

Government injects \$1 million into Canterbury Scientific diabetes research

Press release, 24 September 2012, Canterbury Scientific, Christchurch, New Zealand: Canterbury Scientific, in partnership with the University of Canterbury's Biomolecular Interaction Centre, is set to receive nearly \$1 million in funding from the Ministry of Business, Innovation & Employment. The investment is one of 31 projects selected under the 2012 High-Value Manufacturing and Services Research Fund announced recently by Minister Steven Joyce and will enable research into tests for the secondary complications of diabetes.

The *Diagnostic Markers for Diabetic Complications* research project is expected to lead to the development of new commercial tests to identify patients at high risk of diabetic complications such as heart disease, visual impairment, diabetic neuropathy and kidney disease. The researchers estimate revenue potential from such products at \$5-10 million per year in export sales by 2020. In his announcement Mr Joyce highlighted export potential as a key priority in the funding selection process.

Canterbury Scientific will manufacture and market any resulting products, which would be complementary to their already successful HbA1c blood glucose test controls. The company will also provide an accelerated route-to-market by leveraging existing business models, high quality manufacturing processes and strong distribution relationships with global healthcare giants like Roche, Siemens and Beckman Coulter.

"The benefits of this diabetes research are wide-reaching. Not only will it further global scientific understanding around the triggers of diabetic complications, but it will also meet urgent needs to improve diabetic patient outcomes by ensuring at-risk patients receive close monitoring and early treatment, and reduce the impact on the health system," said Canterbury Scientific CEO Dr Neil Pattinson.

Diabetes now affects 10% of the adult population according to the 2012 World Health Statistics Report. It is a rapidly escalating global health threat that is having a major effect on health care systems around the world; Diabetes New Zealand says that treatments for diabetes and its complications could consume up to 15% of the health budget by 2021. Early identification and intervention is key to reducing the economic burden of this disease.

"We have carved out a niche as a specialist provider of diagnostic test controls based on our commercial success with HbA1c. This injection of funding will be the catalyst for growing Canterbury Scientific to the next level through broader product offerings," continued Pattinson. "With support from Industrial Research Ltd's (IRL) new Christchurch-based protein science team and now funding from MBIE, we have enjoyed tremendous public sector validation and encouragement. There could be no stronger endorsement of our business strategy."

The research project concept stemmed from recent international studies that found two biomarkers for diabetic retinopathy (vision impairment), and seeks to assess their potential as predictors of kidney and heart problems as well. The concept was further refined at Canterbury Scientific's inaugural science symposium in March this year, which brought together more than 30 scientists and clinicians from the Universities of Canterbury (Biomolecular Interaction Centre), Otago (Christchurch School of Medicine), Cambridge and Shanghai as well as IRL and Canterbury Health Labs to promote innovation and collaboration, and consider new biomarker product opportunities. Other outcomes from the event include research on tests for heart failure, pre-eclampsia and pancreatitis.

Scientific Director and co-founder Dr Maurice Owen will lead the project on behalf of Canterbury Scientific, and work closely with University of Canterbury researchers Dr Renwick Dobson, Prof Juliet Gerrard and Prof Antony Fairbanks.

About Canterbury Scientific

Canterbury Scientific Ltd is a privately owned New Zealand medical device company founded out of the Canterbury District Health Board in 1985 by directors Prof Robin Carrell, Bryce Hawkins and Dr Maurice Owen. The company specialises in the development and production of quality HbA1c controls for haematology and clinical biochemistry tests which are prized for being highly reliable and ethical with enhanced stability and shelf life.

In February 2011, Canterbury Scientific opened a new \$1.2m facility in Christchurch which has been specially furnished with modern sophisticated systems, including temperature and humidity control, to provide an advanced and sustainable environment comparable to world class manufacturing practices. The company was named as one of the Technology Investment Network's Top 10 Hot Emerging Companies of 2011, a finalist in the Global Operator category of the 2012 Champion Canterbury Awards and a finalist in the Health and Science category of the New Zealand Innovators Awards. For more information visit www.canterburyscientific.com.

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