Sixteen New Members in 2021

In our efforts to deliver value to our Members by fulfilling Strategic Plan 2020’s commitments to Amplify our Influence, Broaden Public Reach and Diversify our Alliance, we were delighted to bring on board 16 new Members representing the different sectors which comprise the health research and innovation ecosystem and whose own networks and expertise strengthen Research Canada’s advocacy influence in Ottawa! Make sure to visit their websites to learn about the work that they are all doing to help Canadians!

- Arthritis Society
- BD Canada
- Canadian Nuclear Laboratories
- Eastern Regional Health Authority (Eastern Health)
- École de technologie supérieure (ÉTS)
- Glycomics Network (GlycoNet)
- Johnson & Johnson Inc.
- Memorial University’s Faculty of Medicine
- Micellae Delivery Systems
- Neighbourhood Pharmacy Association of Canada
- Ovarian Cancer Canada
- Ryerson University
- Simon Fraser University
- University of Montreal’s Faculty of Medicine
- University of Waterloo
- VoxCell BioInnovation
The 2021 Advocacy Program

The Parliamentary Health Research Caucus

In 2021, Research Canada held three virtual Parliamentary Health Research Caucus (PHRC) events. Each of these virtual events raised awareness among Parliamentarians about the social and economic benefits of Canadian health research and innovation.

In February 2021, the PHRC and Research Canada hosted Celebrating the 100th Anniversary of the Discovery of Insulin: Diabetes Research and Innovation in the Making, a celebration of the huge strides and key advances in mapping and understanding the physiology, biochemistry and genetics of diabetes held on the anniversary of Banting and Best’s discovery of insulin in Toronto in 1921.

Our second event of the year, held in April 2021, was Celebrating our Gairdners. Hosted by Senator Judith Seidman on behalf of the Parliamentary Health Research Caucus, this virtual panel event treated Parliamentarians and special guests to presentations from selected 2021 Gairdner Awardees. Dr. Elizabeth Eisenhauer, winner of the Canada Gairdner Wightman Award and Dr. Mary-Claire King, winner of the Canada Gairdner International Award, both presented their transformative cancer research.

In late April 2021, the PHRC and Research Canada hosted a virtual reception, Cancer Gone: The Research and Innovation that Thinks it Can, featuring an incredible 24 researchers from just as many member institutions. This Virtual Reception explored research and innovations in the areas of Early Cancer Detection at Initial Diagnosis and Prior to Progression and Relapse, The Role of Precision Medicine and Immunotherapy in Cancer Research, Pediatric and Adolescent Cancers, and Cancer Prevention.

Our sincere thanks go to our 2021 PHRC Leadership for helping to make this year’s virtual events a success: Mr. Lloyd Longfield, Chair (Liberal), Ms. Tamara Jansen, Vice-Chair (Conservative), Ms. Carol Hughes, Vice-Chair (NDP) and Senator Judith Seidman, Senate Representative.

Lloyd Longfield, Tamara Jansen, Carol Hughes and Senator Judith Seidman

Although our in-person events continue to be disrupted by the pandemic and the public health measures put in place across the country to keep us all safe, our virtual events have proven to
be an excellent tool for bringing the latest health research and health innovations 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 to further profile our Members to our elected officials!

**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 2021, Research Canada wrote a letter to the Prime Minister and co-authored an op-ed in The Hill Times calling for continued investment in fundamental science.

