

## **Allergen receives CIHR grant to host Scientific Café**

*For immediate release*

Allergen NCE Inc. has been successful in securing a CIHR grant to fund an interactive Café Scientifique titled *The asthma and allergy epidemic in Canada: Fact or fiction?*.

The Allergen Café Scientifique, which is to be held on May 31, 2010, at the Royal Botanical Gardens Café in Hamilton, ON, aims to bring together researchers and the public to educate the public and address public questions and concerns about what is perceived to be one of the fastest growing diseases experienced by Canadians.

Scientific Director and CEO, Judah A. Denburg, MD, FRCP(C) says, “the Café Scientifique program is directly aligned with Allergen’s strategic goal to enable knowledge and technology exchange and exploitation (KTEE).

“Allergen is committed to accelerating the realization of social and economic benefits through application of research results to real world problems and challenges faced by partner organizations, sectors of the Canadian economy and/or society,” says Denburg.

The Café Scientifique will be an accessible and informal discussion between the general public and Allergen experts to explore the topic, *The asthma and allergy epidemic in Canada: Fact or fiction* and share current basic and clinical research knowledge about the prevalence, triggers and prevention of allergy and asthma.

“A better informed public will result in better disease management, increased productivity, reduced absenteeism in the workplace and among youth in school, increased quality of life for asthma and allergy patients and their families, reduced stress and fewer demands on the Canadian health system – especially emergency departments where many asthma and allergy patients are seen,” adds Denburg.

The panel of speakers will comprise of three researchers who are currently undertaking Allergen-funded allergic disease research and either an asthma or allergy specialist. The panelists are: Allergen investigator and clinician, Dr. Ann Clarke, Associate Professor Department of Medicine, McGill University; Dr. Malcolm Sears, Professor, Division of Respiriology at St. Joseph’s Healthcare and Dr. Allan Becker, Professor, Section of Allergy & Clinical Immunology, Department of Pediatrics & Child Health, University of Manitoba and Consultant Allergist, Children’s Hospital of Winnipeg.

“By bringing together the experts and the public,” Denburg adds, “discussion can be generated to create awareness and support of this important health issue. The Café will answer questions that are on the minds of Canada’s general population about the causes

of allergy and asthma, biological, genetic and environmental triggers, and optimal management strategies.”

AllerGen hopes this event will unite members of the public who have a shared goal of wanting to increase the quality of life for people with these diseases and reduce the burden of allergy and asthma.

A study by the Institute for Clinical Evaluative Sciences (ICES) demonstrated that asthma prevalence in children is increasing dramatically, showing a 35% increase in less than five years. Every year, the total number of children with asthma continues to increase.

According to Health Canada, non-food allergies are the most common chronic condition in children under 12, and are a significant contributor to poor school and workplace performance.

AllerGen’s mandate to improve the quality of the lives for people with asthma and allergy through consultation and discussion with the public is an immediate and effective way to increase understanding for both researchers and those living with these diseases. In addition, the more AllerGen researchers are made aware of community concerns, the more responsive the Network can be in tailoring its research agenda to meet the public’s needs and accelerate the mobilization of science from the laboratory into the community to benefit all Canadians.

The AllerGen network reaches across the country, supporting research undertaken in multi-disciplinary teams spanning eight Canadian provinces. The inaugural AllerGen Café Scientific will be the prototype for additional Café Scientifiques across the country, in regions proximate to AllerGen’s partner institutions.

Please visit AllerGen’s website [www.allergen-nce.ca](http://www.allergen-nce.ca) for updates on this event and more information on AllerGen’s nationally networked research programme.

AllerGen is funded through the federal Networks of Centres of Excellence program. The Networks of Centres of Excellence Canada is a joint initiative of the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council, the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council and Industry Canada.

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The logo for Canada, featuring the word "Canada" in a serif font with a small Canadian flag above the letter "a".

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