

Media Advisory

Southwestern Ontario Isotope Coalition Officially Launches

Owen Sound, Ontario
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Monday, June 26, 2023

The Southwestern Ontario Isotope Coalition launched last week with the goal of bringing together the region's many strengths in supporting Canada's national imperative and vision to increase the production, development, and use of medical isotopes in the global fight against cancer.

As a public-private partnership, the Coalition was formed by the City of Owen Sound, the Canadian Nuclear Isotope Council (CNIC), and the Nuclear Innovation Institute (NII).

The Coalition's first task is to develop a strategic plan that will:

- Shape a common approach to marketing southwestern Ontario as a major centre of global isotope production;
- Raise awareness among local communities of the vital role the region plays in isotope production;
- Work with the CNIC to convey the message of the region's place in the isotope ecosystem to the national and provincial governments, policymakers, health leaders; and
- Assist in attracting public and private investment to expand the region's role.

In March, the CNIC launched *Isotopes for Hope: Canadian Leadership Needed Now More Than Ever*, focusing on strengthening Canada's global role in the isotope supply chain to double production by 2030 while expanding the critical development of isotopes. This ambitious vision presents a unique opportunity: to inspire communities of all sizes across the country, private and public sector organizations, and all levels of

government to continue in their own way to this once-in-a-generation opportunity for Canada.

“We have a unique opportunity to support the important role Canada has to play internationally in fighting cancer with lifesaving medical isotopes made right here in our region,” said Ian Boddy, Mayor of Owen Sound and Co-Chair of the Coalition. “This Coalition will allow us to work with local communities, public and private sector organizations, and governments across Canada to highlight and develop our role in this national imperative.”

“It’s going to take partnerships across Canada working together to deliver on the ambitious vision outlined in the CNIC’s recent *Isotopes for Hope* report, and this is an important step forward to ensure Southwestern Ontario can make an important and growing contribution as a region,” said James Scongack, Chair of the CNIC and a lifelong resident of Bruce County, serving as a Co-Chair for the new Coalition.

“Producing new, life-saving medical isotopes is a big part of what makes the nuclear industry so innovative,” said Bruce Wallace, President and CEO of NII and Co-Chair of the Coalition. “We look forward to helping spread the word about the vital role of locally produced medical isotopes in Canadian and global health care.”

The Coalition has already begun engaging with local partners, including the region’s Indigenous communities to build upon the isotopes work already happening in this area. In 2019, the Saugeen Ojibway Nation (SON) and Bruce Power entered into a collaboration agreement to jointly market new isotopes to support the global fight against cancer, beginning with the production of Lutetium-177. This partnership will positively impact cancer treatment worldwide and create new economic opportunities within SON Territory by establishing new isotope infrastructure at the Bruce Power Site. The partnership is called Gamzook’aamin Aakoziwin, which is Ojibway for “We are teaming up to fight the sickness” and captures the spirit of the partnership: fighting cancer together.

For more information, please contact Paul McGrath, Manager of Business & Community Development at 519-376-4440 ext. 1254 or email to pmcgrath@owensound.ca

Quick Facts:

- Medical isotopes are the cornerstone of nuclear medicine, a branch of medical science that uses radioactive sources to diagnose, characterize, and treat disease.
- For more than half a century, Canada has been a world leader in developing, producing, and using medical isotopes.
- The CNIC's newest report, *Isotopes for Hope: Canadian Leadership Needed Now More Than Ever* [can be viewed here](#).
- The CNIC is a coalition of science, healthcare, and nuclear-sector organizations to ensure Canada remains a world leader in producing lifesaving isotopes.
- The global market for nuclear medicine reached \$6 billion USD in 2021, despite the global shutdowns and supply chain challenges of the pandemic, and will continue to expand quickly to reach between \$14 and \$33 billion USD by 2031.
- With world-renowned infrastructure and expertise, Canada has the unique capability to build upon its historic leadership within this growing international market to establish itself as an isotope superpower.

Attached Image Credit:

Left to right: Bruce Wallace, President and CEO of NII; Ian Boddy, Mayor of Owen Sound; James Scongack, Chair of the CNIC; Michael Chegahno, Energy Manager – Saugeen Ojibway Nation; Rick Byers, MPP — Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound.