



**CAN-ACN**

CANADIAN ASSOCIATION FOR NEUROSCIENCE  
ASSOCIATION CANADIENNE DES NEUROSCIENCES

Advocacy Committee



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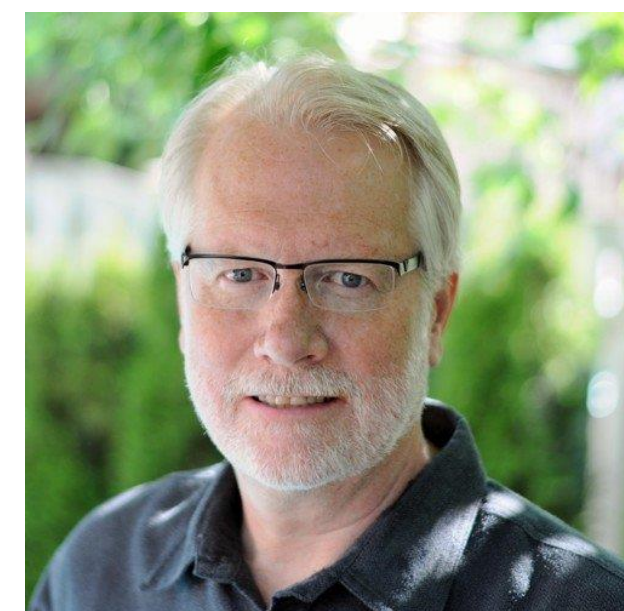
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Supported by  
CAN gratefully acknowledges  
SfN's important support of our  
initiatives. This partnership has  
strengthened our advocacy  
efforts.



# Canadian Association for Neuroscience

## Canadian Advocacy Initiatives

### 4 Keys to effective advocacy in Canada

#### 1 - Engaging politicians

CAN has participated in events **on Parliament Hill in Ottawa**, many of which featured presentations by neuroscientists. These meetings are opportunities to speak directly to Members of Parliament (MPs), and build important relations with elected officials and groups that also advocate for increased science funding.



A delegation of Canadian neuroscientists in the Canadian Parliament building for the **Neuroscience in Canada** event in February 2017. Left to right: Jaideep Bains, VP-elect, Katalin Toth, Chair of Advocacy, Charles Bourque, Speaker, Freda Miller, President, Bev Orser, Speaker, Jason Tetro, Advocacy Officer.

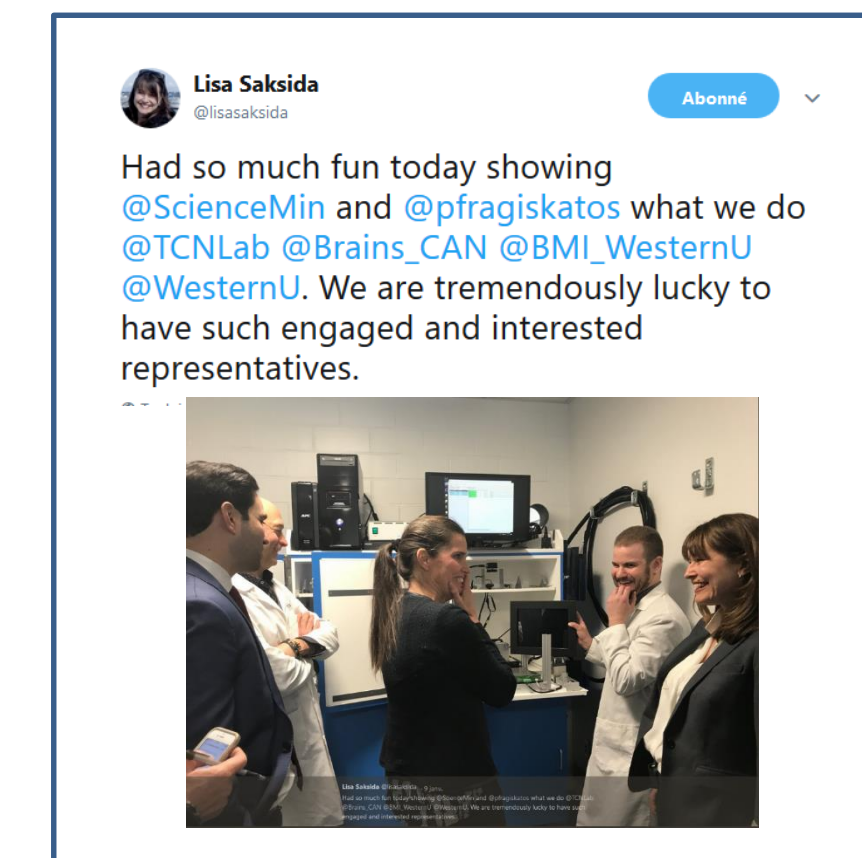
CAN encourages its members to invite their local **MPs in their laboratory**. These visits are a great way to humanize research, and show the reality and relevance of the neuroscience research being done in Canada.

Four MPs participated in the **CAN annual meeting** in Vancouver in May 2018: Joyce Murray (Liberal), Matt Jeneroux (Conservative), Elizabeth May (Green) and Fin Donnelly (New Democrat). The participation of members of all political parties in a discussion about health research support by the government shows this is an issue that crosses party lines and is important for all Canadians. All MPs highlighted the important role of researcher advocates to keep research funding at the forefront of the government's priorities.

