

CAN-ACN Report to SfN GPA Committee – October 2025

The following report covers the advocacy activities of the Canadian Association for Neuroscience from **March 2025 to October 15, 2025**.

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Advocacy Objectives 2024-2025

The Canadian Association for Neuroscience's main objectives in the past months have continued to be to

- Engage directly with Members of Parliament, Senators and Parliament hill staff to promote increased investment in scientific research by the Canadian government.
- Advocate for equity, diversity and inclusion in neuroscience research in Canada
- Promote neuroscience research in Canada to the public, to show its importance for all Canadians.
- Work to promote the economic value of basic research in Canada.

CAN Advocacy Committee Leadership

CAN has an active and engaged Advocacy Committee that drives all its advocacy activities. After seven years as member and then co-chair of the CAN Advocacy committee, Dr. Liisa Galea has stepped down in September 2025. We are very proud to have recruited Dr. **Susanne Schmid**, Professor and Vice-Dean of Basic Medical Sciences at Western University as co-chair of Advocacy. Dr. Schmid participated in the 2024 CAN Hill Day and is very strong advocate for neuroscience research in Canada.

The current membership of the CAN Advocacy Committee is:

Co-Chairs: **Tabrez Siddiqui**, University of Manitoba, **Susanne Schmid**, Western University

Committee members:

John Mielke, University of Waterloo (joined October 2023)

Ciaran Murphy-Royal, Université de Montréal

Shalina Ousman, University of Calgary (joined October 2023)

Lisa Saksida, U Western

Doug Zochodne, University of Alberta, CAN Vice-President

Haung (Ho) Yu, CAMH – U of Toronto

Trainee members:

Shalini Iyer, University of British Columbia (joined October 2023)

Amy Smith-Dijak, McGill University (joined October 2023)

Leanne Young, McGill University (joined October 2023)

Review of the support offered by the Public Affairs firm hired by CAN

CAN has worked with the Public Affairs firm *Temple Scott and Associates* since August 2021. In August 2025, we have undertaken to review the services provided to see how we could expand our advocacy activities. We reached out to other firms with a Call for proposals to review possible alternatives, which was a great opportunity to renew and better target our advocacy efforts in the coming years. After careful review we have chosen to hire Santis Health, a Canadian public affairs, strategic advisory, public policy, marketing and communication consultancy firm that is dedicated to the health care and life sciences sectors. This review process was timely and allowed us to identify a better support team to help expand our advocacy initiatives.

2024-2025 Main Advocacy Targets

The CAN advocacy committee works with our membership, partners, and public affairs consultants to develop and define our advocacy targets. Based on these consultations, our current targets are:

Recommendation 1: That the Government of Canada increase the core budgets of the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR), the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council (NSERC), and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) by ten percent annually for the next five years, as recommended in the *2023 Report of the Advisory Panel on the Federal Research Support System*¹, which stressed the necessity of increased funding for investigator-initiated research and talent support. The objective of this recommendation is to bring Canada's investments in research and development to a level on par with other countries in the G7.

Recommendation 2: That the government of Canada make research on the Brain and Mental Health a national priority by investing in research to understand the brain through well-established and trusted organizations in the field.

These recommendations were taken to elected officials and policy staff during our annual **CAN Parliament Hill Day in Ottawa** on **November 5, 2024**, which we reported on in our previous report the SfN GPA committee (submitted in March 2025)

CAN submits a brief to the Department of Finance pre-budget consultations

2025-08-28

We invite you to read our submission to the Department of Finance pre-budget consultations

<https://can-acn.org/can-submits-a-brief-to-the-department-of-finance-pre-budget-consultations/>

¹ <https://ised-isde.canada.ca/site/panel-federal-research-support/en/report-advisory-panel-federal-research-support-system>



CAN-ACN

CANADIAN ASSOCIATION FOR NEUROSCIENCE
ASSOCIATION CANADIENNE DES NEUROSCIENCES

CAN submits a brief to the 2025 FINA Pre-budget consultations

2025-07-29

We are happy to share with you CAN's pre-budget brief submission for the Consultations launched by the Finance committee of the House of Commons.

https://can-acn.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/CAN-FINA-Submission-July-2025_final-1.pdf

Our two main recommendations are an effective doubling of tri-agency budget over the coming years, and increased investment in brain-related programs.



Engagement during the 2025 Canadian Federal Elections

Canada's Prime Minister, Mark Carney, was sworn in on March 14, 2025, after the previous Prime Minister announced his resignation as Prime Minister and leader of the Liberal Party of Canada. General elections were held on April 28, 2025.

CAN worked with partners to mobilize and engage our members in preparation for these elections.

