

Exceptional contributions to cancer research recognized at Canadian Cancer Research Conference

For immediate release

October 30, 2017 (TORONTO) - The Canadian Cancer Research Alliance (CCRA) announced today the recipients of its biennial awards which recognize significant contributions to cancer research in Canada.

“These awards demonstrate CCRA’s continuing recognition of excellence in cancer research,” says Dr. Sara Urowitz, Executive Director of CCRA. “We take this opportunity to showcase these achievements during our biennial scientific conference so that these awardees can be honoured in the presence of their peers and can serve as a source of inspiration for our new investigators and trainees.”

There are six recipients this year, with two in a new award category recognizing exceptional leadership in patient involvement in cancer research.

Dr. Elizabeth Eisenhauer receives the award for ***Exceptional Leadership in Cancer Research*** for her work as a clinician-researcher and her national leadership roles—President of the National Cancer Institute of Canada, Expert Lead, Research at the Canadian Partnership Against Cancer and Co-chair of the Canadian Cancer Research Alliance—demonstrating her long-standing commitment to enhancing the coordination and quality of cancer research in Canada in order to improve the lives of cancer patients.

Dr. John Bell receives the award for ***Outstanding Achievements in Cancer Research*** for his pioneering work and ground-breaking scientific discoveries, which have propelled the entire field of oncolytic virus therapy forward, and his commitment to enabling translational research through his roles as founder of the Canadian Oncolytic Virus Consortium, Scientific Director of BioCanRx, and Director of the Biotherapeutics Program for the Ontario Institute for Cancer Research.

Dr. Marco Marra receives the award for ***Outstanding Achievements in Cancer Research*** for his fundamental contributions to the understanding of the role of genetic alterations in promoting cancer progression, and in translating these insights for the benefit of patients. His research has used massively parallel sequencing technologies and informatics tools to characterize tumours from patients and this work has led to the discovery of new cancer associated mutations, candidate biomarkers, and new therapeutic targets.

Dr. Eduardo Franco receives the award for ***Distinguished Service to Cancer Research*** for his significant role in cancer prevention by generating critical scientific evidence for the HPV vaccine and actively promoting the adoption of HPV vaccination across Canada, his research and advocacy for cost-effective cervical cancer prevention approaches in low- and middle-income countries, and his proponenty of appropriate peer-review and editorial oversight to ensure the publication of quality cancer research.



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Dr. Michael Jewett receives the award for *Exceptional Leadership in Patient Involvement in Cancer Research* for his long-standing commitment to and advocacy for greater patient involvement in clinical research prioritization, research proposals, funding decisions, research design, and patient-relevant outcome measures, and his championing of patient-led charities as a mechanism to elevate the role of the patient voice in cancer care and research.

Ms. Judy Needham receives the award for *Exceptional Leadership in Patient Involvement in Cancer Research* for her passionate and long-standing commitment to improving outcomes for cancer patients through the development of patient treatment navigation tools and direct engagement of patients in the development of research clinical trial questions, protocols, and patient materials to ensure that the patient perspective is integrated through the research lifecycle.

“These awards are our way to acknowledge the exceptional contributions made by these individuals,” says Dr. Stephen Robbins, Chair of the CCRA. “We are proud to highlight their achievements and the impact they have had on cancer research and the cancer research community. The new award to recognize exceptional leadership in patient involvement in cancer research represents CCRA’s commitment to patient-oriented research.”

The awards will be presented during the CCRA’s Canadian Cancer Research Conference held in Vancouver from November 5-7, 2017. For more information about the conference, see <http://conference.ccracrc.ca/>.

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Dr. Elizabeth A. Eisenhauer, MD, FRCPC, Kingston, ON: A clinician-scientist, Dr. Elizabeth Eisenhauer was the Director of the Investigational New Drug Program for the Canadian Cancer Trials Group from 1982 to 2012. Her work fundamentally changed clinical practice worldwide through the introduction of innovative trial methodologies and endpoints and her emphasis on the benefits of team science and timely adoption of evidence-based medicine. From 2006 to 2017, she assumed several national leadership roles—President of the National Cancer Institute of Canada (2006-2009), Expert Lead, Research at the Canadian Partnership Against Cancer and Co-chair of the Canadian Cancer Research Alliance (2008-2017). Dr. Eisenhauer’s most recent position was as Head and Professor for the Department of Oncology at Queen’s University. Dr. Eisenhauer’s very personal commitment to research is also evident in her creation of the “Edith and Carla Eisenhauer Chair in Clinical Cancer Research” at Queen’s University in 2001.

Dr. John C. Bell, PhD, FRSC, Ottawa, ON: A Senior Scientist in cancer therapeutics at The Ottawa Hospital and Professor of Medicine and Biochemistry, Microbiology and Immunology at the University of Ottawa, Dr. John Bell is a global pioneer in the discovery and development of oncolytic viruses (OV), a novel class of

targeted cancer therapeutics. He is founder of the Canadian Oncolytic Virus Consortium, the first of its kind in the world, which aims to expand cancer viral therapy discovery and application at all levels and is also Scientific Director of BioCanRx, a Network of Centres of Excellence, and Director of the Biotherapeutics Program for the Ontario Institute for Cancer Research. Committed to “bench to bedside” research, Dr. Bell has worked tirelessly to build the infrastructure to make these state-of-the-art immunotherapies a reality for patients, and through his participation in various community forums, he has made OV therapies understandable to patient populations.

