



**Improving labour-force participation of Canadians with disabilities focus of conference
*Job matching network, Magnet, announces new partnerships with CIBC and Holland
Bloorview***

Toronto – Jan 17, 2017 –To help break down barriers to employment for Canadians with physical or intellectual disabilities, Magnet, a not-for-profit online network that connects job seekers to employers based on skills and talent need, today announced two new partnerships with CIBC and Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital at its Innovation, Diversity, Employment and Ability (I.D.E.A.) conference at Toronto’s Ryerson University. The announcement comes just as a new poll commissioned by CIBC and Magnet revealed that 19 per cent of Canadians with disabilities do not disclose their disability to an employer prior to an interview, and half of those (51 per cent) do not disclose their disability do so out of fear of discrimination.

Magnet is partnering with CIBC, which is now Magnet’s Diversity partner for Indigenous peoples and Persons With Disabilities, and Holland Bloorview to reach Canadians with disabilities that are unemployed or underemployed with job opportunities. The new partnerships were announced at the I.D.E.A Conference, where young professionals with disabilities and a number of community, government, education and employer stakeholders are gathering to celebrate disability and employment through the lens of innovation, creativity and leadership.

The Honorable Minister Tracy MacCharles, in her capacity as Minister Responsible for Accessibility is also attending the conference to help open the event and participate with attendees to discuss new solutions to Canada’s disability unemployment and underemployment challenges. The conference will include panel sessions on topics such as Building Skills for Success, Accommodations and Disclosure, Entrepreneurship and Alternative Careers and Career Transitions among others.

“We are grateful to CIBC and to Holland Bloorview for their leadership and support in recognizing that persons with disabilities are an important part of Canada’s workforce and can provide skills to make a positive financial and innovative impact on Canadian business,” said Mark Patterson, Executive Director, Magnet. “Magnet will use these partnerships and the I.D.E.A. Conference to improve how Canadians, especially youth, with disabilities find meaningful employment.”

“CIBC is committed to having a team that reflects our diverse clients and the communities in which we live and work,” says Laura Dottori-Attanasio, Senior Executive Vice-President and Chief Risk Officer, and Diversity & Inclusion Executive Champion, CIBC. “And through our partnership with Magnet, we can let even more job seekers with disabilities know that we focus on the abilities and personal strengths of people when hiring.”



Well recognized as an inclusive employer and for respecting individual differences and the value those differences bring in terms of creativity, productivity, and service excellence, CIBC is committing to hiring 500 new team members with disabilities in 2017, and will grow that number year over year.

Both CIBC and Holland Bloorview will utilize Magnet's powerful data-rich job-matching network. Led by Ryerson University and supported by the Ontario Chamber of Commerce, Magnet radically alters how people with disabilities find significant employment and how organizations source talent from this largely untapped diverse labour force. Creating a profile is fast and intuitive. Magnet provides a unique "self-ID" feature that provides job seekers with a positive way to privately and securely identify their disability as a strength. Once registered, candidates are matched to employers committed to hiring people with disabilities based upon their skills, preferences and talents.

"We are honoured to be partnering with Magnet on this exciting initiative and applaud this outstanding organization for taking an important step forward in addressing employment needs for all Canadians," says Diane Savage, Vice President, Programs and Services, Holland Bloorview. "Holland Bloorview offers essential services and resources for youth to provide them with tools and skills tailored to their needs as they prepare to transition into the workforce. Working together with Magnet will not only help connect young job seekers with disabilities to specific employment opportunities, but also links advocates, employers and community partners across the country to foster innovative solutions that support inclusion of youth with disabilities in our vital labour force."

Dr. Wendy Cukier, Founder, Diversity Institute, Ryerson University and expert in work-integrated learning, is a keynote speaker at The I.D.E.A Conference. "I am not surprised by the CIBC Magnet poll findings that show a fear of disclosure due to discrimination. Accessibility extends beyond ramps or workspace accommodations," said Cukier. "Our research shows that the rates of self identification are not always accurate indicators of the representation of diversity groups in an organization. Rather the willingness to self-identify or disclose is often a reflection of the extent to which individuals feel comfortable disclosing their identity which in turn is affected by the effectiveness of an organization's efforts to address inclusion. We have seen this in research on religious identity, gender identity and sexual orientation, aboriginal identity as well as disability. It can also be affected by the definition of disability. An asset-based approach focuses on making accomplishments as well as their challenges highly visible. I look forward to discussing this issue and others at this important conference."

To view further findings from the CIBC Magnet poll and to sign up for Magnet's job-matching network, please visit <https://www.magnet.today/>.



*Canadians Living with a Disability Employment Poll Disclaimer:

From December 20 to 22, 2016 an online survey was conducted among 1,002 Canadian adults with a disability who are Angus Reid Forum panelists. For comparison purposes, a probability sample of this size has a margin of error of +/- 3%, 19 times out of 20.

For further information: Kathleen Powderley, Responsible Communications, 416-803-5597 or Kathleen@responsiblecomm.ca

About Magnet

Magnet is a new network powered by data-rich, job-matching technology that connects job seekers with employers based upon skills, preferences and talent needs. The network is also a unique source of real-time labour market information for decision makers and community planners. Magnet's goal is to address unemployment and under-employment specifically as it relates to youth, new immigrants, Indigenous peoples, persons with disabilities and other individuals facing barriers to employment.

About CIBC

CIBC is a leading Canadian-based global financial institution with 11 million personal banking and business clients. Through three major business units - Retail and Business Banking, Wealth Management and Capital Markets - CIBC offers a full range of products and services through its comprehensive electronic banking network, branches and offices across Canada with offices in the United States and around the world. Ongoing news releases and more information about CIBC can be found at www.cibc.com/ca/media-centre/ or by following on LinkedIn (www.linkedin.com/company/cibc), Twitter @CIBC, Facebook (www.facebook.com/CIBC) and Instagram @CIBCNow.

About Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital

Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital provides specialized programs and clinical care for children and youth with rehabilitation and complex care needs to enable them to participate in life to the fullest. We are Canada's leading pediatric rehabilitation teaching hospital, dedicated to being at the forefront of clinical care, research and education. As a key resource for Ontario, we are committed to partnerships to build clinical, academic and community capacity to enhance the quality of life for children with rehabilitation and complex care needs and their families. For more information or to make a donation, visit hollandbloorview.ca.