

## ***The 2020 Advocacy Program***

### ***The Parliamentary Health Research Caucus***

In 2020, Research Canada made the necessary shift to virtual events, holding five Parliamentary Health Research Caucus (PHRC) events virtually for the first time in our history. Each of these virtual events raised awareness among Parliamentarians about the social and economic benefits of Canadian health research and innovation, all through the lens of the COVID-19 pandemic that emerged in full force earlier in the year.

In June 2020, the PHRC and Research Canada hosted the first of our Virtual COVID-19 Series, **A RACE AGAINST THE CLOCK: COVID-19 Vaccine and Treatment R&D in Canada**. Itself a follow-up to Research Canada's earlier public event of the same name, this virtual panel featured four researchers from across Canada who were at the forefront of early Canadian research on COVID-19 vaccines and treatments.

In August 2020, the PHRC and Research Canada hosted our second virtual panel, **AFTERNOON TEA AND SPIRITS: Conversation with COVID-19 Testing and Contact Tracing Experts**. Featuring researchers from three of Research Canada's member institutions, this event explored just how important testing and contact tracing are in fighting a pandemic and the role that research must play in building capacity across the country.

Our third event of the year, held in October 2020, was **A RACE AGAINST THE CLOCK: The Quest for a COVID-19 Vaccine**. Moderated by VIDO-InterVac's Director and CEO, Dr. Volker Gerdtz and featuring researchers from four member institutions across Canada, Parliamentarians heard about the entire vaccine development process, from animal models to manufacturing, and where the different Canadian vaccine candidates are in this process.

In November 2020, the PHRC and Research Canada hosted our very first virtual reception, **A RACE AGAINST THE CLOCK: Canadian Mental Health Researchers Stand Up to COVID-19**, featuring an incredible 20 researchers from just as many member institutions. This Virtual Reception explored the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on Canadians' mental health from a psychosocial perspective—at the level of both the individual and the population—and from a neurobiological and neuropsychological perspective.

Rounding out the year, we held our second virtual reception in December 2020, **A RACE AGAINST THE CLOCK: Environmental Health and Climate Change Research in Canada**. Featuring 17 researchers from across our membership, this Virtual Reception introduced Parliamentarians to the direct health impacts of climate change on respiratory health and infectious diseases, as well as the indirect health impacts of environmental change.

Clearly, our original plans for the PHRC this year were disrupted by the pandemic and the public health measures put in place across the country to keep us all safe. However, if 2020 has taught us anything, it is that virtual events are an excellent tool for bringing the latest health research to Parliamentarians and engaging an even wider audience than might otherwise have been possible with in-person events in Ottawa. While we are certainly looking forward to seeing everyone in person at our Luncheon and Reception events in the future, we are thrilled to have this additional platform in our pocket to further profile our Members to our elected officials!

### ***A New Parliamentary Health Research Caucus Chair***

Following the 2019 federal election, **Mr. Lloyd Longfield, MP for Guelph, Ontario**, was appointed as the new PHRC Chair by the **Minister of Health, the Honourable Patty Hajdu**. The new Caucus was officially launched with a special virtual event to welcome Parliamentarians to a new session of Parliament, in conjunction with the PHRC's vaccine event on October 21, 2020. **Ms. Marilyn Gladu** from the Conservatives and **Ms. Carol Hughes** from the NDP, continue to serve as Vice-Chairs of the Caucus while **Senator Judith Seidman** stays on as the Senate Representative. Mr. Longfield has already done a stellar job chairing this year's five virtual events, and we are delighted to continue to work with him and his Caucus colleagues in the New Year.



### ***Research Canada's Publications***

Research Canada continues to produce our popular publication for Members, ***RC On the Move***. Produced three to six times each year, *RC On the Move* provides Members with political and policy news, information about Research Canada's Parliamentary Health Research Caucus events, news from the HRI Portal, exclusive interviews with Canadian thought-leaders in health research and innovation, such as Canada's Chief Science Advisor, Dr. Mona Nemer, and more!



