



PRESS RELEASE

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## Montreal’s Four Leading Pediatric Institutions Begin Largest Collaboration in Canadian History to Help Children with Musculoskeletal Disorders

**CHU Sainte-Justine and its Marie-Enfant Rehabilitation Centre, the Montreal Children’s Hospital and Shriners Hospitals for Children – Canada come together to revolutionize patient management and care in Quebec thanks to a generous \$10 million donation from the Mirella & Lino Saputo Foundation**

MONTREAL, June 5, 2019 – The foundations of Montreal’s four leading pediatric institutions are proud to announce the creation of MUSCO, the first and largest collaborative initiative of its kind in Canada to help children with musculoskeletal disorders. The CHU Sainte-Justine and its Marie-Enfant Rehabilitation Centre, the Montreal Children’s Hospital and Shriners Hospitals for Children – Canada are coming together thanks to an exceptional and visionary \$10 million donation from the Mirella & Lino Saputo Foundation that will allow us to revolutionize patient care and services in Quebec. The mission of the MUSCO collaborative project is to transform the care and services offered to children with musculoskeletal diseases requiring complex care and that of their families.

### The Challenges Our Patients and Their Families are Facing

Each of our four institutions have their expertise and state-of-the-art equipment, meaning children with complicated musculoskeletal issues such as cerebral palsy, scoliosis, club feet and muscular dystrophy, among others, are often followed at several of our hospitals/centres and are seen by a variety of experts. “These children follow a trajectory through our institutions that is too much like that of a warrior’s,” explains Dr. Stefan Parent, M.D., Ph.D., Orthopedic Surgeon and Clinical Researcher at CHU Sainte-Justine and Professor, Department of Surgery, Université de Montréal. “Transferring from one institution to another has, in the past, been associated with communication problems, waiting lists, and gaps in service that have had a major impact on our patients and their families.”

“When you have a child with musculoskeletal disabilities needing complex care, you can easily feel as if you’re drowning in the healthcare system,” says Linda Moreau, mother of Nia who is hemiplegic (paralysed on one side of her body). “When Nia was a baby and doctors told us she’d never walk or talk, we were in shock. It was devastating,” she adds. “But what’s more is that we weren’t always referred to the right specialists at the right institutions and were on incessant

waiting lists. There was no framework to help us navigate the system to get the best help for our daughter.”

### **MUSCO Now Possible Thanks to the Mirella & Lino Saputo Foundation**

MUSCO (Initiative for children with **MUS**culoskeletal disorders who require **CO**mplex Care) would not be possible without this generous and visionary \$10 million donation from the Mirella & Lino Saputo Foundation. “Mr. and Mrs. Saputo have been partners and leaders in this project, encouraging all four institutions to work together and to involve patients and their families in the process,” states Dr. Reggie Hamdy, M.D., Orthopedic Surgeon and Chief of Staff at Shriners Hospitals for Children – Canada and Chief of Pediatric Orthopedics, McGill University. This donation is the largest contribution the Mirella & Lino Saputo Foundation has ever made. “All four institutions and their foundations are very grateful for their support,” he adds.

“It was so important to us to support this innovative initiative,” says Mrs. Mirella Saputo. “We had received requests from these institutions and wanted to find a way to ensure our support would have an impact on the way they work collaboratively,” she adds. “The hope was – and remains – that this project will bring the hospitals to work more closely together on a lasting basis.”

“We actively support many initiatives aimed at bettering the lives of children with special needs and varying degrees of disabilities, as well as the lives of their families,” explains Mrs. Saputo. “We knew that this innovative project would greatly contribute to the impact we want to achieve. We believe that families should receive the support and care they need in a timely and efficient manner. MUSCO promises to be an important element in alleviating a burden and stress on families by enabling imperative collaboration for complex cases,” she states. “It brings us immense pride to see doctors and specialists from multiple institutions willing and motivated to work together for the greater good of these children and their families,” adds Mrs. Saputo.

### **MUSCO to Improve Patient Care and Services, Reduce Waiting Lists**

“Some of the care teams and researchers from our institutions already know each other and collaborate, but this project is allowing and encouraging them to work together even more and to share expertise, information and ideas in order to push patient care and research further,” says Dr. Jean-Pierre Farmer, M.D., Neurosurgeon and Surgeon-in-Chief at Montreal Children’s Hospital and Chair of Pediatric Surgery, McGill University. “There are over 450 patient transfers between our four institutions every year,” he adds. “We expect this initiative will reduce waiting lists and the duplication of services, as well as increase satisfaction with the patient experience when it comes to patients with musculoskeletal disorders.”

### **MUSCO’s Collaboration to Refine Rehabilitation Services**

Nearly all of these patients require intense rehabilitation, often over months, even years. “The MUSCO initiative will reinforce collaboration between our pediatric institutions, will lead to the development of cutting-edge platforms for rehabilitation and with the collaboration of patient partners, will lead to a unique ecosystem to refine rehabilitation practices,” points out Maryse St-Onge, Director of Rehabilitation, Multidisciplinary and Mental Health services at Marie Enfant Rehabilitation Centre of the CHU Sainte-Justine. “This is extremely important as rehabilitation is key to allowing these children and teenagers to lead a better quality of life.”

