Market Need: Twenty to thirty percent of adults, across most of the industrialized world, are characterized as having metabolic syndrome (MetS), which includes hypertension (HTN), diabetes, hypercholesterolemia, and excess body fat – the principal contributors to increased risk for cardiovascular disease (CVD) and all-cause mortality. Although recognized as a core feature of psychotic disorders, impaired illness awareness and the minimization of the need for medical intervention in MetS and HTN are under-recognized and understudied phenomena that contribute to treatment nonadherence and poor clinical outcomes. HTN is a major contributing risk factor for coronary heart disease and strokes accounting for 57 million disability adjusted life years (DALYS) worldwide. Raised blood pressure is estimated to cause 7.5 million deaths, approximately 12.8% of the total of all global deaths. Although influential, the true prevalence of impaired illness awareness or illness denial in metabolic disorders and their impact on medication adherence and treatment outcomes requires further study. Improving illness awareness among individuals with MetS and HTN may facilitate treatment adherence, reduce morbidity, mortality and the need for hospitalization, and improve the quality of life for patients and their families. A number of instruments have been developed to measure illness perceptions in metabolic disorders and HTN; however, these scales are not specific to the quantitative assessment of illness awareness or illness denial in these conditions. Moreover, most are cumbersome, difficult to use and interpret. Thus, the aim was to develop easy to use self-report scales of insight into illness in blood pressure that would have the capability to detect small changes in insight and assess the multidimensionality of insight into illness in these conditions.

Technology Description: Our scientists have developed a novel and easy to administer self-report measure of illness awareness in HTN. The measure assesses the core domains of illness awareness, including awareness of need for treatment. With 10-point Likert scales for each item, this scale has the capacity to detect small changes in illness awareness and need for treatment scores.

Stage of Development: Investigators are currently validating the scale and conducting tests for reliability. The scale will be validated in English and potentially other languages for wider use. Upon validation, the inventor plans to create an electronic version, which will facilitate data storage for research studies and clinical use.

Advantages:

- Specific to the quantitative assessment of impaired illness awareness or illness denial
- User friendly tool with the capacity to detect small changes in illness awareness scores with the use of 10-point Likert scales for each item
- Provides a set of questions specific to blood pressure that are within the niche of understanding patient awareness of their illness
- Offers a screening mechanism to determine which patients are most suitable for medication adherence programs or interventions to enhance illness acceptance and medication adherence.

Business Opportunity: CAMH is leading the development and commercialization of this scale. We are seeking partnerships with pharma, biotech and hospitals who may be interested in licensing this scale for use in clinical trials and patient assessment.