

**For Immediate Release:**  
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## **Transformational gift to create the first clinical genome centre of its kind in Canada**

LONDON, ONTARIO – Today, Wednesday, October 14, 2020, London Health Sciences Foundation (LHSF) is pleased to announce the creation of the Archie and Irene Verspeeten Clinical Genome Centre at London Health Sciences Centre (LHSC) following a transformational gift of \$3M from Archie and his late wife Irene Verspeeten. The Verspeeten Clinical Genome Centre will be the first of its kind in Canada and will result in state-of-the-art genetic diagnostics to enable personalized treatment options, better care and improved patient outcomes.

“The creation of the Verspeeten Clinical Genome Centre will have a profound effect in the lives of patients with complex diseases not only in our community, but also in communities around the world,” said John MacFarlane, President and CEO at LHSF. “It is because of Archie and Irene’s vision and deep-rooted passion to find a cure to end cancer that this Centre is possible.”

No two people are the same and genetic differences mean that even if a treatment works for one patient, it may not work for another. Genomic profiling can help create personalized treatment options to improve treatment options for patients with diseases linked to genetics such as cancer, epilepsy, neuromuscular disorders and developmental disabilities. The Archie and Irene Verspeeten Clinical Genome Centre will provide the ability to more accurately diagnose patients, predict the progress of their disease and provide highly targeted and new treatment options.

“This is the first facility of its kind in Canada. It integrates the advanced translational research capabilities of a genome centre within the highly standardized and regulated clinical diagnostic laboratory environment,” said Dr. Bekim Sadikovic, Scientific and Clinical Director of the Verspeeten Clinical Genome Centre. “It will advance the standard of care by providing access to the world-leading molecular genetic diagnostics and personalized medicine to cancer patients in southwestern Ontario. The Verspeeten Clinical Genome Centre will improve a patient’s journey by uncovering unique information hidden in their personal genomes,” says Dr. Sadikovic.

In honour of Archie’s late wife Irene and son Alan, the Centre will initially have a heightened focus on genomic sequencing for pancreatic cancer in conjunction with the Baker Centre for Pancreatic Cancer.

“This Verspeeten Clinical Genome Centre will have the ability to bring us closer to transforming fast-spreading and fatal cancers, such as pancreatic cancer, into manageable diseases and the research and knowledge gained through genomic profiling will provide valuable information that will benefit patients now and, in the future,” says Dr. Sadikovic.

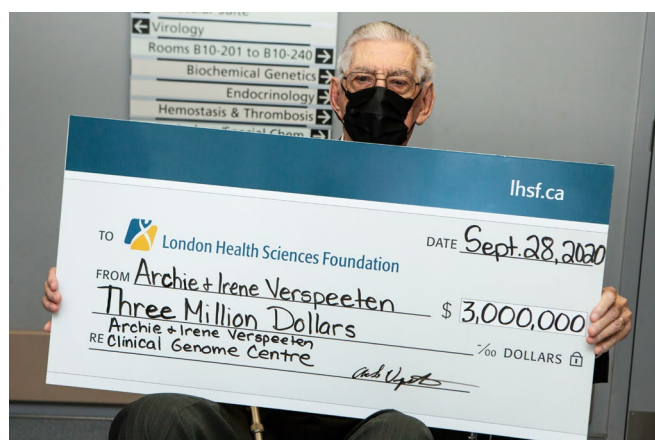
Not only will the Centre have an impact on patients locally but it has the potential to impact patients nationally and around the globe through research and knowledge sharing.

“I am so humbled that we are able to support launching the first Clinical Genome Centre in Canada. This means more than words can ever express. My wife and I have been passionate about finding a cure for cancer because, unfortunately, my family has been no stranger to the deathly grip of the

disease and I want nothing more than to end cancer completely,” said Archie Verspeeten. “I hope this Centre will get us one step closer to that goal. I believe genetic testing can provide better patient outcomes and help patients live longer, fuller and happier lives.”

The Archie and Irene Verspeeten Clinical Genome Centre will serve patients in London and beyond. The lead gift of \$3M from Archie and Irene Verspeeten has laid the ground work for the Centre but there is still more to do. The full vision for the Verspeeten Clinical Genome Centre is \$10M, which will provide patients access to in-depth genomic profiling, for improved patient outcomes.

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**About London Health Sciences Foundation (LHSF)** is a [Canada Revenue Agency](https://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/charities/eng/eng.asp) registered charity accredited by [Imagine Canada](https://www.imaginecanada.ca/) linking our community and health care experts - including physicians, allied professionals, researchers, staff and educators - together in pursuit of medical excellence at [London Health Sciences Centre](https://www.lhsc.on.ca/) (LHSC) and [Lawson Health Research Institute](https://www.lawsonhealthresearchinstitute.ca/) (Lawson). Established to strengthen LHSC's ability to provide the highest quality health care for patients in Southwestern Ontario and beyond, LHSF offers opportunities to support discovery and innovation in research, education and patient care at our hospital. To see how donations enable extraordinary care, visit [www.lhsf.ca](https://www.lhsf.ca).

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