Dr. Marco A. Marra, OBC, PhD, FRS(C), FCAHS, Vancouver, BC: Director and Distinguished Scientist at Canada’s Michael Smith Genome Sciences Centre (BC Cancer Agency), Professor and Head of Medical Genetics at the University of British Columbia, and Canada Research Chair in Genome Science, Dr. Marco Marra has made fundamental contributions to the understanding of the role of genetic alterations in promoting cancer progression, and in translating these insights for the benefit of patients. His research has used massively parallel sequencing technologies and informatics tools to characterize tumours from patients and this work has led to the discovery of new cancer associated mutations, candidate biomarkers, and new therapeutic targets. He has described, along with colleagues, the functional interplay between the genome and the epigenome, and has demonstrated transcriptional dysregulation as a major property of cancers.

Dr. Eduardo L.F. Franco, MPH, PhD, FRSC, FCAHS, OC, Montréal, QC: Dr. Eduardo Franco is Professor James McGill and Chairman of Oncology and Director of Cancer Epidemiology at McGill University. In addition to his remarkable scientific contribution to the molecular epidemiology and prevention of cervical cancer and human papillomavirus-associated diseases, Dr. Franco has played a major role in cancer prevention advocacy, actively promoting the adoption of HPV vaccination across Canada and striving to enhance cost-effective cervical cancer prevention approaches in low- and middle-income countries. A vocal proponent for good peer-review and editorial oversight to ensure that published science is quality science, Dr. Franco has served on the editorial boards of various prestigious academic journals and has twice served as an advisor to the US President’s Cancer Panel (2012, 2013).

Dr. Michael A.S. Jewett, MD, FRCSC, Toronto, ON: A uro-oncologist with a long and distinguished career in genitourinary oncology, Dr. Michael Jewett is recognized worldwide for his significant contributions to clinical research in kidney cancer. He is Professor of Surgery (Urology) at the University of Toronto, a surgical oncologist, a clinical investigator at the Princess Margaret Cancer Centre (University Health Network), and Farquharson Clinical Research Chair in Kidney Cancer Research. Dr. Jewett is also co-chair of the National Cancer Institute’s Renal Task Force, providing recommendations on ways to enhance clinical trials for genitourinary cancers. He fostered the development and growth of three patient-led charities: Testicular Cancer Canada (2007), Kidney Cancer Canada (2009), and Bladder Cancer Canada (2010) and formed the CIHR-funded Kidney Cancer Research Network of Canada in 2012.

Ms. Judy Needham, Abbotsford, BC: A breast cancer survivor, Ms. Needham is passionately committed to improving outcomes for cancer patients through direct engagement of patients in clinical research processes. Soon after her own treatment, Ms. Needham became involved as board member of the former BC/Yukon Chapter of the Canadian Breast Cancer Foundation, leading fundraising initiatives and development of the first Breast Cancer Navigation Map, a patient tool aimed at simplifying the

breast cancer journey. Since 2012, Ms. Needham has been affiliated with the Canadian Cancer Trials Group, first as a Breast Disease Site Executive Committee member, then Lay Representative Committee Chair. She has worked to further patient centred research across CCTG by formalizing integration of the patient perspective into all steps of development and delivery of clinical trials. She is also a member of the Canadian Cancer Clinical Trials Network's Portfolio and Lay Representative Committees, and BC Clinical Trials Leadership Committee.

The **Canadian Cancer Research Alliance (CCRA)** is an alliance of organizations that collectively fund most of the cancer research conducted in Canada – research that will lead to better ways to prevent, diagnose and treat cancer, and improve patient and survivor outcomes. Over 30 members, including federal research funding programs/agencies, provincial research agencies, provincial cancer care agencies, cancer charities, and other voluntary associations, are part of the Alliance. Members are motivated by the belief that, through effective collaboration, Canadian cancer research funding organizations can maximize their collective impact on cancer control and accelerate discovery for the ultimate benefit of Canadians affected by cancer. The CCRA Executive Office is supported by the Canadian Partnership Against Cancer, an independent, not-for-profit organization funded by the federal government to accelerate action on cancer control for all Canadians. For more information, please visit: <http://www.ccra-acrc.ca>.

About the Canadian Partnership Against Cancer

As the steward of the [Canadian Strategy for Cancer Control](#), the Partnership works with partners to reduce the burden of cancer on Canadians. Our partner network – cancer agencies, health system leaders and experts, and people affected by cancer – brings a wide variety of expertise to every aspect of our work. After 10 years of collaboration, we are accelerating work that improves the effectiveness and efficiency of the cancer control system, aligning shared priorities and mobilizing positive change across the cancer continuum. From 2017-2022, our work is organized under five themes in our [Strategic Plan](#): quality, equity, seamless patient experience, maximize data impact, sustainable system. The Partnership continues to support the work of the collective cancer community in achieving our shared 30-year goals: a future in which fewer people get cancer, fewer die from cancer and those living with the disease have a better quality of life. The Partnership was created by the federal government in 2006 to move the Strategy into action and receives ongoing funding from Health Canada to continue leading the Strategy with partners from across Canada. Visit www.partnershipagainstcancer.ca.