CAN2022 - Advocacy Training

Be An Effective Advocate for Science:
Be Involved & Tell Your Story

can-acn.org/advocacy
Introductions

Karun Singh
Senior Scientist, Krembil Research Institute (Krembil)
Chair of the CAN Advocacy Committee

Wai Haung (Ho) Yu
Independent Scientist, Brain Health Imaging Centre, and the Adult Neurodevelopment and Geriatric Psychiatry division
CAMH
Member of the CAN advocacy committee

Julie Poupard
Chief Operating and Advocacy Officer, CAN-ACN
(moderator)
Agenda

• Why advocacy matters

• Overview of recent CAN Advocacy efforts

• How advocacy has had an impact in other countries

• Why it is important to advocate in Canada

• What you can do to make an impact

• Q&A
Why Advocacy Matters

• Communicating with elected officials helps your issues to stand out.

• Advocacy is critical to research funding and promoting science.

• The federal government is the largest funder of basic biomedical research.

• Each year the government makes decisions on federal funding for science.

• CIHR, NSERC and SSHRC (Tri-council) budget for research grants depend on advocacy.

• CIHR Budget stagnant

Katalin Toth and Melanie Woodin in Ottawa in 2018

#NeuroAdvocate
You Should Advocate Because:

• Your expertise could help to influence science policy.
• Your MP wants to hear from his/her constituents about what matters to them.
• You are the “face” of brain science and research.
• Policymakers want to see how their support advances discovery.
## CAN Advocacy efforts

**CAN Hill week – March 21-25, 2022 – Virtual event: 25 meetings**

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<td>MP Marilyn Gladu</td>
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<td>Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos</td>
<td>Minister of Health (Meeting with Staff)</td>
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<td>MP Robert Morrissey</td>
<td>Chair of House Human Resources Committee</td>
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<td>MP Matt Jeneroux</td>
<td>Previous Shadow Minister for Science &amp; Health; Current Shadow Minister for Diversity &amp; Inclusion</td>
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<td>MP Elisabeth Briere</td>
<td>PS to the Min of Mental Health and Addictions</td>
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<td>MP Mike Lake</td>
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<td>MP Dr. Robert Kitchen</td>
<td>Senator</td>
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<td>Louise Mercier (DPOL to Senator Lankin)</td>
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<td>MP Bardish Chagger</td>
<td>Policy Advisor to Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry François-Philippe Champagne</td>
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<td>Bianca Hossain</td>
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<td>MP Maxime Blanchette-Joncas</td>
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<td>MP Lena Metlege Diab</td>
<td>PS to the Minister of National Revenue</td>
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<td>MP Peter Fragiskatos</td>
<td>Vice Chair - Standing Committee on Status of Women; Member of Health Committee</td>
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<tr>
<td>MP Sonia Sidhu</td>
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<td>MP Corey Tochor</td>
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<td>Dr. Michael Strong</td>
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<td>MP Carol Hughes</td>
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CAN Advocacy efforts

CAN Hill week – March 21-25, 2022 – 48 neuroadvocates
CAN Advocacy efforts

CAN Hill week – March 21-25, 2022 – Results

Short term:

• Identification of multiple Science champions on the Hill

• Outreach by the office of Minister Champagne for post budget reaction

• Invitations to appear in front of HoC Standing committees: Health, Science and Research (soon)

• Neuroadvocate training

Long term:

Building relationships & Increased awareness of the importance of Science funding for Canada
CAN Advocacy efforts

Budget consultations
• Permanent committee on finances (FINA) and Finance minister
• Response to budget

Engagement with House of commons permanent committees, requests to appear at studies:
• Finances
• Science and Research (new)
• Health
• Industry and Technology
Support for grass-roots advocacy initiatives – Advocacy Awards

Who can become a scientist?
University of Victoria
Education & workshops about equity diversity and inclusion issues in science

Montreal Neurological Institute Open Outreach Program
Engage with youth in remote northern communities and expose them to neuroscience education and research, with the long-term goal of attracting Indigenous students from such communities to enter neuroscience-related programs at the university level.

Convergence: Art, Neuroscience and Society - a collaborative public exhibition and symposium
Collaborative projects between neuroscientists in training and artists to engage the public in discussions on the convergence of art and science, and to promote neuroscience awareness and the importance of equity, diversity, and inclusion in science.
Advocacy training

- Hill week training
- Joint training session with CSMB
  - Kirsty Duncan last year
  - Senator Stan Kutcher April 25, 2022
- CAN Meeting training
Building support for tri-council

Canadian researchers need to build support for CIHR, NSERC and SSHRC

CAN advocates for a 25% increase in the budgets of CIHR, NSERC and SSHRC

NIH support in the US is bi-partisan and strong – How advocacy has contributed to this

Ho Yu – Experience as neuroadvocate in the US, with SfN and brainY
#NeuroAdvocate story

1) What advocacy means to me

2) Getting started and being active

3) Patience and success

Intro – how I got started in advocacy

STEM outreach

low funding opportunities

realization elected officials were remote from science and little understanding
The graph above shows the NIH budget in millions of dollars from 2002 to 2016. The budget remains relatively stable over the years, with slight fluctuations.