New for 2020 were our President and CEO Bulletins, ***A Message from Research Canada's President and CEO***. A bit more informal than our other publications, the PCEO Bulletin provides

our Members, Supporters and Partners with a brief update on political and policy Ottawa and political insights from Research Canada's President and CEO.

Research Canada also continued to keep Parliamentarians updated with the latest health research and health innovation news from our Members with our new publication, the ***Biweekly Media Digest for Parliamentarians***. Building on the success of our past publication, the *RC Update*, and taking some ideas from our *Daily Media Digest*, the *Biweekly Media Digest* provides Parliamentarians with a selection of news about our Members' and Canadian



constituents' contributions to health research and health innovation. This publication has allowed us to profile even more of the great research being conducted across the country.

## Social Media

Throughout 2020, Research Canada has continued to grow our social media audiences and engagement. By the end of 2020, Research Canada had nearly 6,700 Twitter followers and an average number of over 30,000 Impressions per month. Our Twitter followers are also highly engaged, having engaged with our tweets 31% more often compared to 2019. Our Facebook page now has almost 1,200 Likes, and these numbers are continuing to grow each day. New for this year was Research Canada's official LinkedIn page, which now has over 250 engaged followers. Over the past four years, Research Canada's social media audience across platforms has grown by over 36%, reaching even more of the health research and health innovation community online to profile our Members and amplify the voices of the Canadian health research and innovation ecosystem.

## HRI Portal



Throughout 2020, Research Canada has continued to use the **HRI Portal** as a vehicle through which we can profile the important and innovative work of our Members and the advocacy and education work that Research Canada does through the

Parliamentary Health Research Caucus and policy initiatives. Research Canada offers this service to our Members to assist you in getting the word out about your ground-breaking research and innovations at an affordable rate.

The HRI Portal also hosts the news and commentary the health research community wants to see through the ***Daily Media Digest*** and the French ***Weekly Digest (La revue de presse hebdomadaire)***. These stories are made available to our community for free.

## ***FINA Submission***

Research Canada submitted a response to the **House of Common's Standing Committee on Finance's (FINA) Pre-Budget Consultations** in advance of the 2021 Budget in August 2020, entitled ***Restarting the Canadian Economy as it Recovers from the COVID-19 Pandemic***. Our submission highlights the inextricable link between health and economic security and the need for continued investment in the health research and innovation ecosystem that has been critical to Canada's response to the pandemic. Research Canada recommended that the Government of Canada:

- 1) deepen Canada's commitment to fundamental science;
- 2) provide direct support and stability for academic health science centres;
- 3) enhance support for trainees and post-doctoral fellows;
- 4) invest in the digitalization of Canada's health system; and
- 5) implement the recommendations of the Health and Biosciences Economic Strategy Table's Report.



## ***Research Canada's 2020 AGM***

Research Canada held its **2020 Annual General Meeting** in June 2020, taking place virtually for the first time in the organization's history. While we were not able to hold the PHRC Luncheon and Panel Presentation that typically accompany the Business Meeting, we were pleased to appoint **Dr. Rosie Goldstein as Chair of the Board of Directors** and thank outgoing **Chair, Dr. Robert McMaster**, for his dedicated service over the past three years. We were also thrilled to welcome three new Board Directors to the team: **Dr. Amir Asif, Ms. Elizabeth Kidd and Dr. Jennifer Walker**.

## ***Research Canada's Policy Initiatives***

A cornerstone of Research Canada's mission and mandate is to reach across the many sectors that comprise the health innovation ecosystem and encourage opportunities to work together in response to public policy processes and to seek out alignment among our national partners on a number of important issues. Research Canada's Policy Engagement Committee, chaired by **Research Canada's Policy Advisor, Dr. Ryan Wiley** and comprised, in part, of representatives from our Members across the different sectors that make up our health research and health innovation ecosystem, has continued to advise Research Canada's Board of Directors on our shared efforts to advance health research and health innovation in Canada.



