



BC Professional Fire Fighters' Burn Fund

Burn Fund *Link*

SPECIAL EDITION

Al Leier, President ☞ Robert E. Hall, Secretary Treasurer

August 2005

VANCOUVER GENERAL HOSPITAL TO LEAD WORLD FOR RESEARCH AND TREATMENT TO HEAL BURNS AND WOUNDS



New Research Laboratory Funded by BC's Professional Fire Fighters

The BC Professional Fire Fighters' Burn & Wound Healing Research Laboratory at Vancouver General Hospital (VGH) officially opened on August 18.

Vancouver General Hospital is poised to lead the world in burn and wound healing with the arrival of an acknowledged world-leader in the treatment of burns and wounds and the opening of a new donor-funded research lab at VGH.

Dr. Aziz Ghahary, a world-renowned leader in the treatment of burns and wounds, will head the research laboratory. He joins the medical team at the BC Professional Fire Fighters' Burn & Plastic Surgery Unit. The unit provides care for burn and trauma patients across B.C. and the Yukon.

Dr. Ghahary and his team have discovered communication among different types of cells in the skin is crucial to successful healing. They have isolated a protein that is key to the communication. This discovery is essential to learning how to prevent formation of scar tissue after a burn, as well as understanding why other wounds fail to heal.

"Among the many hospitals around the world, VGH and Vancouver Coastal Health offer the best opportunity to build on the body of research accomplished to date, and I firmly believe we are on the brink of remarkable new treatment options for patients with wounds or burns," says Dr. Ghahary. "I am so grateful for the donor support we have received to help open the new research laboratory. As we move forward, ongoing support for the program will ensure we can continue to translate new discoveries into better patient care for people in British Columbia."

Dr. Ghahary's recruitment to Vancouver Coastal Health Research Institute is a major development for Vancouver Coastal Health, VGH and patients. At the new BC Professional Fire Fighters' Burn & Wound Healing Lab at VGH, Dr. Ghahary will be developing a shelf-ready topical cream containing the purified protein, as well as an actual skin substitute that can be applied to burns and wounds to allow the skin to heal properly. The result will be significantly less scarring from burns and improved healing of wounds.

"The opening of the BCPFF Burn & Wound Healing Research Laboratory shows the power of what can be achieved when Fire Fighters, medical caregivers, and the community work in partnership," says Dr. Nicholas Carr, head of the Division of Plastic Surgery, UBC. "The Lab has the potential to bring to this community the most significant advances ever achieved in the care of burn injured and scarred patients. I am tremendously optimistic that with Dr. Ghahary's Lab, Vancouver will emerge as an important international leader in burn care."



Dr. James C. Boyle MD, FRCSC Medical Director, BCPFF Burn & Plastic Surgery Unit at VGH & Clinical Associate Professor, UBC; **Brady Tupper**, burn survivor; **Dr. Aziz Ghahary**, Director, BCPFF Burn & Wound Healing Research Laboratory at VGH, **Shenica White**, dog attack survivor; **Tony Burke**, Executive Director, BCPFF Burn Fund

**BC Professional Fire Fighters' Burn Fund partners with
VGH & UBC Hospital Foundation to raise an additional
\$3 million towards program for Burn & Wound Healing**

To recognize the partnership between the VGH & UBC Hospital Foundation and the Burn Fund, the research facility will bear the name 'BC Professional Fire Fighters' in honour of the Burn Fund's significant contribution and long-term relationship with VGH.

"BC's 3,300 Professional Fire Fighters take great pride in our more than twenty-five year partnership with VGH Hospital," says Al Leier, president of the BCPFF Burn Fund. "The work Dr. Ghahary and his team will do is an opportunity for the future, and the care of all burn survivors and those who are injured or suffer scars. We pledge a life-long commitment to B.C.'s burn survivors and to the partnership with VGH & UBC Hospital Foundation and the BCPFF Burn Unit. We look forward to working to raise additional funds to help support the BCPFF Burn & Wound Healing

Research Laboratory, which is another example of the Burn Fund's legacy to our province's citizens."

