



*For Immediate Release*

## London Run for Ovarian Cancer stays on fast track

**LONDON, Ont.** – Tonight, London Health Sciences Foundation received a cheque for more than \$197,000 to help combat ovarian cancer. The London Run for Ovarian Cancer raised its first million in its first 10 years. The run remains on pace to double that amount by 2017, having now raised more than \$405,000 in the last two years.

The increased fundraising pace is notable since, on average, only 2.1 per cent of Canadians' donations for cancer research are directed toward ovarian cancer. That's because the disease leaves few survivors to advocate and raise funds.

Ovarian cancer is the fifth-ranking cause of cancer deaths for women and is called the silent killer since there is no screening test and few obvious symptoms. As a result, by the time 60-70 per cent of cases are diagnosed, the patients are at stages three or four. Due to this late diagnosis, 70 per cent of those diagnosed will die.

Lawson Health Research Institute (Lawson) researchers and clinicians at the London Regional Cancer Program (LRCP) are working to change those statistics.

"The funds from the Run for Ovarian Cancer have helped kick-start several new and unique research ideas in our program over the past few years," says Translational Oncology Scientist Trevor Shepherd, PhD who, together with Head of Experimental Oncology and Senior Oncology Scientist Gabriel DiMattia, PhD, leads the Translational Ovarian Cancer Research Program. "Without this continued support from our London community, we wouldn't have been able to get the essential data needed for our recent, successful, national-level research grants."

"Our research program will only continue to grow because of the London Run for Ovarian Cancer," DiMattia adds.

After the cheque presentation, run organizers were given a tour of the research labs at the London Regional Cancer Program, where they could see how their support is making a difference.

Some of the new projects of the Translational Ovarian Cancer Research Program at London Health Sciences Centre's London Regional Cancer Program include:

- Ovarian cancer cells that become dormant or temporarily inactive are resistant to chemotherapy. Senior Oncology Scientist Gabe DiMattia, PhD and LRCP Scientist Fred Dick, PhD have been awarded a Canadian Cancer Society Research Institute grant to study how ovarian cancer spheroids (tumour cells) remain dormant and whether disrupting the molecular control of this dormant state will allow us to kill ovarian cancer cells.
- Researchers are studying a protein (AMPK) that controls cell metabolism to determine whether there will be a way to inactivate the protein and render cancer cells metabolically

*...more*

weak, which will make them more likely to be killed by chemotherapeutics. Translational Oncology Scientist Trevor Shepherd PhD is focusing on a critical energy-sensing pathway governed by the LKB1-AMPK enzyme pathway, which has not been previously studied in ovarian cancer. Having discovered that this protein is essential for tumour-cell viability, it might prove to be a target for therapeutic intervention.

Dr. Shepherd has just been awarded a four-year Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) research grant to study this pathway - a significant accomplishment, given that only 15 per cent of proposals are typically funded. Run for Ovarian Cancer support was instrumental in facilitating the early stages of this research needed to make a strong and successful application to CIHR.

- The Translational Ovarian Cancer Research Program is also facilitating a novel research project initiated by Gynecologic Oncology Surgeon Jake McGee, MD. He is investigating whether the microbiome (micro-organisms in the body) may affect the course of ovarian cancer. The microbiome is making big news in other cancers, such as gastric (stomach) cancer, but has never been tested in ovarian cancer. Dr. McGee is interested in determining whether specific bacterial populations exist when ovarian cancer is present and whether they might act as a biomarker for the disease.

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*The **London Run for Ovarian Cancer** started simply, with a group of fitness friends and a discussion over coffee in September 2002. Ann Crowley was still reeling from her diagnosis of ovarian cancer when she committed to raising awareness about this devastating disease. The first run in 2003 was a personal triumph, raising more than \$85,000. The Run's financial contribution to London Health Sciences Centre continues to be one of the largest amounts raised annually by a community-based group. For more on the Run, visit [www.runforovariancancer.ca](http://www.runforovariancancer.ca), on Facebook at RunForOvarianCancer and Twitter @ovarianrun.*

***London Health Sciences Foundation** is a [Canada Revenue Agency](#) registered charity that is accredited by both [Imagine Canada](#) and the [Better Business Bureau](#). We link our community and health care experts - including physicians, allied professionals, researchers, staff and educators - together in pursuit of medical excellence at [London Health Sciences Centre](#) and [Lawson Health Research Institute](#). Established to strengthen LHSC's ability to provide the highest quality health care for patients in Southwestern Ontario and beyond, LHSF offers opportunities to enhance and advance health care by supporting discovery and innovation in research, education and patient care at our hospital. To see why donations are so important in supporting extraordinary care for patients, their families and friends at LHSC, visit [www.lhsf.ca](http://www.lhsf.ca).*

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