



TRIUMF

Canada's National Laboratory for Particle and Nuclear Physics
Laboratoire national canadien pour la recherche en physique nucléaire
et en physique des particules

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Canada to Transform Technology for Medical-Isotope Production *National Accelerator Laboratory Pushing Forward on Alternatives*

(Vancouver, BC) -- TRIUMF, Canada's national laboratory for particle and nuclear physics, welcomed this morning's Government of Canada Response to the Report of the Expert Review Panel on Medical-Isotope Production (the Government's Response). The Government's Response identifies a clear strategy for developing accelerator-based technologies for medical-isotope production and bringing them to market. TRIUMF has global expertise in the two proposed thrust areas, cyclotrons and linear accelerators, and looks forward to contributing its time, talent, and leadership to seeing these efforts bear fruit and make a real difference for Canadians.

"We are delighted to see the Government's Response acknowledge and endorse accelerators as a central part of the answer to a stable supply of medical isotopes for Canada," said Dr. Nigel S. Lockyer, director of TRIUMF. "As Canada's accelerator laboratory, we are committed to working with the healthcare industry, institutional partners, and the private sector to provide innovative solutions for medical isotopes." TRIUMF, in partnership with MDS Nordion, already produces 15% of Canada's medical isotopes using cyclotron accelerators in Vancouver.

The recently announced federal investment of 2010-2015 core operating funds for TRIUMF builds on the laboratory's core capabilities in the study of isotopes for physics and medicine. The funding will enhance TRIUMF's nuclear-medicine program, which spans the physics, chemistry, and biology of medical isotopes.

The Government's Response indicated, "The cyclotron and accelerator technologies advocated by the Panel are ones in which Canada is already an established leader, including for the production of PET isotopes and for scientific research."

TRIUMF is already working with the federal government and the BC provincial government on several approaches. TRIUMF is co-leading a team that was awarded \$1.3 million by NSERC and CIHR in October 2009 to investigate cyclotron technologies for producing Technetium-99m and several alternative isotopes. TRIUMF's commercial spin-off Advanced Applied Physics Solution, Inc. is working on isotope purification technologies. And TRIUMF's flagship project for the next decade, led by the University of Victoria with CFI support, will benchmark isotope production using linear accelerators operating at high power.

Dr François Bénard, who leads the Tc-99m cyclotron initiative with TRIUMF's Dr. Thomas J. Ruth, is a Professor of Radiology at the University of British Columbia and holds the BC Leadership Chair in Functional Cancer Imaging. He said, "The Government's response clearly emphasized the great potential of a cyclotron-based solution to the isotope supply concerns. Technetium-99m can be produced by cyclotrons in a decentralized model. Our research is exploring new approaches to bring cyclotron-produced technetium to the bedside of patients who need it for critical diagnostic tests for cardiovascular diseases and cancer."

Lockyer added, "This is a powerful step forward for Canada. The Government's Response will ensure Canada a leadership role in the growing field of nuclear medicine."

To learn more about TRIUMF's linear-accelerator and cyclotron-based initiatives please contact:

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About TRIUMF

TRIUMF is Canada's national laboratory for particle and nuclear physics. Located on the south campus of the University of British Columbia, TRIUMF is owned and operated as a joint venture by a consortium of the following Canadian universities, via a contribution through the National Research Council Canada: University of Alberta, University of British Columbia, University of Calgary, Carleton University, University of Guelph, University of Manitoba, McMaster University, Université de Montréal, Queen's University, University of Regina, Simon Fraser University, Saint Mary's University, University of Toronto, University of Victoria, and York University.