The equipment is funded by a \$400 thousand gift from the Burn Fund. VGH & UBC Hospital Foundation, in partnership with the Burn Fund, are also committed to raise \$3 million towards the program for Burn and Wound Healing.

"The opening of the BCPFF Burn & Wound Healing Research Laboratory is further proof that support from our donors helps to build momentum to attract and retain world-class health care professionals to care for patients," says Ron Dumouchelle, President and CEO, VGH & UBC Hospital Foundation. "We need to continue to build on the momentum we have achieved to raise additional funds to advance world-class health care for people in British Columbia."

About the Burn Fund



The BCPFF Burn Fund is a registered non-profit charity established in 1978 by the BC Professional Fire Fighters Association. The Burn Fund provides life saving, life supporting, and life enriching services to the people in British Columbia. More than 3,300 professional fire fighters around the province are building the Burn Fund's vision. They dedicate their time and skills to support burn survivors and increase the public's knowledge about fire and burn safety issues through the work the Burn Fund does with its Burn Awareness, Research and Prevention Programs.

The BC Professional Fire Fighters' Burn & Wound Healing Laboratory is located in the Jack Bell Research Centre at Vancouver General Hospital. For more information or to make a donation to the Burn Fund, the Research Laboratory, and the BC Professional Fire Fighters' Burn & Plastic Surgery Unit, please visit www.burnfund.org.

Burn Fund Board of Directors

Fire fighters represent the Board from locals around the province of British Columbia, and all positions are unpaid.

President: Al Leier

Prince George Fire Fighters Local 1372

Secretary/Treasurer: Robert E. Hall

Vancouver Fire Fighters Local 18

Executive Director: Tony Burke

Coquitlam Fire Fighters Local 1782

Assistant to the Executive Director: Heather Wilson

Burnaby Fire Fighters Local 323

Directors:

Terry Abrams, North Vancouver District Fire Fighters Local 1183; **Kris Anderson**, Burnaby Fire Fighters Local 323; **Tim Baillie**, Surrey Fire Fighters Local 1271; **Ray Boucher**, Coquitlam Fire Fighters Local 1782; **Ryan Cail**, Kamloops Fire Fighters Local 913; **Peter Hansen**, North Vancouver District Fire Fighters Local 1183; **Brent Joel**, New Westminster Fire Fighters Local 256; **Jason Milne**, Trail Fire Fighters Local 941; **Ken Mollan**, White Rock Fire Fighters Local 2407; **Wil Patterson**, Port Moody Fire Fighters 2399; **Earl Steele**, Prince George Fire Fighters Local 1372

About Dr. Ghahary

Since he began his career, Dr. Ghahary has been awarded 33 research grants. He currently holds four Canadian Institute of Health Research (CIHR) grants as the principal investigator. Also, he currently holds another three grants from national and international agencies. Of mention, four of his grants in the past were from the International Association of Fire Fighters. Dr. Ghahary has published or co-published over 98 papers, and presented over 125 abstracts and major presentations at national and international conferences.

Dr. Ghahary graduated in 1976 from the School of Medicine at the University of Tehran, Iran. At the University of Manitoba School of Medicine, Department of Physiology, Dr. Ghahary received a Ph. D. in 1988 and completed his post-doctoral training in research between 1988 and 1990. He joined the University of Alberta Faculty of Medicine in 1990, and held the position of Professor in the Department of Surgery since 2003.



Dr. Ghahary reacts to standing ovation from guests at the BCPFF Burn & Wound Healing Research Lab opening on August 18, 2005

Among numerous awards, Dr. Ghahary has twice been the recipient of the United Nations Development Award. He travelled to countries like Cuba and Iran, and studied genes from patients who were suffering from different disorders, including post-burn hypertrophic scarring.

Dr. Ghahary initiated a Transfer Knowledge Program (TKP) through which knowledge in the treatment of certain diseases, such as diabetes, is transferred to developing nations. This program is a significant contribution to international research and training.

Dr. Aziz Ghahary is married to Ruhangiz T. Kilani, Ph.D., who will become a senior research associate with her husband at the UBC Faculty of Medicine. The couple live in Vancouver, and have three grown sons. One is a medical doctor, another is a digital artist, and their youngest son is a pharmacy student at the University of British Columbia.