### **MUSCO Makes Montreal an Innovator and Leader in the Field**

This inter-institutional donation for children with musculoskeletal issues is a big first in Canada and this collaboration between four major pediatric healthcare institutions positions Montreal as an innovator and an uncontested leader in this area. The ultimate objective is to continuously improve the quality of life of these children and their families. MUSCO is expected to lead the way for a new norm in management and care improvement across the country.

### **MUSCO Involves Concrete Actions to Improve Patient Care and Services**

The MUSCO collaboration will involve:

- **Re-evaluating procedures and tools** to facilitate a patient's trajectory through our four institutions and to improve the patient experience;
- **Recruiting key people** (patient navigator) to accompany patients and their families ensuring they receive the right care, at the right time and at the right place;
- **Building infrastructure and buying state-of-the-art medical equipment and technology** enabling patients in our system access to the best and latest care and diagnostic techniques;
- **Creating spaces encouraging innovation and discussion** to share best practices and develop new protocols;
- **Organizing events and help centres** to offer patients and families the best information possible;
- **Training medical professionals** to offer a better bedside manner;
- **Including patients and families** as partners.

### **More about the Four Pediatric Institutions Involved**

#### **About the CHU Sainte-Justine Foundation**

The CHU Sainte-Justine Foundation's mission is to engage the community and support the CHU Sainte-Justine in its pursuit of excellence and its commitment to providing children and mothers with one of the highest levels of healthcare in the world, now and in the future. [fondationstejustine.org/en](http://fondationstejustine.org/en)

#### **About the CHU Sainte-Justine**

The Sainte-Justine university hospital centre (CHU Sainte-Justine) is the largest mother-child centre in Canada and the second largest pediatric hospital in North America. A member of the Université de Montréal extended network of excellence in health (RUIS), Sainte-Justine has 5,664 employees, including 1,578 nurses and nursing assistants; 1,117 other healthcare professionals; 502 physicians, dentists and pharmacists; 822 residents and over 200 researchers; 300 volunteers; and 3,400 interns and students in a wide range of disciplines. Sainte-Justine has 484 beds, including 35 at the Centre de réadaptation Marie-Enfant (CRME), the only exclusively pediatric rehabilitation centre in Quebec. The World Health Organization has recognized CHU Sainte-Justine as a "health promoting hospital." [chusj.org](http://chusj.org)

## **About the Montreal Children's Hospital Foundation**

The mission of the Montreal Children's Hospital Foundation is to inspire and mobilize the community to support innovation in research, teaching and care at the Montreal Children's Hospital, the pediatric teaching hospital for McGill University's Faculty of Medicine, and pediatric research at the Research Institute of the McGill University Health Centre. Since its inception in 1973, the Foundation has raised more than \$450 million, which has transformed the lives of sick children through innovative research and teaching projects, and cutting-edge care. For more information, please visit [childrenfoundation.com](http://childrenfoundation.com).

## **About the Montreal Children's Hospital**

Established in 1904, the Montreal Children's Hospital (MCH) is Quebec's oldest children's hospital and the pediatric hospital of the McGill University Health Centre (MUHC). A tertiary and quaternary care teaching and research facility, treating newborns, children and adolescents up to age 18, it serves 63% of the geographic population of Quebec.

With its pediatric care and research facilities adjacent to the adult facility on the Glen site, the Children's is in a unique position to offer services and research across the lifespan. The Centre for Innovative Medicine - the only clinical research centre in a hospital setting in North America – allows its researchers to conduct clinical trials on the Hospital site.

The Children's is a leader in providing a broad spectrum of highly specialized care to young patients and families from all across Quebec. The hospital is a provincially designated trauma centre and is recognized for its wealth of expertise in cardiology and cardiac surgery, emergency care, neurology and neurosurgery.

## **About Shriners Hospitals for Children – Canada**

Established in Montreal in 1925, Shriners Hospitals for Children – Canada is the only Canadian facility in the network of Shriners Hospitals. A bilingual hospital, it offers short-term, ultra-specialized orthopedic care to children in Canada, the United States and around the world. Infants, children and young adults with orthopedic and neuromuscular problems such as scoliosis, osteogenesis imperfecta, clubfoot, hip dysplasia or cerebral palsy benefit from the expertise of our medical teams in terms of treatment and rehabilitation.

Affiliated with McGill University, the hospital has a Pediatric Simulation Center and a Motion Analysis Center to stimulate excellence and innovation in care, teaching and research. Physicians, residents and health professionals benefit from our facility on the McGill University Health Centre Glen site to further their training and experience. In addition to providing an environment of patient- and family-centered care, the hospital, through telemedicine, community clinics and satellite clinics, is present in communities across Canada. Recognized as an institution that promotes health, Shriners Hospitals for Children – Canada has been helping children reach their full potential for over 90 years. [shrinershospitalsforchildren.org/montreal](http://shrinershospitalsforchildren.org/montreal)

## **More about the Mirella & Lino Saputo Foundation**

The Mirella & Lino Saputo Foundation is a private family foundation founded in Montreal. It supports different initiatives aimed at creating a better social and economic exercise of the aging community, of those living with disabilities and of newcomers. Inspired by the vision of its founders, Mirella & Lino Saputo, the foundation adopts a collaborative approach aimed at the

promotion of a resilient and inclusive society, where all can exercise their citizenship to its full potential.

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