G. MAGNOTTA FOUNDATION
FOR VECTOR-BORNE DISEASES

G. MAGNOTTA FOUNDATION FOR VECTOR-BORNE DISEASES BECOMES OFFICIAL CANADIAN REGISTERED CHARITY

Foundation is partnering with Toronto's new Humber River Hospital to establish Canada's first facility dedicated to Lyme disease and other vector-borne illnesses

VAUGHAN, ONTARIO – July 3, 2013: Rossana Di Zio Magnotta, president and CEO of Magnotta Winery Corporation, announced today that the G. Magnotta Foundation for Vector-Borne Diseases has been granted charitable status by the Canadian government.

Funds raised by the new foundation will be focused on establishing Canada's first facility dedicated to research, testing and treatment of Lyme disease and other vector-borne illnesses.

In addition, Magnotta announced the foundation is partnering with Toronto's new Humber River Hospital to house the facility when the state-of-the-art, acute care hospital opens in Fall 2015 in North Toronto at Keele and 401.

"We are thrilled to be working with Humber River Hospital to bring our long overdue facility for vector-borne diseases to Canada," said Magnotta. "The new Humber River Hospital is leading the way as North America's first fully digital hospital with a new model for patient care as well as aggressive green initiatives. Now it's including a world-class facility for researching Lyme disease and other vector-borne illnesses that will lead to better diagnostics and treatment for Canadians here in our own country. Currently, Canadians have had to leave Canada to get the necessary help."

Vector-borne diseases are transmitted to humans through the bite of an infected vector such as a mosquito or tick. Lyme disease is a common vector-borne disease that's currently affecting Canadians and is expected to grow.

Magnotta pointed to a recent study by the Public Health Agency of Canada and published in the Journal of Applied Technology that indicated the speed of tick invasion in eastern Canada is predicted to increase from 18% in 2010 to over 80% by 2020. Magnotta said this will likely result in a substantial increase in Lyme disease among Canadians. The two major factors dramatically influencing this rate of speed are more migratory birds carrying ticks coming across Canadian borders and climate warming.

“More than ever, the establishment of Canada’s first facility dedicated to vector-borne diseases is now a vital and time-sensitive goal,” said Magnotta.

Jim Wilson, president of the Canadian Lyme Disease Foundation added, “Rossana has worked closely with us since 2007 and currently sits on our Board of Directors. Together, the G. Magnotta Foundation for Vector-Borne Diseases and the Canadian Lyme Disease Foundation will bring a synergy between evidence-based science and public awareness.”

One of the top ten misdiagnosed diseases in the world which is now found in all Canadian provinces, Lyme disease is a bacterial infection caused by the bite of an infected tick. Lyme disease can be curable when properly diagnosed and treated early. However, when misdiagnosed, Lyme disease becomes debilitating, chronic and sometimes irreversible, even fatal. This multi-system infection can attack a person’s heart, brain, bones, muscles, digestive system, skin, eyesight, hearing and more. It can cause symptoms that mimic many other diseases including Multiple Sclerosis, ALS, Alzheimer’s and Parkinsonism resulting in a prolonged misdiagnosis.

“Canada has an estimated two million people currently suffering from chronic diseases of unknown origin,” explained Magnotta. “We hope to take the unknown out of a significant percentage of these cases.”

As part of its research initiatives, the G.Magnotta Foundation for Vector-Borne Diseases has plans underway to establish the first bio-repository – or “human tissue bank” – in Canada for patients who fit the Lyme disease profile but have gone undiagnosed or have been misdiagnosed.

“Despite the accelerated growth of Lyme disease in Canada and the U.S. over the past 20 years, no one has been doing this kind of human pathology for vector-borne diseases like Lyme disease,” according to Magnotta. “By studying the tissue samples of these patients who have suffered without really knowing what’s wrong with them, we will be able to identify if they have Lyme bacteria in their tissue so that they can get immediate help instead of waiting years and maybe decades to discover otherwise which, unfortunately, has happened to far too many Lyme patients in Canada already. Today’s technology and knowledge of genomics allow us to analyze tissue like never before and the cost to do so has come down considerably over the last few years making it very feasible now to undertake.”

Magnotta concluded, “Imagine the staggering dollars that have been spent on revolving door doctor’s visits resulting in misguided treatments, tests and medication for these patients, including addictive pain killers, steroids, anti-depressants, sleeping pills, anti-psychotics and many others because they didn’t know what they had. Imagine the drain on our healthcare system all these years. Our research project can change much of that.”

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