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Calgary philanthropists inject over \$312 million into health system

– Largest fundraising campaign to date in Calgary’s history a success –

CALGARY, AB, February 24, 2009 – Celebrations are underway today as Reach!, the joint fundraising initiative of the University of Calgary, Alberta Health Services and the Calgary Health Trust recognizes over 700 donors who have made a commitment to achieve a new world standard of health for southern Albertans.

Launched in October 2005 and comprised of a strong core of community volunteers, Reach! set out to raise \$300 million in targeted philanthropic gifts for over 100 projects in medical research, education, patient care, and public health and wellness; over \$312 million raised to date.

“This really is an unprecedented achievement on many fronts,” states Dr. Harvey Weingarten, president and vice chancellor, University of Calgary. “Our organizations determined to partner together, share resources and work collaboratively for the betterment of the health community. What we have achieved is a milestone organizationally as well as philanthropically.”

The organizations partnered on a previous fundraising campaign, Partners in Health, which raised approximately \$53 million for Calgary’s health community between 1993 – 1995.

“This campaign, by any measure, has been a phenomenal success and its achievements are materially improving Alberta’s standing in medical education, research and clinical care,” states Ken Hughes, board chair, Alberta Health Services.

The money raised will be used to advance projects in eight key areas of health – bone and joint; brain; cancer; cardiovascular; child and maternal health; infection, immunity and inflammation; new frontiers of medicine; and public health and wellness.

Projects already underway as a result of philanthropic investments through Reach! span the health continuum and include: new institutes of health; a colon cancer screening centre; dedicated research laboratories in cancer, infectious diseases, spinal cord research, and hypertension, among others; numerous research Chairs designed to attract the best and the brightest medical minds in the world to lead research enterprises in Calgary; community well-being projects targeting health of refugees, healthy eating for students, and falls prevention for seniors; the world’s first MRI-compatible surgical robot; and scholarship / education funds for medical students and health care workers.

A number of other initiatives under development include a new patient focused urology centre; a state of the art simulation training centre for health care teams; and a seniors’ health campus – all of which will continue to impact the health of the community well into the future.

“What this community has achieved is nothing short of remarkable,” says Ken King, one of three Reach! co-chairs. “Calgarians are known for their can do spirit and their commitment to the community. They know that we need to find new and innovative ways to fulfill and accelerate health initiatives, research, new diagnosis and treatment. It’s the Calgary way.”