Left to right: Melanie Woodin (incoming chair of the CAN advocacy committee), Joyce Murray, liberal MP, Matt Jeneroux, Conservative MP, Lynn Raymond, CAN President, Fin Donnelly, New Democratic Party MP, Elizabeth May, Green Party MP, Katalin Toth, Chair of the CAN Advocacy Committee, Jaideep Bains, CAN Vice-President.



The government of Canada holds **official consultations** yearly on the budget. CAN has submitted briefs to these consultations, and invited its members to participate in open mic sessions that occur across Canada.



There are also opportunities to engage with the Ministers of Health, of Science and of Finance on **social media**, and Canadian neuroscientists use these opportunities to congratulate our elected officials for their support of science.

#### 2 - Building Partnerships

**SfN**  
The very important financial support provided by the Society for Neuroscience has allowed CAN to develop a diversified advocacy program, specifically tailored to Canada's political reality.

Doug Munoz, Past President of CAN, Julie Poupart, Advocacy Officer and Katalin Toth, CAN VP in Washington DC for Hill Day 2018



CAN's participation in SfN's Hill Day in 2018 was an extremely valuable experience, as we were able to see first-hand the professional approach SfN takes to advocacy, with pre-meeting training, and on-the-ground accompaniment of the scientists as they met with elected officials and their staff.

**Research Canada**  
Through our membership in Research Canada (<https://rc-rc.ca/>), CAN has visited the Canadian Parliament and showcased neuroscience and neuroscientists to elected officials on multiple occasions.

#### Other partnerships

CAN has developed important relationships with scientific associations, such as the Canadian Society for Molecular Biosciences, who share a common goal of promoting increased science funding in Canada. CAN also has links with Universities and Research Centers – as many of our members are actively engaged with their institution, in leadership positions.

#### 3 - Sharing a message

The Government of Canada commissioned a report on the state of governmental funding of fundamental research in Canada, which was released in April 2017: Canada's Fundamental Science Review (available at <http://www.sciencereview.ca>).

Universities, research centre and associations of scientists across Canada rallied behind this report, which led to the **#SupportTheReport** social media movement in advance of budget 2018.

Through coordinated messaging, including use of the website [supportthereport.ca](http://supportthereport.ca), which was developed by CAN, the scientific community and its supporters were able to bring about a historic reinvestment in fundamental research in Canada in the latest budget.

#### 4 - Reaching out

##### Public lectures

CAN organizes yearly public lectures. The 2018 public lectures featured two leading neuroscientists who spoke on the very timely topic of addiction: Catharine Winstanley and Luke Clark. They are pictured here at a science museum in Vancouver with Tim O'Connor, Shernaz Bamji and Liisa Galea.



#### Canadian neuroscience research success stories

CAN regularly developed and published public-friendly Canadian stories of research to highlight the work of our members and its relevance to all Canadians.

Since 2016 CAN has developed over 30 stories, some of which were collected in book format and distributed to elected officials in Ottawa during our visits, and at CAN public events.

Many stories were also developed for presentations at our annual meeting and disseminated through EurekAlert! (the AAAS Global Source for Science News). These stories and other association news can be found in the CAN news section of our website: <https://can-acn.org/category/can-news>

#### Advocacy training

CAN offered an advocacy training workshop to meeting attendees on May 31st 2017 titled "All You Need Is Love...And A Little Help From Your Friends." A Science Communication and Advocacy Workshop, Jason A. Tetro, Advocacy Officer, CAN <https://can-acn.org/science-communication-and-advocacy-workshop>

#### Promoting Advocacy & Outreach initiatives

CAN has been awarding prizes for Outreach & Advocacy since 2016, at our annual meeting. These prizes serve to highlight the great work done by Canadian neuroadvocates across the country, and help publicize their initiatives, which raise awareness of the importance of neuroscience research for everyone.



2018 award winners: The Neurohistory Team. Top (left to right): Armin Mortazavi (cartoon), Jordan Shimell, Luis Bolanos, Brett Hathaway, Eli York, and David Cheng Bottom (left to right): Susan Lin, Asma Bashir, Samantha Baglot, Amy Smith, and Anne Liu Missing from the photo: Aarthi Gobinath, Jill Dosso, Katelyn Hudak, Ellen Koch, Samantha Feldman, Naila Kuhlmann, Blair Jovellar, and Matt Sacheli

### 4 Challenges & Opportunities for increased impact

#### 1 - Balancing gratefulness and need

The government of Canada announced historical investment in fundamental research in the 2018 budget, with a 25% increase. Yet Canada remains second to last in science funding in the G7. How to be thankful for the increased funding yet still ask for more?

#### 2 - Building a team of neuroadvocates

Neuroscience research has the potential to improve the lives of all Canadians. How to convince non-scientists to advocate for research with us?

#### 3 - Competing with other government priorities

The government of Canada has identified its priorities as helping the middle class thrive, and boosting the economy. How can we make health research part of these priorities?

#### 4 - Framing our message

Insider knowledge is needed to frame our message in a way that will resonate with members of Parliament, Ministers and their staff. What is the best way to present neuroscience research to touch the minds and the hearts of elected officials?

More on our website:  
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