**Investing in a Health Research and Innovation Ecosystem Strategy**

Written Submission to the Pre-Budget Consultations in Advance of the 2022 Budget

This year, Research Canada once again submitted a response to the House of Common’s Standing Committee on Finance’s (FINA) Pre-Budget Consultations in advance of the 2022 Budget in August 2021, entitled Investing in a Health Research and Innovation Ecosystem Strategy: Submission to the Pre-Budget Consultations in Advance of the 2022 Budget. Our submission highlights the need for bold and transformative, versus incremental, change through the deliberate alignment of government priorities, policies, programs and investments across ministries to maximize the impact and potential of the health research and innovation ecosystem for all people living in Canada. Research Canada recommended that the Government of Canada develop a health research and innovation ecosystem strategy that includes:

1. **Bolstered investment in fundamental science** through the Tri-Council;
2. **Support for diverse, highly-qualified research personnel**, including the next generation, Indigenous Peoples and people from racialized and otherwise marginalized communities;
3. **Support for health research and innovation ecosystem sectors** that have faced significant challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic;
4. Support for an enabling environment for trans-sector partnerships through attention to and investment in culture, structures, incentives and governance; and
5. Investment in the digitalization of our health system that facilitates and encourages public engagement in the discourse surrounding health, research and innovation.

In 2021, Research Canada also convened an Expert Advisory Panel to lead an independent study examining the role that industry plays in Canadian health research and innovation and the potential impact that decreased industry involvement may have on the ecosystem at large. The various stakeholders that comprise Canada’s health research and innovation ecosystem participate in trans-sector partnerships that are critical to a functioning ecosystem, but we have an incomplete understanding of how these partnerships work and are impacted by policy and investment. Research Canada’s Expert Advisory Panel was convened to address this gap and advance dialogue, culminating in both a Final Report and Panel Discussion with four of the Expert Advisory Panel members.

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

2020 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. In the fall of 2020, we announced that Research Canada would be establishing a Task Force on Racial and Indigenous Justice in Health Research and Related Innovation, chaired by Research Canada Board Director, Dr. Abraham Rudnick, 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.
Throughout 2021, Research Canada has been gathering information and meeting with various agencies and organizations to learn about their ongoing racial and Indigenous justice efforts. Moving forward into 2022, the Task Force will be taking some of the lessons learned to identify actions we can take internally through Research Canada’s governance model and operations to be more inclusive, diverse and equitable. In the meantime, we continue to engage and profile the work of diverse health researchers, innovators and advocates through all of our policy and advocacy efforts.

**Research Canada’s Publications**

Research Canada continued to keep Parliamentarians updated with the latest health research and health innovation news from our Members with the *Biweekly Media Digest for Parliamentarians*. Following Parliament’s return in November, this publication was relaunched as the *Research Canada Update* providing 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 and will continue to do so in 2022!

Research Canada also 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 and more!

After a successful first year in 2020, we have continued 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 and occasionally features exclusive interviews with Canadian thought-leaders in health research and innovation, such as Dr. Eleanor Fish, a scientific advisor to Canada’s COVID-19 Therapeutics Task Force.
Research Canada’s 2021 AGM

Research Canada held its 2021 Annual General Meeting virtually in June 2021. 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. Tarik Möröy as Vice-Chair of the Board of Directors and thank Dr. Robert McMaster, Ms. Tara Bingham, Dr. Denis Roy and Ms. Andrée Dumulon, all of whom have completed their terms on the Board, and stepped down after years of exemplary service. We were also thrilled to welcome four new Board Directors to the team: Ms. Sue Mack-Klinger, Dr. Stéphanie Michaud, Ms. Taylor Morriseau and Dr. Ingrid Waldron.

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.

In early June, Research Canada was proud to announce the winners of the 2021 Leadership in Advocacy Award: Dr. Aubie Angel, the founding and current President of Friends of CIHR (FCIHR), Professor Emeritus at the University of Manitoba and Senior Fellow at Massey College of the University of Toronto, and the Canadian Society for Molecular Biosciences, a professional association of active researchers and students in the fields of biochemistry, cell biology, molecular biology and genetics.

Dr. Aubie Angel is a builder and champion of health care organizations in Canada. A leading endocrinologist and former head of internal medicine at the University of Manitoba, he co-founded the Canadian Society of Endocrinology and Metabolism to enable collaboration amongst specialists in his field. He was also a driving force in the establishment of the Canadian Academy of Health Sciences and the Friends of the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, an organization dedicated to sharing the benefits of health research with Canadians.

