Scotiabank to children with cancer and blood disorders

Scotiabank's global philanthropic program, Bright Future, the Bank announced a pledge of $1 million to support the Caribbean-SickKids Paediatric Cancer and Blood Disorders Project.

These funds will be used to support the project's telemedicine programs in Barbados, Jamaica, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Trinidad and Tobago, and The Bahamas.

The telemedicine element of the project will allow physicians in the Caribbean to connect directly with leading paediatric cancer and blood disorder experts at SickKids. As well, physicians specializing in areas other than cancer and blood diseases can also connect with both Caribbean and international colleagues, enhancing their ability to diagnose and care for Caribbean children. The goal of this project is to expand access to world-leading medical professionals allowing children to get the best care possible in their own country.

"The Caribbean is a big part of Scotiabank's history and our future. This donation and our partnership with SickKids are directed at giving the next generation a better chance of growing up healthy and making their contribution to the Caribbean," said Sabi Marwah, Scotiabank Vice Chairman and Chief Operating Officer. "Supporting our communities through the Bright Future program is a big part of Scotiabank's culture and our way of giving back to the network of 55 countries we call home."

Through SickKids Foundation, Scotiabank also previously pledged $1 million to the International Patient Program.

"We are grateful for Scotiabank's generous support of the telemedicine element of the project," said Ted Garrard, President and CEO, SickKids Foundation. "Too often, children in the Caribbean succumb to cancer because the proper diagnostics and treatments are not available. This gift will help build capacity for these Caribbean countries to more effectively diagnose and treat children."

In the Caribbean, there is often a combination of factors that negatively impact on the ability to deliver clinical care, including: a lack of medical professionals with specialized training in paediatric cancer care; limited technological resources which often prohibits proper diagnoses; few nurses and pharmacists able to provide specialized front-line health care; and limited data on the effectiveness of treatments and epidemiology of paediatric cancer. Working with local hospital partners in the Caribbean, the Caribbean-SickKids Paediatric Cancer and Blood Disorders Project includes a five-year plan to address the region's gaps in research, care and education in order to advance the diagnosis and management of paediatric cancer and blood disorders.

Elements of this five-year plan include using telemedicine, physician envoys, and the SickKids International Learner Programme to provide customized, hands-on training to local individuals, establishing and maintaining a patient registry to provide high-quality data and key outcomes, and increasing the knowledge of primary care practitioners and pharmacists in the region to improve cancer care access. Trainees will also travel from the Caribbean to SickKids on a regular basis for hands-on training and experience within the Garron Family Cancer Centre at SickKids.