

# B.C. mining industry raising money for children's hospital

Mining for Miracles campaign will fund tech to help doctors diagnose rare diseases faster

PAUL WALDIE

PITCHING IN

**The pitch:** Raising \$3.5-million

**The organizers:** B.C.'s mining industry

**The cause:** BC Children's Hospital

Jim O'Rourke spent more than 50 years in the Canadian mining industry and built a number of mines and companies.

Mr. O'Rourke, who died in 2021, won numerous awards during his career and he was inducted into

the Canadian Mining Hall of Fame in 2013. One of his most meaningful legacies has been the Mining for Miracles charity which he launched in 1988. Over the past 35 years the charity has brought together companies from across British Columbia's mining sector and raised \$37-million for the BC Children's Hospital.

"Every couple of years we have an opportunity to select from a series of initiatives that the doctors and researchers from the hospital put together," said Jelena Puzic, director of strategic initiatives at Teck Resources Limited who chairs the charity.

This year the organization has launched a campaign to raise \$3.5-million to fund genetic sequencing technology at the hospital. The program, called Precision Health Initiative, will enable doctors to diagnose rare diseases much faster. It is expected to help up to 100 children annually.

Stuart Turvey, who heads the

initiative, said the technology will allow researchers to understand a child's disease at a molecular level. "By knowing the molecules that are disrupted, we can target them with specific therapies that target just that molecular problem. And so we avoid side effects that are common with less specific medicines." He added that the charity's donation "really allows us to do things we couldn't have done otherwise."

Ms. Puzic said the technology builds on research that has been funded by previous Mining for Miracles donations. And she said the long-term commitment to BC Children's Hospital also means that people working in the mining sector can see their donations at work.

"It's really amazing to see the actual impact, live at the hospital," she added. "It really is making a difference."

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Precision Health Initiative head Stuart Turvey, left, and research assistant Simran Samra store patient cells in liquid nitrogen at BC Children's Hospital on Wednesday. JENNIFER GAUTHIER/THE GLOBE AND MAIL