

Genetic Alliance's iHope Genetic Health (iGH) Program Launches with SickKids and CHEO

Free testing for undiagnosed children in under-resourced communities

WASHINGTON, DC, USA, July 9, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [iHope Genetic Health](#) (iGH) has announced the launch of its first pro bono genetic testing initiative, in partnership with The Hospital for Sick Children ([SickKids](#))

and [CHEO](#) (Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario). This groundbreaking collaboration marks the beginning of iHope Genetic Health's effort to build a worldwide network of laboratories and clinical sites that will provide genetic testing to undiagnosed children from under-resourced communities. This program is made possible in part by donations from Illumina.



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We are excited to strengthen our commitment through this partnership and support children and youth in low and middle income countries.”

*Dr. Christian Marshall,
Clinical Laboratory Director*

SickKids and CHEO have been selected as the inaugural lab partnership in Genetic Alliance's iGH program. They emerged from a competitive pool of 25 clinical laboratory applicants. This collaboration is the first of several that will extend the reach of whole genome and exome sequencing to those who need it most.

“We are thrilled to partner with SickKids and CHEO,” said Sharon Terry, President and CEO of Genetic Alliance. “Their dedication and expertise will be instrumental in helping us

achieve our goal supporting children in need, particularly those in low- and middle-income countries. This is a critical step toward ensuring that every child, regardless of their socioeconomic status, has access to life-changing genetic testing.”

The program initiated operations in June. It focuses on providing accurate diagnoses and potential treatment paths for children who have been undiagnosed due to limited access to advanced medical resources. By leveraging the renowned diagnostic laboratory expertise of SickKids and CHEO, iGH aims to significantly impact global health disparities.

Ryan Taft, Chief Scientific Officer at Genetic Alliance, emphasized the importance of this initiative:

"Over the last ten years iHope has demonstrated the power of genomic sequencing in vulnerable populations worldwide. It is imperative that we expand access quickly so that no child goes without a diagnosis."

Dr. Christian Marshall, Clinical Laboratory Director in the Division of Genome Diagnostics, Department of Paediatric Laboratory Medicine at SickKids says, "Equitable access to tools like genome sequencing is a key part of SickKids' efforts to improve child health around the world. We are excited to strengthen our commitment through this partnership and support children and youth in low and middle income countries. "

Dr. Kym Boycott, Chief of the Department of Genetics at CHEO, added: "We are honored to be part of this pioneering effort. The ability to offer comprehensive genetic testing to underserved populations is a significant advancement in our mission to provide equitable healthcare. We look forward to the meaningful changes this program will bring to the lives of many families."

This collaboration underscores the commitment of Genetic Alliance, SickKids, and CHEO to advancing global health equity by combining resources and expertise to provide improved diagnostic and treatment opportunities for children around the world.

About Genetic Alliance

Genetic Alliance is a nonprofit health advocacy organization dedicated to transforming health through genetics. Founded in 1986, the organization focuses on promoting access to genetic services, fostering innovation, and advocating for policies that support individuals and families impacted by genetic conditions. With a global network of partners, Genetic Alliance works to integrate genetic knowledge into everyday healthcare, ensuring equitable access to genetic testing, research, and personalized medicine. Through programs like iHope Genetic Health, Genetic Alliance is committed to advancing health equity and improving outcomes for all communities, particularly those that are under-resourced. For more information, visit www.geneticalliance.org.

About SickKids

The Hospital for Sick Children (SickKids) is recognized as one of the world's foremost paediatric health-care institutions and is Canada's leading centre dedicated to advancing children's health through the integration of patient care, research and education. Founded in 1875 and affiliated with the University of Toronto, SickKids is one of Canada's most research-intensive hospitals and has generated discoveries that have helped children globally. Its mission is to provide the best in complex and specialized family-centred care; pioneer scientific and clinical advancements; share expertise; foster an academic environment that nurtures health-care professionals; and champion an accessible, comprehensive and sustainable child health system. SickKids is a founding member of Kids Health Alliance, a network of partners working to create a high quality, consistent and coordinated approach to paediatric health care that is centred around children, youth and their families. SickKids is proud of its vision for Healthier Children. A Better World.

About CHEO

Dedicated to the best life for every child and youth, CHEO is a global leader in pediatric health care and research. Based in Ottawa, CHEO includes a hospital, children's treatment centre, school and research institute, with satellite services located throughout eastern Ontario. CHEO provides excellence in complex pediatric care, research and education. We are committed to partnering with families and the community to provide exceptional care — where, when and how it's needed. CHEO is a partner of the Kids Come First Health Team, a network of partners in eastern Ontario working to create a high quality, standardized and co-ordinated system for pediatric health care centred around children, youth and their families. Every year, CHEO helps more than 500,000 children and youth from eastern Ontario, western Quebec, Nunavut and northern Ontario.

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