

■ From Greek to great collaboration

Tom Kerber was among hundreds of delegates at Hamilton's inaugural Health Research in the City forum back in January. He was keen but had few real expectations: "When I got invited I thought, 'This is Greek. What am I going to do here?'" But he sat in on two sessions on light therapy to treat cancer.

Flash forward two or three months. Now the entrepreneur and head of Kerber Applied Research is moving ahead with new opportunities and connections he made at the all-day seminar. Here's what he says now: "I made a number of contacts. It was just absolutely perfect timing. There couldn't have been a better time for that event to occur."

Kerber, who was working with LEDs in the dental field, is now teamed with the Juravinski Cancer Centre in using light therapy in oncology

treatment. Similarly, they are working with an Israeli company on anti-cancer medication that uses photodynamic therapy to go after cancer.

The Kerber story illustrates the collaboration going on across the Golden Horseshoe and how innovative research is leading to treatment solutions. At more than \$260 million in research spending, Hamilton is home to one of the top five medical research clusters in Canada.

"Collaboration," said Dr. Bill Evans, of the Juravinski centre, "is core to the future of research." Scientists from many disciplines are co-operating in their work. Now, the drive is to turn innovation to invoice, transferring top-line networking into bottom-line revenues.

Commercialization means working with the private sector, learning to become an entrepreneur, Christian Dube, of the Trillium Medical Technology Association, based in Markham, told the January forum.

While cancer has long been a 'headline' disease, the fight against obesity is gaining international attention too. Obesity, said Dr. Arya Sharma, director of the Centre for Obesity Research and Management, "is the mother of all diseases". It is informed by the very nature of culture and society.

Just as cancer has long since evolved into an interdisciplinary field, so must obesity research. Treatment and prevention must be aligned to combat this chronic syndrome, he said.

■ A super-lab to fight a super bug (cont'd from cover)

of biology and applies them to infectious-disease research. But the weave is broader than that, also including medicine and geography and earth sciences. Operational within the year, the institute is a prime example of the cross-disciplinary efforts that now mark modern healthcare.

"I see this as a tremendous area for us to really put McMaster on the map with this level of science," said Wright. With its leading-edge science, the laboratory's profile will allow it to seek funding and research-partnership matches around the world, he added.

The centre will be looking at chemical compounds, identifying

and engineering new molecules, as scientists attempt to find answers that may lead to new drugs to combat infectious diseases.

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The 12,500 sq. ft. laboratory – essentially, a series of interjoined units -- will have facilities that will allow investigators to perform organic syntheses of molecules,

high-throughput screening, cell biology, DNA sequencing and other top-flight research science.

It will also have a level-2 biosafety area, a centre to tackle organisms that cause infections. The laboratory will also house an informatics database of chemical genetic interactions that can be accessed anywhere in the world over the Internet.

McMaster succeeded last fall in gaining an infrastructure investment of more than \$8 million from the Canadian Foundation for Innovation. Now it is seeking public and private-sector funding.



Brock's UN vintage

Wine research now carries a United Nations label and Brock University is part of that vintage brand.

The school's Bacchus at Brock event will take place under the auspices of the UN's educational, scientific and cultural organization (UNESCO).

UNESCO has created a chair for wine and culture, all in aid of global co-operation in vine and wine research.

Brock's three-day Bacchus conference (June 7 to 9) is part of the international exchange and collaboration under UNESCO's program, itself proposed by Brock's partner in Bacchus, the University of Burgundy in France.