

News Release: New Genome Sequencing Laboratory Opens at CancerCare Manitoba

By CCMB Communications and Public Affairs

Tue Mar 30 10:00:00 CDT 2021



NEW GENOME SEQUENCING LABORATORY OPENS AT CANCERCARE MANITOBA

Investment supports leading-edge targeted cancer therapy and genomic testing in our province

Winnipeg, MB: Cancer care takes a huge step forward in Manitoba with the establishment of a Genome Sequencing Lab.

"Precision medicine is the new generation of cancer therapy. The new Genome Sequencing Laboratory will allow CancerCare Manitoba and Shared Health to use precision medicine to conduct genetic testing in Manitoba, which brings new treatment options and faster turnaround time for results," said Dr. Sri Navaratnam, President and CEO of CancerCare Manitoba.

Precision medicine is treatment customized to a specific person's genes or features of their cancer. This helps to choose the treatment that will work better for certain individuals and avoids the use of therapies which are less likely to be of benefit. This approach improves both survival and the quality of a patient's life.

Creation of the Genome Sequencing Lab has been an excellent collaborative effort between CancerCare Manitoba, the provincial agency at the frontlines of cancer patient care and research, and Shared Health, the leader and provider of diagnostic services in the province. Prior to creating a precision medicine platform locally, multiple tests had to be performed in other provinces or the United States.

Located within the CancerCare Manitoba facility and operated in collaboration with Shared Health, the new Genome Sequencing Laboratory is capable of testing more than 30 genes simultaneously in multiple tumour types. The lab will also continue to provide testing for many genes that contribute to inherited cancers like hereditary breast cancer and Lynch syndrome.

“The Genome Sequencing Laboratory will provide Manitobans with access to cutting-edge, innovative therapies to fight cancer right here in Manitoba,” said Minister of Health and Seniors Care Heather Stefanson. “I applaud the collaborative efforts of CancerCare Manitoba, Shared Health, and the CancerCare Manitoba Foundation to advance this important project.”

“Genome sequencing can have a significant positive impact on outcomes for patients by informing more effective and predictable cancer treatment options,” said Dr. Amin Kabani, Medical Lead, Provincial Laboratory Diagnostic Services, Shared Health. “This dedicated space will support our ability to meet the growing demand for a more personalized, gene-specific approach to medicine with quicker turnaround times for lab results that previously may have been sent out of province.”

This project would not have been possible without the support of CancerCare Manitoba Foundation to fundraise for this innovative project and the contributions of Western Economic Diversification Canada, Genome Canada, and Genome Prairie.

“The Foundation is extremely proud to be a key funder of the new Genome Sequencing Lab. We are so grateful to our two major donors, the Manitoba Metis Federation and Barry and Carol McArton, for their vision and desire to advance cancer care and help Manitobans affected by this disease,” said Annitta Stenning, President and CEO of CancerCare Manitoba Foundation.

“The *Roadmap to Cancer Control for Manitoba 2020* calls for access to evidence-based, high-quality care. The opening of the Genome Sequencing Lab enhances access and helps to incorporate precision medicine into cancer services in Manitoba,” said Dr. Navaratnam.

- 30 -

Attachment: Photo featuring (LtR) Dr. Sri Navaratnam, President and CEO of CancerCare Manitoba; Dr. Amin Kabani, Medical Lead, Provincial Laboratory Diagnostic Services, Shared Health; and Annitta Stenning, President and CEO of CancerCare Manitoba Foundation.

For more information:

Media requests for CancerCare Manitoba comment, contact CancerCare Manitoba Communications at CCMBCPAffair@cancercare.mb.ca.

Media requests for CancerCare Manitoba Foundation comment, contact CancerCare Manitoba Foundation Marketing & Communications at jkiddhantscher@cancercare.mb.ca or (204) 791-4569.