The graph below indicates the percentage of R01 grants funded from 2002 to 2016. The percentage decreases over the years, suggesting a trend of decreasing R01 grant support.
Comparison of 2021-2 budgets per capita and % GDP

per person ($ local currency)

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% GDP

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CIHR budget
- Actual CIHR $

 COVID related
Trending down with less $

NIH budget
- Advocacy

ACTUAL NIH $
NIH $ Adj for inflation

https://www.aip.org/fyi/federal-science-budget-tracker/
Funding for Alzheimer’s disease research

Data from NIH and HHS budget

Budget Year


$ millions funding

$- $500 $1 000 $1 500 $2 000 $2 500 $3 000 $3 500 $4 000

ARRA supplement

NAPA bill

Funding increases begin

$412 $534 $529 $448 $500 $504 $386 $431 $1 423 $1 911 $2 398 $2 869 $3 194 $3 489 $3 715

Funding for Alzheimer’s disease research
IDEAS

• DIY – invite to brain awareness and outreach events; offer to cohost and ask them to advertise thru their office i.e., City Healthy Aging Expo

• Invite for lab tours (ask permission of department and institute beforehand)

• Office visit – regional hill Day

• Develop infographics for offices as tools for promoting funding
Why should we advocate for science

Intrinsic Merits
► Funding for research
► Disease and Patient awareness
► Education and Training
► Public Support for Science
► Public Education / Information Source

Extrinsic Merits
► Develop communication skills
► Public speaking
► Consider your research cosmos
► Appreciation of government operations
Engaging with Public office: What to do?

• Knowing your audience – applies to all speaking engagements

• What is interesting to an official
  • Community first
  • Measurable impact in community
  • Appealing to personal missions of official
  • Placing science as a priority

• Funding in community
  • links to economic impact
  • recent findings from research in community
  • Local events and outreach
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Grand Total                                               $18,082,072 $7,151,234 $25,233,306

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**Research highlights from Congressional District 12**

- **Weill Cornell Medical College, June 2017**: Scientists used skin cells from patients with colorectal cancer to develop organ-like structures that can be used to test drug candidates. This process enables for the first time the development of patient-specific treatments, as well as providing a platform for modeling colon cancer, the second leading cause of cancer deaths in America and a disease that cannot be modeled in rodents (Crepo et al., 2017).

- **New York University, June 2017**: NYU researchers found that activating specific types of brain cells could reverse neuropathic pain in rodents. If applicable in humans, this could lead to the development of new treatments for neuropathic pain (Cichon et al., 2017).
Effective Advocacy

- Knowing your audience
- Impact on society—everyone generally accepts science is good, but what else
- Understanding your constituency
- Appreciating the complexity of politics and funding
- Impact of research for all Canadians
Your Story is CRUCIAL!

- You are a constituent
- Make it personal. Be the “face” of brain science and research.
  - “I count on federal research funding to... and that will make a difference in the life of people by...”
- Be concise
  - Prepare a 1–2 minute version
  - Write it down and rehearse
Now it’s your turn!

• In-person
  • Invite your MP to a lab tours, meetings, public events you organize
  • In Ottawa – apply to participate in Hill Day/week
  • Meetings with staff are just as impactful

• Individualized contact
  • Phone calls
  • Emails
  • Social Media

• MPs read hometown media
  • Letters to the Editor
  • Op-Eds

• Follow-up!

#NeuroAdvocate
Using Social Media to Communicate with MPs

Lawmakers pay attention to social media and constituent sentiment.

Tag CAN, share widely
Next Steps: Be an **Active Advocate**

- Learn about and engage your legislative offices
- Share advocacy ideas with CAN staff
- Tag us online with your advocacy activities — CAN will retweet and share
  - @can_acn | #NeuroAdvocate
- Stay involved all year!

Jaideep Bains, **Katalin Toth**, Charles Bourque, Freda Miller Beverley Orser and Jason Tetro in the Parliament building to talk about neuroscience

#NeuroAdvocate
Take home messages

• Members of Parliament listen to their constituents!

• Your story is important

• Need to keep advocating. Every. Single. Year.

can-acn.org/Advocacy
@can_acn
#NeuroAdvocate
Questions?

• Audience questions first

• Who has advocated in the past?

• Who participated in CAN Hill Week

• Do you have an elevator pitch – what is an elevator pitch?

• Would you be interested in a longer advocacy training session

• Would you consider running for office?

• Do you discuss advocacy at lab meetings?