

NMIN names new Scientific Director & CEO Dr. Christine Allen

VANCOUVER, BC (18 June 2021)

The NanoMedicines Innovation Network (NMIN), a national research network funded by the Government of Canada, has appointed Dr. Christine Allen Scientific Director & CEO, effective 1 July 2021.

Dr. Allen is Associate Vice-President and Vice-Provost, Strategic Initiatives, and Professor in the Leslie Dan Faculty of Pharmacy, at the University of Toronto. An internationally recognized researcher in nanomedicines and a pioneer in the development of image-guided drug delivery, Dr. Allen has been involved with NMIN since its initial planning phase and is an NMIN Principal Investigator.

Dr. Allen is the Editor-in-Chief of the *Journal of Controlled Release*, a leading drug delivery journal. Her research is focused on the field of drug delivery; specifically, polymer and lipid-based formulations for treatment of chronic diseases such as cancer and osteoarthritis. She has developed several new polymer materials for drug delivery, and the Allen lab at the University of Toronto has done considerable work evaluating the integration of drug delivery with other therapeutic modalities such as radiation and hyperthermia. She holds numerous patents and has produced over 150 publications.

"I am keen to dedicate my energies toward accelerating the tremendous momentum already achieved by this remarkable community of accomplished nanomedicine scientists," states Dr. Allen.

"Despite the impact of the pandemic on labs across the country, NMIN researchers have continued to create new diagnostic technologies, drugs and therapeutic approaches for a range of diseases, and, with NMIN's support, are moving to quickly translate them into health and economic benefits for Canadians," comments Dr. Allen. "In the face of pandemic-imposed restrictions, the Network has also pursued novel strategies to provide its early-career researchers and trainees with opportunities to develop their professional skills and build community."

"It will be a privilege to work with Dr. Allen," states NMIN's Board Chair Don Enns. "Dr. Allen's proven prowess as a scientist and entrepreneur fit the goals and direction of this Network perfectly. She is a well-respected scientist and leader in Canada and internationally. Given her vision and energy, she will maximize the scientific and social potential of NMIN's vision and mission."

"Dr. Allen is a cutting-edge researcher with innovative ideas who will ensure that this vibrant network continues to fulfil its promise within the NCE program," comments founding Scientific Director Dr. Pieter Cullis, a professor of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology at the University of British Columbia.

Nanomedicines are "smart" medicines that employ various forms of nanotechnology. NMIN researchers are leveraging nanotechnologies to deliver drugs, such as anticancer drugs, more specifically to sites of disease to dramatically improve efficacy and reduce toxicity, and to enable gene therapies employing RNA and DNA that have the potential to treat most human diseases. They are also developing diagnostics and imaging agents based on nanotechnology to detect disease earlier and monitor the effectiveness of therapy more accurately.

NMIN's outgoing Scientific Director, Dr. Cullis, will continue to co-lead the Network's Gene Therapy research program with Dr. Christian Kastrup, as well as serve on the NMIN Board of Directors. The University of British Columbia remains the Network's Host Institution and administrative headquarters.

About NMIN

The [NanoMedicines Innovation Network \(NMIN\)](#) is a national research network dedicated to advancing research, innovation & training in nanomedicines to maintain Canada as the world leader in this revolutionary approach to treat & cure disease. Funded by the Government of Canada through the federal Networks of Centres of Excellence (NCE) Program, the Network is hosted at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, British Columbia.

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Media Contacts:

Marshall Beck
Digital Initiative Consultant
NanoMedicines Innovation Network (NMIN)
info@nanomedicines.ca
416-828-8877