

## Versant Ventures-Bayer AG Partnership Represents Significant Milestone for Canada's Biotech Sector and Innovation Economy

December 12, 2016 (OTTAWA) - BIOTECanada congratulates Versant Ventures and Bayer AG on their partnership and the significant investment announced today in the creation of Blue Rock Therapeutics, a new Canadian-based stem cell research company. The creation of Blue Rock builds on Canada's globally recognized and historical stem-cell research capacity and stands to establish Canada as a global leader in regenerative-medicine therapies.

"The \$225 million deal represents the second largest investment in Canadian biotech history. The Bayer-Versant partnership and creation of Blue Rock is also very representative of the new biotech commercialization model that requires a diverse and collaborative ecosystem which includes investors and multinational partners. Importantly, this partnership, the corresponding financial commitment and the creation of a cutting edge stem-cell company in Toronto sends a very strong signal to the global investment community that Canada's scientists are generating phenomenal innovation and the Canadian biotech ecosystem is thriving. Furthermore, the growth of Blue Rock Therapeutics over the years ahead will further enable Canada's biotech ecosystem to develop even more innovative science and ultimately Canadian companies. All told, today's announcement represents a very significant milestone for the biotech industry and Canada more broadly," commented Andrew Casey, President and CEO BIOTECanada.

BIOTECanada also welcomed the strong and active support of the Ontario and Canadian governments through the participation at today's announcement by Premier Kathleen Wynne and the Honourable Navdeep Bains, Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development.

"The participation of Premier Wynne and Minister Bains at today's announcement also sends a very important signal to the global investment and pharmaceutical industry community that Canadian governments understand the important role the biotechnology sector can play in delivering solutions for global health and environmental challenges while also enhancing Canada's global economic competitiveness," added Casey.

BIOTECanada is the national industry association with more than 200 members located nationwide, reflecting the diverse nature of Canada's health, industrial and agricultural biotechnology sectors. In addition to providing significant health benefits for Canadians, the biotechnology industry has quickly become an essential part of the transformation of many traditional cornerstones of the Canadian economy including manufacturing, automotive, energy, aerospace and forestry.

For more information:  
Nadine Lunt  
BIOTECanada  
613-230-5585 x257