In an effort to stay up-to-date on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the various sectors that comprise our health innovation ecosystem, Research Canada also established, in early spring, an internal Ad-Hoc Policy Working Group on COVID-19, also chaired by **Dr. Ryan Wiley**, which helped to advise the Policy Engagement Committee on the policy priorities of our community. In 2020, Research Canada wrote and co-signed seven letters to the Prime Minister and members of Cabinet on a number of issues, including the interrelationships and dependencies between sectors that were critical to our country's pandemic response; the impact of the pandemic on health charities and the academic health science centres sectors, specifically; and the reforms to the Patented Medicines Regulations of the Patented Medicine Prices Review Board (PMPRB).

### **Leadership in Advocacy Award**

Research Canada's Leadership in Advocacy Award honours health research advocacy champions and draws greater attention to health research and health innovation in Canada. The award is given on an annual basis to recognize individuals and/or organizations that have made outstanding efforts in advocating for Canadian health research at the local, provincial and/or national level.

Early in the spring, Research Canada's leadership made the decision to extend the Call for Nominations for the 2020 Leadership in Advocacy Award until October 2020, given the pressures suddenly facing researchers, administrators and advocates alike due to the pandemic. In early December, Research Canada was proud to announce the winners of the 2020 Leadership in Advocacy Award: **Dr. Ingrid Waldron**, Associate Professor in the Faculty of Health at Dalhousie University and the Director of the Environmental Noxiousness, Racial Inequities and Community Health Project (The ENRICH Project), and **HealthCareCAN**, the national voice of healthcare organizations and hospitals across Canada.



As a social scientist, Dr. Waldron's research advances community and collective understanding of inherent bias and structural racism. Through her tireless advocacy work, Dr. Waldron is the embodiment of activist science; as a fearless champion of the systemically marginalized, socioeconomically disadvantaged communities at the centre of her research, she has made the public true partners in realizing the value—the *why*—of health research.



HealthCareCAN has encouraged countless Canadians to take part in advocacy efforts through their training and mentorship activities

to local health research institutes. The organization has had an outsized impact on three of the greatest challenges the health research community faces: ensuring the resilience of its institutions in the face of COVID-19; unleashing its investment in talent by creating fulfilling professional options for research trainees and early-career investigators; and embedding inclusion, diversity, equity and accessibility in research systems, practices and cultures.

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**43RD PARLIAMENT**

**Welcome Kit**

**Trousse de bienvenue**

**POUR LA 43<sup>E</sup> LÉGISLATURE**



## ***Virtual 43<sup>rd</sup> Parliament Welcome Kit***

Following the 2019 federal election, Research Canada began planning for our 43<sup>rd</sup> Parliament Welcome Reception and Kit for new and returning Members of Parliament to launch the Parliamentary Health Research Caucus. This initiative would have provided Members of Parliament with a printed Welcome Kit that would introduce them to our Members, Supporters and Partners and educate them about the state of health research in Canada, the roles played by each stakeholder within the ecosystem and the ways in which health research and innovation can address some of the most pressing health priorities in Canada.

This, of course, did not go as planned, but that did not stop us from delivering these same messages and profiling our Members, Supporters and Partners to Members of Parliament. To do this, we developed an interactive **Virtual Welcome Kit** on our website that went beyond the original scope of the printed Welcome Kit and provided Members of Parliament with the latest news on what our community has been doing to combat and respond to COVID-19.

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## ***Engaging and Supporting Members***

### ***COVID-19 and our Members***

The COVID-19 pandemic has had an impact on all of Research Canada's Members, from necessitating a transition to working from home, to reimagining the nature of events and public engagement, to dealing with substantial financial losses and halted research operations. Despite these challenges, each of our Members have continued to work diligently this year to advance health research—both COVID-19-related and otherwise—and support the patients and people across Canada who depend on the life-changing and life-saving innovations that come out of this research. We are proud to continue to support our Members, not only by advocating on behalf of the health research endeavor and health innovation ecosystem and amplifying your profile to Parliamentarians and the public, but also in smaller, day-to-day ways like sharing our lessons learned for holding virtual events and meetings.

