Governments around the world have, in recent years in particular, made significant investments in health research – investments that bring potential benefits to the health of people worldwide and that play an important role in building strong scientific cultures and knowledge economies. The majority of this health research investment has been made into academia. However, there exists a significant gap in translating the resulting academic discoveries into commercially-viable investment opportunities for the private sector. And as the costs and risks associated with bringing new drugs or other therapeutic products to market become greater and greater, the various players (from government, to academic institutions and granting agencies, to translational research organizations, foundations and industry) must find new avenues to come together to fill the gaps in the development continuum and effectively de-risk early-stage technologies.

In this context, **The Centre for Drug Research and Development (CDRD)** was established in 2007 as Canada’s fully-integrated, national drug development and commercialization centre, providing expertise and infrastructure to enable researchers from leading health research institutions to advance promising early-stage drug candidates. A Canadian Centre of Excellence for Commercialization and Research (CECR), its mandate is to de-risk discoveries stemming from publicly-funded health research and transform them into viable investment opportunities for the private sector — thus successfully bridging the commercialization gap between academia and industry, and translating research discoveries into new therapies for patients.

CDRD fulfills this mandate by working with scientists from research centres across the country and around the world to identify the most commercially-promising discoveries, and then performing the additional proof-of-concept research and business analysis required in order to develop and de-risk those discoveries into commercially-viable opportunities for the private sector. The private sector is then well-positioned to take on the responsibility of developing them further into new treatments for patients – and in doing so, generating strong economic returns on the original public investment in health research.

This presentation will describe CDRD’s mandate, model, and global linkages (including its role in establishing the Global Alliance of Leading Drug Discovery and Development Centres), introduce CDRD’s expertise, and summarize the progress, and challenges encountered since being established approximately six years ago.