



## NEWS RELEASE

For immediate release

### **AmorChem, Université Laval and CHU de Québec collaborate on the development of a treatment for endometriosis and estrogen-dependent cancers**

**Montreal, November 18, 2013** – AmorChem, Université Laval and the CHU de Québec are proud to announce the launch of a collaboration on the development of novel drugs for the treatment of endometriosis and estrogen-dependent cancers. The objective of this collaboration is the preclinical development of an inhibitor of an enzyme (17 $\beta$ -HSD1) responsible for a key step in the biosynthesis of estradiol. This inhibitor was discovered and characterized by Donald Poirier, professor at the Faculty of Medicine at Université Laval and researcher at the CHU de Québec Research Center, and his team.

"AmorChem is honored to work with Professor Poirier's team on a very promising molecule that has the potential to address a largely unmet medical need. Women with endometriosis or other diseases exacerbated by estrogens are in dire need for a better therapeutic arsenal", said Inès Holzbour, General Partner at AmorChem.

Endometriosis affects 10-15 % of women of childbearing age. It is a leading cause of infertility and work absenteeism among women. Existing treatments are not curative and do not relieve chronic pain associated with the disease. The molecule developed by this team has the potential to alleviate the pain caused by this disease, and can also be used to treat breast and endometrial cancers. The global market for drugs used to treat endometriosis is expected to reach \$1.2 billion within five years; the combined market for the treatment of breast and endometrial cancers will be in the order of \$15 billion.

"Université Laval is pleased to initiate this partnership with AmorChem and acknowledges the support provided by SOVAR to this project. We believe that the findings of Professor Donald Poirier will improve the health of women who suffer from endometriosis and estrogen-sensitive cancers", said Sophie D'Amours, Vice Rector, Research and Innovation at Université Laval.

"For AmorChem, this is the second agreement we conclude on a project involving a discovery made by a researcher at Université Laval and the CHU de Québec Research Center. We are very pleased to have these two organisations as well as SOVAR among our partners," said Élisabeth Douville, 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 UNIVERSITÉ LAVAL**

Located in Quebec's historic capital, a World Heritage City, Université Laval is the first French-language University in North America. It is one of Canada's leading research universities, ranking 7<sup>th</sup> among the country's 94 university-level institutions in terms of research funding with more than \$300 million devoted to research last year. Université Laval's 1,400 professors-researchers share their knowledge with 48,000 students, 10,000 of whom are enrolled in graduate-level programs.

### **About CHU de Québec**

Regrouping the CHUL, L'Hôtel-Dieu de Québec and hospitals l'Enfant-Jésus, Saint-François d'Assise and du Saint-Sacrement, the CHU de Québec is the most important health care institution in the province of Québec and one of the biggest in Canada. The CHU de Québec offers general and specialized care, but mostly ultra-specialized care throughout Eastern Quebec, which represents nearly two million persons. In partnership with Université Laval and focused on the future, the CHU de Québec also has core missions in teaching, in research in many fields of excellence and in the evaluation of health technologies and professional practices. In order to accomplish those missions, CHU de Québec counts 14,000 employees, 1,700 doctors, dentists and pharmacists and also 500 researchers. For more information, visit [www2.chudequebec.ca](http://www2.chudequebec.ca)

### **ABOUT SOVAR**

Founded in 2000 by Université Laval and CHU de Québec, SOVAR is devoted to the development and commercialization of new technologies derived from university research and from partnering research centers. SOVAR also responds to the needs of businesses in search of innovation. Its team of seasoned experts works in close collaboration with researchers helping them through the complex process that transforms innovative concepts into marketable applications. At the same time, it develops partnerships with key players in the innovation system of both Quebec and Canada as well as with potential investors. Institut universitaire en santé mentale de Québec (IUSMQ) and Université du Québec à Chicoutimi (UQAC) have joined SOVAR in 2011.

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