



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**The McCain Foundation and the NBHRF
Health Research Chair
in Community Health and Aging**

Fredericton, NB (August 16, 2017) – The Honorable Lisa Harris, Minister of Seniors and Long-Term Care, was joined by representatives from St. Thomas University, The McCain Foundation, and the New Brunswick Health Research Foundation to announce the establishment of a Health Research Chair in Community Health and Aging at the university.

“Research into community health and aging is absolutely vital to our province,” said Seniors and Long-Term Care Minister Lisa Harris. “Exploring ways to improve the aging experience is important to New Brunswickers, and I am looking forward to seeing the topics that will be explored as a result of this new position.”

New Brunswick is one of the most rapidly aging regions in Canada with 90 per cent of our senior population living outside of hospitals in nursing homes or long-term care facilities. As the population ages, the need for age-related research, policy analysis and program development becomes more important. The province’s aging strategy focuses on independent living and person-centered care for seniors, and the government intends to make the province more age-friendly while establishing the region as a leader in seniors’ health research and innovation.

The Health Research Chair in Community Health and Aging will support the province in those efforts as the work done by the new chair will position the province as a frontrunner, not just in coping with costs, but also in capitalizing on the benefits of an aging population.

The McCain Foundation and the New Brunswick Health Research Foundation, on behalf of the Government of New Brunswick, are equally co-funding the chair with \$1 million over the next five years.

“St. Thomas University is the ideal location for this research chair. We are the only university in New Brunswick to offer a Bachelor of Arts degree with a major in Gerontology so we are already educating the next generation of leaders in this field. Moreover, the research and scholarship by our faculty has been recognized worldwide and will become an even more important community resource,” said Dawn Russell, President and Vice-Chancellor of St. Thomas University.

Russell said the Health Research Chair in Community Health and Aging will build on that foundation by leading curriculum development and research, as well as providing additional experiential learning opportunities for students. This will strengthen the university’s ability to educate undergraduate students on working with the aging population and will provide additional research avenues for those studying Gerontology.

Potential areas for research include: community health, senior-friendly communities, the perception of the aging population, healthy living, social wealth, and the impact of social isolation on emotional and physical well-being. The Chair will also present additional opportunities for collaboration between

academic departments at STU and researchers from STU, the University of New Brunswick, and Dr. Everett Chalmers Hospital, as well as the Third Age Centre and local nursing homes.

“The McCain Foundation is the philanthropic arm of McCain Foods, and both the corporation and the foundation have long been supporters of the communities in New Brunswick which collectively make for a strong province. This Chair will bring about advances in the thinking and programming in such areas as the promotion of inter-generational activities within families, communities, churches, public sectors, industry, and government, and will help to move New Brunswick toward a culture which both celebrates an aging population and maximizes its potential,” said Linda McCain, Chair of The McCain Foundation.

“We realize the need and the importance of research on aging and eldercare,” said Dr. Bruno Battistini, President, CEO and Scientific Director of NBHRF. “This strategic recruitment is in direct response to the recent recommendations from the New Brunswick Council on Aging. The Chair will help policy-makers towards establishing improved policies based on existing best practices and toward developing novel tools and techniques to improve healthcare and the service-delivery of social programs, thus social population seniors’ health within the province. This Health Research Chair represents our eighth partnering Chair alongside the present cycle of the Foundation’s strategic plan.”

The university will allocate a tenured faculty position for the chair, who will also teach courses related to their area of expertise. A portion of the external funding may be earmarked for postgraduate students and research assistants. The funding will begin in 2017-18 and, following a national search, the chair is expected to be in place this coming academic year.

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Media contacts:

Jeffrey Carleton, Associate Vice-President – Communications
St. Thomas University
(506) 452-0522
carleton@stu.ca

Dave MacLean, Communications Director
Department of Social Development
(506)444-2501
Dave.MacLean@gnb.ca

Patricia Seaman, Senior Communications Officer
New Brunswick Health Research Foundation
506-455-0471
Patricia.seaman@nbhrf.com