

**For immediate release**

### **AmorChem invests in a diabetic macular edema opportunity**

**Montreal, June 18, 2014** – AmorChem partners with Dr. Przemyslaw (Mike) Sapieha (Hôpital Maisonneuve-Rosemont) and Univalor to discover new drugs for the treatment of diabetic macular edema. Dr. Sapieha has been working for a number of years on a novel target Semaphorin 3A (SEMA 3A) and its role in ocular diseases and has discovered therapeutics which may be useful in treating and stopping the development of the disease.

“SEMA 3A promotes vascular leakage and contributes to diabetes-related macular edema. Intravitreal injections of SEMA 3A inhibitors could be used as adjuncts to current therapeutic strategies to more effectively counter diabetic retinopathies”, says Élizabeth Douville, general partner at AmorChem.

“Univalor is very pleased about this deal with AmorChem. Because of the increased prevalence and incidence rates of diabetes, diabetic macular edema is and will become a more and more significant public health challenge. This collaborative project for the discovery of Sema3A inhibitor drugs will challenge this disease and bring new hope for patients.” said Laurence Rulleau, Vice-President Business development at Univalor.

Diabetic macular edema is a common feature of retinopathy, affecting 25% of diabetic patients. It is characterized by extravasation of fluids and plasma into the vitreous humor, thickening of the retina leading eventually to vision loss. Diabetic macular edema is the most prevalent ophthalmologic problem faced by diabetic patients and the leading cause of blindness in North American adults of working age.

“We believe that the field of ophthalmology is still in need of new and effective therapeutic strategies. AmorChem is very pleased to be supporting projects such as Dr. Sapieha’s and to build a promising ophthalmology portfolio,” says Inès Holzbaour, general partner at AmorChem.

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#### **ABOUT AMORCHEM L.P.**

AmorChem L.P. ([www.amorchem.com](http://www.amorchem.com)) is a venture capital fund located in Montreal focused on investing in promising life science projects originating from Quebec-based universities and research centres. The principal limited partners of this fund are Investissement-Québec, FIER Partenaires, Fonds de solidarité FTQ and Merck & Co. This fund is the latest addition to the GeneChem portfolio of funds, a fund manager in existence since 1997. AmorChem’s innovative business model involves financing research-stage projects to enable them to reach pre-clinical proof-of-concept (“POC”) in a semi-virtual mode within 18-24 months. The fund seeks to generate returns through a two-pronged exit strategy: sell projects having reached POC to large biotechnology or pharmaceutical companies; or bundle them into new spin-out companies. AmorChem using external resources will manage the projects. To that effect, AmorChem has established a strategic partnership with the Biotechnology Research Institute in order to access its R&D platforms. In addition, to enabling projects requiring small molecules as tools or drug leads, AmorChem has founded NuChem Therapeutics Inc., a medicinal chemistry contract-research company.

**ABOUT UNIVALOR**

Univalor is a university technology transfer organization. Since 2001, it has been commercializing scientific findings and technological innovations emanating from some 2,600 researchers at the Université de Montréal and its affiliated health centres, Polytechnique Montréal and HEC Montréal. By creating links between the university and the business community, Univalor helps make businesses more competitive, generate revenue for research and, most importantly, enrich society. Please visit [www.univalor.ca](http://www.univalor.ca) for more information.

**About Hôpital Maisonneuve-Rosemont (HMR)**

Affiliated with Université de Montréal, Hôpital Maisonneuve-Rosemont (HMR) is a major institution where healthcare, teaching and medical research have converged since 1954. Its 5,500 employees and physicians, together with its 500 volunteers, work with the sizeable population of Montréal's East-End and beyond, as the hospital also has a regional and extended regional mandate. HMR is home to a renowned research centre with four nationally and internationally recognized areas of expertise: Immuno-Oncology, Vision Health, Nephrology and Cellular Therapy.

[www.maisonneuve-rosemont.org](http://www.maisonneuve-rosemont.org)

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