

MEDIA STATEMENT

New Multiple Sclerosis Research Warrants Funding

February 8, 2010 – The pioneer of a new, but yet unproven, treatment for multiple sclerosis (MS), Dr. Zamboni, will make his North American debut at a press conference at St. Joseph's Healthcare in Hamilton, Ontario today. Dr. Zamboni, from the University of Ferrara in Italy, was the first to hypothesize that abnormalities in blood drainage from the brain and spinal cord may be a critical culprit in the development of MS. This condition is called Chronic Cerebrospinal Venous Insufficiency (CCSVI). More telling still, Dr. Zamboni proposes that a simple endovascular surgical procedure, which unblocks veins to permit the flow of blood, is potentially effective in correcting the abnormalities and the debilitating effects of MS.

Since multiple sclerosis was first diagnosed in 1868, there has been no cure and no effective treatment abating its progression. The leading thinking until recently was that MS was an auto-immune reaction, where the body begins attacking itself. Dr. Zamboni's preliminary findings turn conventional wisdom on its head, and although far from being proven, offer MS sufferers and those close to them a compelling new avenue of inquiry and research.

Multiple sclerosis is the primary neurological disease affecting young adults in their prime, with most people initially diagnosed between the ages of 20 and 40. Most people suffering from MS are unable to work 10 years after diagnosis, many living years with growing disabilities. It is also highly prevalent in Canada, affecting an estimated 44,000 to 78,000 Canadians. Canada has the 5th highest prevalence of MS in the world on a per capita basis.

Current drug treatments are ineffective in abating this disease's progression, and are expensive. The Canadian Institute for Health Information estimates that MS costs Canada over \$1 billion each year.

Dr. Zamboni's research has sparked a drive around the world to thoroughly investigate these findings and see if they can be replicated. The question is simple: do people suffering from MS have blocked veins in the neck and upper chest and is there a compelling cause and effect relationship. Only additional research can answer this question once and for all.

Yet undertaking CCSVI research requires funding. To date, the St. Joseph's Healthcare - McMaster initiative has raised \$50,000 out of a needed \$500,000. A University of British Columbia trial has received \$10,000 out of a projected \$1.06 million. The MS Society of Canada may award each of these initiatives \$100,000 in July 2010. However, for this research to get underway in Canada it will require Canadian donors contributing.

Canadians donated \$62 million to charities working in the multiple sclerosis field last year. As an advocate for effective and smart charitable giving and on behalf of donors who have solicited our counsel on MS research in Canada, Charity Intelligence feels that supporting CCSVI research presents an opportunity for donors to have high impact in their giving. Donors wanting to support CCSVI research in Canada should donate directly to St. Joseph's Healthcare and McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario and University of British Columbia, designating their donations to CCSVI research.



Charity Intelligence feels the diversity the CCSVI hypothesis brings to MS research can only advance our understanding of this horrible disease and after more than 100 years, it's time to donate to alternative perspectives.

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About Charity Intelligence Canada : Charity Intelligence Canada (Ci) is a Canadian charity that provides donors with information, empowering them to learn how their generosity can impact real change. Ci acts as an objective broker for donors, providing evidence-based research and standardized analysis to help donors make intelligent, more strategic giving decisions. Mirroring the strategies used by The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and using investment models, Ci helps donors to be social investors.

For further information on donor choices for funding MS research please visit www.charityintelligence.ca or call Martha Grant at (416) 302-4957 / marthagrant@rogers.com