



NEWS RELEASE

For immediate release

**AmorChem invests in a novel drug for geographic atrophy.**

**Montreal, Quebec –November 27, 2012** – AmorChem is delighted to announce the closing of a transaction with Univalor for the development of a drug to stop the progression of geographic atrophy, an ophthalmic disease.

This project centers around the work of Dr. Huy Ong and his colleagues of the Université de Montréal and the Research Center of Hôpital Maisonneuve-Rosemont showing the importance of the CD36 receptor in the development of Age-Related Macular Disease and one of its most severe forms, geographic atrophy. The Hôpital Maisonneuve-Rosemont is a leader in the field of health vision. The collaboration between AmorChem and the university will enable the leverage of a substantial "Programme de soutien à la valorisation et au transfert" ("PSVT") grant from the Quebec government.

"We have been following the work of this group in the ophthalmology space for a number of years and believe geographic atrophy represents a crucial unmet medical need in the context of an ageing population", explains Dr. Elizabeth Douville, general partner at AmorChem. "Access to the PSVT grant will enable us to reach additional goals which we believe will increase the project's ability to attract companies in ophthalmology."

"Univalor is very pleased to welcome this third investment from Amorchem in one of our portfolio projects," comments Laurence Rulleau, vice-president of business development at Univalor. "This proves the commitment from both Univalor and Amorchem to support seed financing of early stage technologies in order to enhance value and bring discoveries closer to the industry. Our partnership with Amorchem allows the financing of early-stage technologies, filling a gap in the value chain."

"I am pleased with this agreement with AmorChem with the results of Dr. Huy Ong, from our Faculty of Pharmacy, and his colleagues," says Geneviève Tanguay, vice-president of research, creation and innovation of Université de Montréal. "This reflects the role of the university research in terms of discoveries, but also the importance of the partners involved in the value chain."

Geographic atrophy is a severe form of dry age-related macular degeneration that affects 1.5% of the population over 40 years of age and may lead to blindness. The prevalence of the disease is expected to increase dramatically as the population ages. There are no successful therapies for the disease. The collaborators in this project are developing a drug based on the role played by CD36 in the progression of the condition. "The Faculty of Pharmacy is working on many aspects of the discovery and use of medication, including the identification of new therapeutic targets," said Pierre Moreau, Dean of the Faculty of Pharmacy at Université de Montréal. "Dr. Ong's work is the result of several years of work by his group in this field."

"This investment confirms our continuing interest in projects coming to us from the Université de Montréal", comments Dr. Inès Holzbaur, general partner at AmorChem.

## **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, founded in 2001, is a limited partnership that offers to the industry the opportunity to increase their competitive advantage through access to leading edge scientific and engineering technologies developed by world class researchers from the Université de Montréal, its affiliated schools and most of its affiliated hospitals. The work of Univalor's specialists is to showcase some of the most promising technologies developed by those researchers to potential partners looking for innovation in the areas of life sciences and human health, pure and applied sciences, engineering, information technology and management sciences. Please visit [www.univalor.ca](http://www.univalor.ca) for more information.

## **ABOUT UNIVERSITÉ DE MONTRÉAL**

The 64,000 students and professors associated with Université de Montréal and its affiliated schools for commerce (HEC Montréal) and engineering (École Polytechnique) are recognized for the high volume and quality of their research and for their international profile. Ten per cent of the university's students are from outside Canada, and 40% of research published by the university's community involves international collaboration. Within Canada, Université de Montréal's excellence is recognized by the awarding of half a billion dollars in funding; at an international level, it is consistently placed within the top 150 institutions in major world research rankings. [www.umontreal.ca](http://www.umontreal.ca)

## **ABOUT HÔPITAL MAISONNEUVE-ROSEMONT**

Affiliated with the University of Montreal, Maisonneuve-Rosemont Hospital is a major institution, which converge care, education and medical research. Its 5500 employees, physicians and researchers, are working with the population of Greater Montreal and beyond since the hospital has a superregional. The HMR include a health class research. Three sectors stand to the national and international levels: the vision health, hematology-oncology and nephrology. It receives each year more than 4000 students, future doctors, nurses and health professionals. For more information: [www.maisonneuve-rosemont.org](http://www.maisonneuve-rosemont.org)

### **Media contacts:**

Elizabeth Douville  
514-849-6358  
[elizabeth@amorchem.com](mailto:elizabeth@amorchem.com)

Inès Holzbaur  
514-849-7454  
[ines@amorchem.com](mailto:ines@amorchem.com)

### **Business development contact:**

John Clement  
514-849-6477 (o) ; 514-887-7696 (c)  
[john@amorchem.com](mailto:john@amorchem.com)