



**PRESS RELEASE**  
**For immediate release**

## **FUNDING FOR INNOVATIVE THERAPIES FOR HEREDITARY ATAXIAS**

**Montréal, April 28, 2023** – It is with great enthusiasm that Génome Québec, Ataxia Canada and Muscular Dystrophy Canada announce the launch of the Innovative Therapies for Hereditary Ataxias competition to encourage the discovery and development of new therapies and to mobilize the research ecosystem. The three organizations aim to jointly invest \$1M to support projects with a maximum of \$330,000 per project for a period of two years.

The goal of this competition is to meet the needs of people affected by these rare neurological diseases, to enable them to benefit from genomic innovations and to encourage the development of innovative therapies. It supports the objectives and orientations of the provincial and federal governments, notably by accelerating therapeutic innovation ([Politique québécoise pour les maladies rares](#)) and by supporting research [to improve access to affordable and effective drugs for the treatment of rare diseases](#).

This competition is open to researchers affiliated with a Québec university and its affiliated institutions (including hospitals and research institutes).

The deadline for submitting the mandatory registration to Génome Québec is **June 8, 2023**.

### **Quotes**

“As a former employee of Génome Québec, I am familiar with the functioning of the funded projects, and I can attest to the success of several of them. I am especially proud that they are associated with leading organizations working in research on ataxias. This is very good news for people affected by these rare neurological diseases.”

Fanny Chagnon, volunteer at Muscular Dystrophy Canada and person diagnosed with ataxia

“The announcement of this competition represents a great pride for our organization. Given the urgent need for therapies for people with ataxia and the enormous potential of genomics in the development of innovative therapies, it was more than relevant to join forces to respond to this critical need. Omics and bioinformatics technologies will potentially find targets for new drugs more efficiently, but also to accelerate the development of effective therapies for people affected by these rare neurological diseases.”

Stéphanie Lord-Fontaine, Vice-President, Scientific Affairs at Génome Québec

“For 50 years, the flame of hope for a life without ataxia, lit by the founder Claude St-Jean, has been burning among the ataxic community. It is with enthusiasm that we are pleased to announce this innovative program on hereditary ataxias. By collaborating with partners with similar missions to ours, we want to continue to propel research and benefit from an important lever for the hard-earned donations of our community. Ataxia Canada is 50 years of constant scientific progress towards a cure. We believe that genomic technologies are essential to eradicate ataxias and that the future is promising. Because science advances, technologies progress, and life is stronger than anything else, we do everything possible to make our mission a reality.”

François-Olivier Théberge, Chief Executive Officer of Ataxia Canada

“Muscular Dystrophy Canada is excited to launch this much-valued competition that is all about leveraging the power of collaboration and innovation. This call for proposals is designed to encourage innovation that will accelerate how we understand rare conditions like Friedreich’s ataxia, and identify pathways for future

therapies. Ultimately, it will help address the impact these conditions have on people's care, lives and the health system, and optimize research outcomes. We are also pleased this competition demonstrates our commitment to making equity, diversity, and inclusion an integral component of the research process.”

Homira Osman, Vice President, Research and Public Policy, Muscular Dystrophy Canada

### **About Génome Québec**

Génome Québec's mission is to catalyze the development and excellence of genomics research and promote its integration and democratization. It is a pillar of the Québec bioeconomy and contributes to Québec's influence and its social and sustainable development. The funds invested by Génome Québec are provided by the Ministère de l'Économie, de l'Innovation et de l'Énergie du Québec (MEIE), the Government of Canada, through Genome Canada, and private partners. To learn more, visit <https://www.genomequebec.com/en/home/>.

### **About Ataxia Canada**

Ataxia Canada's mission is the well-being of people with familial ataxia, to contribute to the research of new diagnostic tools, to the development of promising treatments and to bring the ataxia community in Canada closer together. For more information, visit <https://lacaf.org/en/>.

### **About Muscular Dystrophy Canada**

Muscular Dystrophy Canada's mission is to enhance the lives of those impacted with neuromuscular disorders by continually working to provide ongoing support and resources while relentlessly searching for cures through well-funded research. To learn more about Muscular Dystrophy Canada, please visit [muscle.ca](http://muscle.ca) or call our toll-free number at 1 800 567-2873.

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