



**STRICT EMBARGO: 00:01 HRS**  
**Friday July 1, 2005**

## **£35 MILLION FUNDING BOOST FOR EXPERIMENTAL CANCER MEDICINE**

Cancer Research UK has teamed up with the Departments of Health in England, Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales to develop and expand a network of Centres for Experimental Cancer Medicine worth £35 million over five years.

The funding will help to ensure that the UK remains at the forefront of international efforts to develop new treatments for cancer, built upon outstanding science. It will also help to ensure that treatments are targeted at those patients most likely to benefit.

The initiative will be developed under the umbrella of the National Cancer Research Institute (NCRI) and will be fully coordinated with the UK Clinical Research Collaboration's (UKCRC) activities in experimental medicine outside cancer.

The network will build on the successful work of the Departments of Health-funded National Translational Cancer Research Network (NTRAC). NTRAC was established in 2002 as part of the National Cancer Plan to help facilitate translational cancer research in the NHS.

Established NTRAC centres will now be encouraged to apply to become Centres for Experimental Cancer Medicine so they may continue and expand their innovative work. In addition, new centres will also be encouraged to apply for funding to help broaden the network. Successful centres can expect to receive funding of between £200,000 and £500,000 per year.

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## 2... £35 MILLION FUNDING BOOST FOR EXPERIMENTAL CANCER MEDICINE

The support will cover infrastructure costs enabling centres to bring together scientific and clinical research, sharing knowledge and resources for the benefit of cancer patients. The funds will underpin the translational work needed to develop new anti-cancer drugs and diagnostics from the laboratory into the clinic and then to test them in early clinical trials.

Harpal Kumar, Chief Operating Officer of Cancer Research UK, says: “Cancer research needs to encompass a wide range of scientists, medical specialists, clinicians, nurses and support staff – people who together form a team capable of accelerating research into new approaches that can benefit patients. This initiative will bolster the infrastructure of these centres, enabling them to position the UK at the international forefront in experimental cancer medicine. We are delighted to be working closely with the Departments of Health on this critical initiative.”

The funding is open to all centres in the UK working in the area of experimental cancer medicine.

Professor Sally Davies, Director of Research and Development for the Department of Health, says: "This initiative brings welcome extra funding into developing cancer treatments for patients, building on the proven success of the NTRAC network. Together with our earlier announcement on funding for experimental medicine, this pledge to boost experimental medicine in cancer underpins our commitment to this important area of research.”

Dr Alison Spaul from the Chief Scientist’s Office at the Scottish Executive says: “Scottish Executive funding of £2.3 million has already contributed to tripling the number of patients involved in cancer clinical trials in Scotland. We are delighted that Cancer Research UK has made this substantial investment to further enhance experimental cancer research medicine and improve patient care.”

Professor John Williams, Director of the Wales Office of Research and Development, Welsh Assembly Government, says: “This initiative will further strengthen the existing infrastructure for experimental cancer research in the UK and will ensure that translational research of ‘bench’ findings into clinical practice can prosper.”

Professor Bob Stout, Director of Research and Development for Northern Ireland Health and Personal Social Services, says: “Northern Ireland is pleased to be part of this initiative which will continue the effort to improve treatment of cancer.”

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### 3... £35 MILLION FUNDING BOOST FOR EXPERIMENTAL CANCER MEDICINE

Dr Jane Cope, Director of the NCRI, says: "This funding ensures that innovative cancer research in the UK has the support and infrastructure in place to allow it to prosper. Part of this initiative will also include making sure these centres talk to one another, so that best practice and knowledge can be shared."

ENDS

**For media enquiries please contact Steve Palmer on 020 7061 8312 or, out-of-hours, the duty press officer on 07050 264 059.**

#### Notes to Editors:

- Researchers interested in applying for funding should visit [www.ncri.org.uk](http://www.ncri.org.uk) from early August 2005. The closing date for applications is 30 November 2005. The awards will be made for five years, starting from April 2007.
- Experimental medicine is defined as investigation undertaken in human beings to identify mechanisms of pathophysiology or disease and to test the validity and importance of new discoveries or treatments
- The National Cancer Research Institute (NCRI) was established in April 2001. It is a partnership between government, the voluntary sector and the private sector, with the primary mission of maximising patient benefit that accrues from cancer research in the UK through coordination of effort and joint planning towards an integrated national strategy for cancer research.

The NCRI consists of: The Association of British Pharmaceutical Industry (ABPI); The Association for International Cancer Research; The Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council; Breakthrough Breast Cancer; Breast Cancer Campaign; Cancer Research UK; Department of Health; Economic and Social Research Council; Leukaemia Research Fund; Ludwig Institute for Cancer Research; Macmillan Cancer Relief; Marie Curie Cancer Care; The Medical Research Council; The National Assembly for Wales; Northern Ireland Health and Personal Social Services Research & Development Office; Roy Castle Lung Cancer Foundation; Scottish Executive Health Department; Tenovus; Wales Office of Research and Development for Health & Social Care; The Wellcome Trust and Yorkshire Cancer Research.

#### Cancer Research UK

- Cancer Research UK's vision is to conquer cancer through world-class research.
- The charity works alone and in partnership with others to carry out research into the biology and causes of cancer, to develop effective treatments, improve the quality of life for cancer patients, reduce the number of people getting cancer and to provide authoritative information on cancer. Cancer Research UK is the world's leading independent charity dedicated to research on the causes, treatment and prevention of cancer.
- For further information about Cancer Research UK's work or to find out how to support the charity, please call 020 7009 8820.

**More...**

#### 4... £35 MILLION FUNDING BOOST FOR EXPERIMENTAL CANCER MEDICINE

- The UK Clinical Research Collaboration (UKCRC) is a partnership of organisations united by the shared aim of establishing the position of the UK as a world leader in clinical research, by harnessing the power of the NHS. The Collaboration was established in response to the growing concerns that the UK was not fully realising the clinical research potential offered by the NHS and brings together the major stakeholders that influence the clinical research environment in the UK. The partnership includes representatives from the main funding bodies for clinical research in the UK, academic medicine, the NHS, regulatory bodies, representatives from industry and patients.

The UKCRC was launched in April 2004 and has five main areas of activity:

- Building up the infrastructure in the NHS
  - Developing Incentives for Research in the NHS
  - Building up the Research Workforce
  - Streamlining the Regulatory and Governance Processes
  - Co-ordinating Clinical Research Funding
- Full NTRAC Network Centre status and funding has currently been awarded to fourteen centres of scientific and clinical excellence in translational cancer research: Belfast, Birmingham, Cambridge, Cardiff-Swansea, Edinburgh, Glasgow-Dundee, Imperial College London, Leeds-Bradford, Manchester, Newcastle, Oxford, Royal Marsden, Southampton and University College London. Each Centre receives around £1m funding over 5 years to help build the research infrastructure and workforce capability needed to fast-track research for cancer patients.
  - Existing NTRAC Centres and new centres that successfully win funding will be known as “Cancer Research UK/Department of Health Centre for Experimental Cancer Medicine.”