Advocacy webinar – April 9, 2025 – 11AM (Eastern)

CAN partnered with Evidence for Democracy to present an advocacy webinar, open to all our members. In addition to useful tools for advocacy year-round, this event focused on strategies to engage during the federal election period.

Title: Bridging Science and Policy: Tools for Effective Advocacy



Description: Join Evidence for Democracy (E4D), Canada’s leading voice for science, evidence-informed public policy, and transparent decision-making, for an engaging and interactive workshop titled “Bridging Science and Policy: Tools for Effective Advocacy.” This session is designed to equip scientists and researchers with the knowledge and skills to become effective advocates for science. Participants will gain insights into the basics of science policy, the importance of evidence in policy-making, the fundamentals of science advocacy, and how to engage with elected officials. Whether you are new to advocacy or looking to enhance your existing skills, this workshop will provide valuable tools to make your voice heard and ensure science and evidence are at the forefront of public decision-making.

CAN election one-pager

Published April 2025

CAN prepared a federal election one-pager titled: **Elbow’s Up for Science: Advancing Canadian Science as a Cornerstone of National Prosperity and Economic Resilience: A Call to Action for Canada’s Leaders.** This document was a tool sent to all our membership and shared on our website to help our members engage with candidates during the election period. It provided talking points and arguments in support of science funding as an important pillar of the Canadian economy and the well-being of all Canadians.

Read it here: <https://can-acn.org/can-election-one-pager/>

Vote for Brain Health – a campaign by the Canadian Brain Research Strategy

(March 2025)

Millions of Canadians are affected by brain conditions—yet brain health is missing from the national conversation. With an election on the horizon, let’s change that.

Visit the <https://www.vote4brainhealth.ca/> website to view the campaign!



Evidence for Democracy – [Vote Science Campaign](#)

CAN supported and shared the e [Vote Science campaign](#), launched by Evidence for Democracy, during the 2025 federal election. The objective of this campaign was to bring attention to the importance of science as an election issue.

E4D's Vote Science portal contained a variety of resources and actions to pursue, including a letter-writing campaign, party platform analyses, a toolkit on how to engage with candidates, and potential questions to ask.

CORE-COEUR Canada – Coalition for Research Excellence – Coalition pour l'excellence en recherche

(February -April 2025)

CORE-COEUR : the Coalition for Research Excellence in Canada is an informal non-partisan coalition of researchers agreed that a robust research ecosystem is in the common interest and should be a strategic priority for the next Canadian Parliament and federal government.

CAN has contributed to this project by participating in drafting the statement of intention to vote and building the coalition website.

Visit the <https://core-coeur.ca/> website for more!

CAN endorses Science Matters! A Statement from FENS – the Federation of European Neuroscience Societies & Allies

(March 2025)

Read this important statement in support of science on the FENS website:

<https://www.fens.org/news-activities/news/statement-from-fens-stand-up-for-science>

Publication of key statistics on research funding in Canada

CAN publishes and maintains a list of key statistics on science funding in Canada.

<https://can-acn.org/science-funding-in-canada-statistics/>

According to the latest data from the OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development <http://www.oecd.org/>) Canada is the only country in the G7 whose investments in Research and Development have steadily declined over more than 20 years.

Another alarming statistic is the stagnation of the budget of the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR, the Canadian equivalent of NIH), resulting in dropping success rates in funding competitions.

The statistics compiled by CAN are used to support our asks and to inform the public and elected officials we meet in our advocacy efforts.

Promoting Canadian neuroscience success stories on our websites & Social media accounts.

CAN regularly publishes neuroscience research discoveries made in Canada on our website and social media platforms. CAN is present on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram, and uses these platforms to disseminate the success stories of Canadian neuroscientists to a wide audience. These stories and other association news can be found in the CAN news section of our website:

<https://can-acn.org/>

As reported in our previous advocacy report, we also published and maintain the Canada Brain Power website:

<https://canadabrainpower.com/>

The target audience for this website is members of the public, but also policy makers, to provide concrete examples of brain research and its impact for all Canadians. We are currently working on a model to regularly update this website.

Partnership building

CAN is continuing to build and nurture partnerships with Canadian organizations to promote investments in basic research and brain and neuroscience targeted initiatives. In the last year, CAN has partnered with the Canadian Society for Molecular Biosciences, CIHR-INMHA, Research Canada, the Canadian Brain Research Strategy, Neurological Health Charities of Canada, Canadian Neurological Sciences Federation, Brain Canada, the CORE-COEUR group and others to promote research and science in Canada.

The Society for Neuroscience remains CAN's most important advocacy partner.

Thank you for reading our advocacy report. If you have any questions, please contact the CAN Advocacy Officer, Julie Poupart at the following address: Julie.Poupart@can-acn.org. You can find more information about all our advocacy activities here: <https://can-acn.org/advocacy/>