particularly under-resourced scientific topics.



About The W. Garfield Weston Foundation

The W. Garfield Weston Foundation is a private Canadian family foundation, established in the 1950s by Willard Garfield Weston and his wife Reta. In 1924 Garfield inherited his father's company and during his life established bakeries and other successful enterprises throughout Canada and in many parts of the world. Today, these businesses include the George Weston Limited and Loblaw Companies Limited, companies in food retailing, processing and distribution. The founders believed that as the funds are generated through the hard work and success of these Canadian companies, grants should be given in Canada for the benefit of Canadians. For three generations, The W. Garfield Weston Foundation has maintained a family tradition of supporting charitable organizations across Canada. Today the Foundation directs the majority of its funds to projects in the fields of neuroscience, land conservation, education, and science in Canada's North.

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