The Canadian Society for Molecular Biosciences (CSMB) is a professional association of active researchers in biochemistry, cell biology, molecular biology and genetics. CSMB provides an interface between society and our scientific community, so we may continue to appreciate its functions and foster interaction, communication and collaboration amongst discovery scientists. This volunteer run organization is at the forefront of science communication, equity, diversity and inclusion initiatives and works to build the next generation of researchers for academia, industry and the entrepreneurial enterprise.
In 2021, Research Canada launched **DEEP DIVE**, our new podcast series where we talk to Canada’s dedicated and inspiring leaders in health research and innovation who are solving some of our greatest health and economic challenges! To kick off the series, we celebrated the **100th anniversary of the discovery of insulin** by Canadian researchers with Deborah Gordon-El-Bihbety (Research Canada) and Dr. David Hill (Lawson Health Research Institute and Western University). On Episode 2, we heard from the two recipients of Research Canada’s **2020 Leadership in Advocacy Awards**, Dr. Ingrid Waldron (The ENRICH Project) and for HealthCareCAN, Paul-Émile Cloutier, both of whom discussed their commitment to promoting innovation and research across Canada.

**Social Media**

Throughout 2021, Research Canada has continued to grow our social media audiences and engagement. By the end of 2021, Research Canada had over 7,000 Twitter followers and an average number of over 47,000 Impressions per month. Our Twitter followers are also highly engaged, having engaged with our tweets 40% more often compared to 2020. Our Facebook page now has almost 1,200 Likes, and these numbers are continuing to grow each day. First established in 2019, Research Canada’s LinkedIn page now has almost 600 engaged followers. Since 2018, Research Canada’s social media audience across platforms has grown by over 23%, 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 2021, 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.

**Election 2021: Your Candidates, Your Health**

In the fall of 2021, Research Canada launched the Your Candidates, Your Health 2021 Federal Election Campaign to provide its Members with the tools and resources necessary to effectively advocate for and educate 2021 Federal Election Candidates about the social and economic benefits of Canadian health research and innovation. Delivered to Members and Candidates in a fully digital format for the first time, the Your Candidates, Your Health initiative offered valuable tips, advocacy messages, and information about health research and innovation in Canada. Throughout this year’s short federal election campaign, Research Canada joined our Members in engaging with Candidates on this critical issue to Canadians’ health and wellbeing.

Following our collective advocacy efforts, the Liberal Party of Canada won its third mandate, returning to another minority government with 159 seats. The Conservative Party claimed 119 seats, the Bloc Québécois took 32 seats, the NDP won 25 and the Green Party returned with 2 seats. One independent Member of Parliament was also elected.
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.

Exclusive Events for Research Canada Members

Research Canada continued to work closely to bring political insights from Hill+Knowlton’s Michelle McLean to Members through multiple Members-only webinars, including one which unpacked the implications of the Budget for the health research and health and biosciences communities and one regarding the results of the 2021 federal election and what the results might mean for health research and innovation in Canada. We look forward to continuing to work with Michelle next year to provide our Members with the best political information and advice we can.

In November, Research Canada held its first virtual Member Networking Event, Building Bridges, where our Members were treated to Pfizer’s story of collaboration and partnership to develop one of the four COVID-19 vaccines currently approved by Health Canada and then had the opportunity to build bridges with your colleagues in other sectors.
Into the Future

Four Virtual PHRC Events Planned Through June 2022!

While we don’t yet know what 2022 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 a celebration of our Gairdners; resilience in Canadian research in the face of rare disorders; and our 2022 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.

Welcome Reception for New and Returning MPs

Following our Your Candidates, Your Health initiative and the 2021 federal election, Research Canada will hold a Welcome Reception event for new and returning Members of Parliament. Accompanied by our digital Welcome Kit provided to the entire 44th Parliament of Canada, this event will provide our Members, Supporters and Partners an opportunity to introduce their organizations to MPs and to strengthen their relationships with them.

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.