## Member Exclusive Webinars and Political Insights with Michelle McLean



Research Canada continued to work closely to bring political insights from Hill+Knowlton's Michelle McLean to Members through a **Members-only webinar** at the start of quarantine, an **exclusive interview leading up to September's Speech from the Throne** and regular discussions with Research Canada's Board and Leadership. We look forward to continuing to work with Michelle next year to provide our Members with the best political information and advice we can.

## Twelve New Members in 2020

We were so pleased to be able to welcome twelve new Members to the Research Canada Alliance this year, each of whom bring a unique perspective to health research and health innovation in Canada that helps to guide our advocacy and policy initiatives. Make sure to visit their websites to learn about the work that they are all doing to help Canadians!

Banting Research Foundation  
Canada Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder  
Research Network (CanFASD Network)  
Canadian Cancer Society  
Canadian Frailty Network  
Canadian Institute for Military and Veteran  
Health Research (CIMVHR)

Canadian Medical Hall of Fame  
Cancer Research Society  
Gilead Sciences Inc.  
Institute for Advancements in Mental Health  
Kids Brain Health Network  
MedicAlert Foundation Canada  
University of Regina



## Into the Future

### Four Virtual PHRC Events Planned Through June 2021!

While we don't yet know what 2021 will hold for in-person events, we are charging ahead with a plan for several virtual Parliamentary Health Research Caucus events throughout the year, including diabetes research and innovation; a celebration of our Gairdners; cancer research and

innovation; resilience in Canadian research in the face of rare disorders; and our 2021 AGM in June. We also plan to hold another panel discussion for our Members and a selected group of Parliamentarians on open science, a topic that has been particularly front-of-mind for many health researchers and practitioners this year. We welcome suggestions on research projects and researchers in these fields from our Members.

### ***Task Force on Racial and Indigenous Justice in Health Research and Related Innovation***

2020 has reminded us all about the realities of discrimination and systemic racism facing Canada's racialized and Indigenous communities, both within our health care system and embedded in our health research ecosystem, and of the health inequity experienced by these communities. Earlier this fall, we announced that Research Canada would be establishing a **Task Force on Racial and Indigenous Justice in Health Research and Related Innovation** to address practice and policy related to the inclusion of racialized and Indigenous populations as participants, conductors, learners and administrators in Canadian health research and related innovation.

Chaired by Research Canada Board Director, **Dr. Abraham Rudnick**, the Task Force will consult on a regular basis with external experts from racialized and Indigenous groups to ensure that the diverse perspectives and experiences of those across Canada are reflected in our work. Work for the Task Force will begin in the New Year, so stay tuned for more information.

### ***Your Candidates, Your Health and a Likely Federal Election***



**YOUR CANDIDATES  
YOUR HEALTH**

**VOS CANDIDATS  
VOTRE SANTÉ**

It is not clear yet when the next federal election will take place, although it is expected at some point in 2021. Whenever the election may be, we will be ready once again with our federal election campaign, ***Your Candidates, Your Health***, to provide our Members with the tools and resources necessary to effectively advocate for and educate federal election Candidates about the social and economic benefits of Canadian health research and health innovation. We received great feedback from our Members regarding our 2019 Campaign, including many Members who also chose to sponsor the initiative, and we look forward to working alongside you all once again to engage Candidates when the time comes!

### ***Always Mission-Driven***

As a mission-driven organization, Research Canada continues to take the long-term health research and health innovation advocacy view, recognizing that advocating for investments in health research and policies that build a strong health innovation system take time and persistence and require a consistent presence with Parliamentarians — a presence that Research Canada has because of your ongoing support.

*For more information about Research Canada: An Alliance for Health Discovery, visit **rc-rc.ca**.*