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***Huntington Society of Canada and Brain Canada Announce Recipient of the
HD Clinician-Scientist-to-Patient Virtual Networks Grant Competition***

(Kitchener, ON) October 13, 2016 – Bev Heim-Myers, Chief Executive Officer of the Huntington Society of Canada (HSC), and Inez Jabalpurwala, President and Chief Executive Officer of the Brain Canada Foundation, are pleased to announce the 2016 recipient of the *HD Clinician-Scientist-to-Patient Virtual Networks* grant competition. The competition, which was launched in late 2015, aims to create networks of clinicians, researchers, and Huntington disease (HD) patients. These networks ensure ongoing multi-disciplinary research collaborations focused on expediting discoveries-to-treatments to slow or prevent HD and other neurodegenerative diseases.

This year’s recipient team is led by Dr. Simonetta Sipione from the University of Alberta. Her team includes Dr. Jonathan Curtis, University of Alberta, Dr. Sylvain Chouinard, Centre de Recherche du Centre Hospitalier de l’Universit  de Montr al, Dr. Oksana Suchowersky, University of Alberta, Dr. Justyna Sarna, Hotckiss Brain Institute, University of Calgary and Dr. Richard Fahlman, University of Alberta. Together they will examine the cause and treatment of Huntington’s disease from the perspective of gangliosides, important signaling molecules in the brain that are diminished in HD. The title of their project is “Gangliosides in Huntington’s disease: from bench to clinics and back” and is being supported by a \$900,000 grant through this initiative.

Brain health is one of the most pressing health challenges facing Canadians. Surpassing cancer and cardiovascular disease in their magnitude and impact, disorders of the brain account for 38% of the global disease burden. Advances in research are leading to an improved understanding of the etiology of brain disorders, better diagnostics and screening, therapeutic interventions, and improved frontline care and social support services.

The Huntington Society of Canada is partnering with Brain Canada on a \$2 million-joint funding initiative to support multi-disciplinary and multi-investigator research that will expand our understanding of HD therapy in humans. Brain Canada funds are provided through a partnership with Health Canada, known as the Canada Brain Research Fund.

The collaborations made possible by this initiative are engaging experts from various fields, including genetics, computer science and many others, in the application of emerging technologies. Furthermore, collaboration with other brain disease researchers, including but not limited to ALS, Alzheimer’s, and Parkinson’s disease, will enrich the overall understanding of potential treatments for HD and other neurodegenerative disorders.

“Brain disorders often share common underlying mechanisms and, therefore, engaging researchers from the full community of brain researchers will accelerate our understanding of HD as well as other neurodegenerative diseases. The partnership with Huntington Society of Canada is also highlighting the critical role of patients and families in the research process, and ensuring bi-directional dialogue to improve outcomes for people living with this disease,” says Jabalpurwala.

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“As we advance towards treatments addressing the root cause of Huntington disease”, says Heim-Myers, “this innovative research initiative and partnership with Brain Canada has the potential to transform HD research and provide the mechanisms to expedite discovery to treatments”.

Brain Canada and Huntington Society of Canada are aiming to launch a second competition in Fall 2016.

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About Huntington Disease

Huntington disease (HD) is an inherited, debilitating brain disorder that is fatal and incurable. About one in every 7,000 Canadians has HD and approximately one in every 5,500 is at-risk of developing the disease. Many more are touched by HD whether as a caregiver, a family member, or a friend. Huntington disease is devastating for both the body and the mind. The symptoms, which may include uncontrollable jerking movements and relentless cognitive and emotional impairment, usually present between the ages of 30 and 45, and gradually worsen over the 10-25 year course of the disease. Eventually they lead to total incapacitation and death.

About the Huntington Society of Canada

The Huntington Society of Canada (HSC) is a respected leader in the worldwide effort to end Huntington disease (HD). HSC is the only national health charity dedicated to providing help and hope for families dealing with HD across Canada. HSC aspires to a world free from Huntington disease. For more information about Huntington disease and the Huntington Society of Canada visit www.huntingtonsociety.ca.

About Brain Canada

Brain Canada is a national non-profit organization headquartered in Montreal, Quebec, which enables and supports excellent, innovative, paradigm-changing brain research in Canada. For more than one decade, Brain Canada has made the case for the brain as a single, complex system with commonalities across the range of neurological disorders, mental illnesses and addictions, brain and spinal cord injuries. Looking at the brain as one system has underscored the need for increased collaboration across disciplines and institutions, and a smarter way to invest in brain research that is focused on outcomes that will benefit patients and families. Brain Canada's vision is to understand the brain, in health and illness, to improve lives and achieve societal impact.

The Canada Brain Research Fund

The Canada Brain Research Fund is a public-private partnership between Health Canada and Brain Canada designed to encourage Canadians to increase their support of brain research, and maximize the impact and efficiency of those investments.

Brain Canada and its partners have committed to raising \$100 million, which is being matched by Health Canada on a 1:1 basis for a total of \$200 million. The Fund was announced in federal Budget 2011. In Budget 2016, the Government of Canada committed an additional \$20 million in matching funds, bringing the total Fund to \$240 million.

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