

## **Thistledown Foundation grants \$26 million gift to Canada's Children's Hospitals**

TORONTO – November 18, 2021 – Canada's Children's Hospital Foundations (CCHF) together with Children's Healthcare Canada (CHC) are thrilled to announce a \$26 million investment from Thistledown Foundation to support Canada's 13 acute care children's hospitals across the country. This historic gift recognizes the immense impact of the pandemic on Canadian children, youth, and their families.

A donation of \$2 million to each acute care children's hospital coast-to-coast is intended to meet urgent local needs and to ensure children and their families have access to the best available care, regardless of where they call home. "Through this gift, our hope is that children across Canada will have the best possible care to enable them to feel better soon and get back to the important job of being kids," said Fiona McKean, co-founder and Chair of Thistledown Foundation.

For millions of children and youth who have experienced extended school closures, delays in access to essential social, community and healthcare services, and physical separation from friends and family, the pandemic has had both direct and indirect impacts on their health and well-being. Deferred or delayed access to child development services, mental healthcare, surgical and other diagnostic services can have devastating and long-term impacts on children's health outcomes. Of particular concern, children's hospitals across the country are reporting significant increases in visits and admissions related to anxiety, depression and eating disorders among children and youth. Canada's children's hospitals have responded swiftly, adapting and innovating to support timely delivery of urgent and emergency physical and mental healthcare services for Canada's eight million kids.

This gift coincides with National Child Day which is celebrated on November 20. It commemorates a commitment Canada made to uphold the rights of all children. This includes the opportunity for children to be protected from harm, be provided with their basic needs including access to healthcare, be advocated for and have a voice to ensure every opportunity to reach their full potential.

Thistledown Foundation is a private charitable foundation established by Fiona McKean and Tobias Lütke, CEO of Shopify.

### *Quotes:*

"The incredible generosity and power of this donation through the national network of children's hospitals will create a positive impact and be felt in the

smallest and largest communities throughout Canada. It's heartwarming to have these donors step up to put children's needs first at a time when they need it the most," said Jennifer Gillivan, President and CEO, IWK Foundation and Chair, CCHF Board of Directors.

"IWK Health is incredibly grateful to the Thistledown Foundation for this tremendous gift and for prioritizing the health of children. There's no question the pandemic has been especially tough for patients and families. These funds will make such a positive impact — providing new opportunities to enhance care and support the children, youth and families who need our services more than ever," said Dr. Krista Jangaard, IWK Health Centre President and CEO.

"The health and wellbeing of children and youth have always been at the heart of everything we do. Now, our patients are counting on us more than ever before. We must prioritize innovations in pediatric care as we start envisioning how our post-pandemic healthcare institutions and systems will evolve. We are so grateful to Thistledown Foundation for recognizing this through such a generous donation that will have an impact right across Canada," said Dr. Ronald Cohn, President and CEO, The Hospital for Sick Children (SickKids).

"Tobi and Fiona are incredible change-makers with huge hearts. Their unprecedented and historic gift will help children, youth and their families all across Canada, including eastern Ontario, northern Ontario, western Quebec and Nunavut — all of which we serve here at CHEO. Kids are truly the unsung heroes of this pandemic, and this gift recognizes and highlights the urgent need to make them a priority," said Alex Munter, President and CEO, CHEO."

"National Child's Day is a day to reflect on what we need to do differently as a country, to give Canada's eight million children and youth their best chance for a healthy future. Tobi and Fiona's gift comes at a critical time for children's hospitals, experiencing unprecedented demand for specialized services. This gift will help our children's hospitals address unprecedented pressures, locally," said Emily Gruenwoldt, CEO, Children's Healthcare Canada.

## About Thistledown Foundation

The Thistledown Foundation is a private charitable foundation established in late 2019 by Tobias Lütke and Fiona McKean. Its core mission is to advance technological solutions for decarbonization. In the spring of 2020, in light of the global pandemic, Thistledown expanded its focus to contribute to Canada's response to COVID-19 by providing funding to accelerate academic research and to improve the domestic supply chain for personal protective equipment (PPE). Visit [Thistledown.ca](https://www.thistledown.ca)

## About Canada's Children's Hospital Foundations

Canada's Children's Hospital Foundations (CCHF), established in 2017, is a not-for-profit organization that raises funds for a national network of hospital foundations as the largest single, non-government funder of child health in Canada. CCHF continues to receive generous support through donors within Children's Miracle Network® as well as contributions from additional companies and donors. Together, we represent 13 of Canada's children's hospitals where the greatest challenges are tackled; our hospitals see the most critical cases. Your contribution helps your local children's hospital ensure that all sick and injured children have access to the very best care from coast to coast. Visit [childrenshospitals.ca](http://childrenshospitals.ca)

## About Children's Healthcare Canada

Children's Healthcare Canada is a national association representing health service delivery organizations serving children and youth. Our members include all sixteen Canadian Children's Hospitals, Regional Health Authorities, Community Hospitals, Rehabilitation and Children's Treatment Centres, and Home Care Agencies. Through purposeful partnerships, we accelerate excellence and innovation in health systems caring for children and youth. Visit [childrenshealthcarecanada.ca](http://childrenshealthcarecanada.ca)

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