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For Immediate Release

ONTARIO BUDGET – JOBS AND INNOVATION OFFER THE BEST PRESCRIPTION FOR HEALTH AND PROSPERITY

Ottawa, March 24, 2006 – *Canada's Research-Based Pharmaceutical Companies (Rx&D)* congratulates the Ontario Government for its initiatives aimed at fostering a climate for economic growth. However, Rx&D also reiterated that the government must create opportunities and a climate for new jobs and investment in an increasingly globally competitive biopharmaceutical sector.

“The government needs to seize the day in terms of creating a climate for innovation in pharmaceuticals that will mean jobs and prosperity for Ontarians,” stated Rx&D President Russell Williams. “The competition internationally is fierce and the life sciences sector should be a priority in terms of building a stronger economy and providing innovative health care.”

Mr Williams also expressed concern the pharmaceutical and life sciences sectors were not identified as a key driver of jobs and economic growth.

“The challenge for the government is to create a research and innovation vision with concrete measures to grow a globally recognized broad life sciences sector, especially as Premier McGuinty and several other provincial and municipal leaders gather together for the world's largest biotechnology meeting, BIO 2006, in Chicago next month,” said Mr. Williams.

As a major partner in the health care system, the research-based pharmaceutical community is already playing a significant role in the province's economy. Member companies employ 9,000 Ontarians and when spin-off economic activity is taken into account, are responsible for generating a total of 34,000 jobs in the province.

Mr. Williams also expressed concerns that projected spending on drugs could signal a stand alone cost-containment strategy rather than recognizing the value of new medicines in improving patient outcomes and generating savings elsewhere in the health care system.

A study by Columbia University estimated that every dollar invested in newer medicines relieves the system of expenses seven times greater in other areas of health care by reducing hospital, physician and home care costs.

In addition, innovative prescription medicines account for less than seven cents of every dollar spent on health care.

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Mr. Williams also pointed out that rather than being the driver of health care costs, new medicines are a vital part of the solution to a sustainable and cost effective health care system. “New medicines and innovation,” he said, “are a major reason why people are living healthier, longer and more productive lives.”

Mr. Williams also applauded the government's preparation for an influenza pandemic; increasing the government's stockpile of antivirals, emergency supplies and equipment to protect health care workers and their patients; developing programs that prevent illness and promote wellness; and, the purchase of insulin pumps and related supplies for 6,500 children with Type 1 diabetes.

Canada's Research-Based Pharmaceutical Companies (Rx&D) is an association of members dedicated to improving the health of all Canadians. As partner of the health care system, our discoveries help eliminate the need for medical procedures such as surgery, which have a significant impact on patient quality of life and health care budgets. Our community represents over 22,000 men and women working for 50 member companies in Canada and is responsible for generating 100,000 jobs across Canada.

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