

CAN-ACN Advocacy Annual Report – August 2025

The following report covers the advocacy activities of the Canadian Association for Neuroscience from **September 1, 2024, to August 31, 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. The current membership of the CAN Advocacy Committee is:

Co-Chairs: **Liisa Galea**, Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH) & **Tabrez Siddiqui**, University of Manitoba

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)

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.

CAN Hill Day 2024

(November 2024)

The Canadian Association for Neuroscience was proud to host its annual CAN Parliament Hill Day in Ottawa on **November 5, 2024**.

This presented an exceptional opportunity for a team of CAN advocates to meet face-to-face or virtually with members of Parliament, Senators, Parliamentary staff members and important senior civil servants to advocate for a increased support for the major federal funding agencies in Canada (Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR), Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC), Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC), and for making research on Brain and Mental Health a national priority.

It was a full day of meetings with elected officials and representatives of the main federal funding agencies to discuss how to better support scientific research in Canada.

You can read our leave-behind document, which details our message here:

https://can-acn.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/CAN_hill-day_2024_leave_behind_document.pdf

View more pictures of this event here: <https://can-acn.org/can-hill-day-2024/>

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



Pictures, left to right 1. Melanie Woodin, Lisa Saksida, **Peter Fragiskatos**, Jeff Dong, Sanjana Grover; 2. Shalini Iyer, Brady Hammond, **Laila Goodridge**, Ashlynn Swift-Gallant, Tabrez Siddiqui, Ciaran Murphy-Royal; 3. Brady Hammond, Ciaran Murphy-Royal, Julie Poupart, Ashlynn Swift-Gallant, **Maxime Blanchette Joncas**, **Andréanne Larouche**; 4. Galen Wright, Samantha Baglot, **Lloyd Longfield**, Liisa Galea, Tamara Franklin, Ciaran Murphy-Royal (names of Members of Parliament are **bold**)

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/>

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>

CAN participates in the 2024 Canadian Science Policy Conference

2024-11-26

The Canadian Association for Neuroscience was happy to participate in the Canadian Science Policy Conference in Ottawa, and in the symposium organized by the Canadian Brain Research Strategy: **"Scaling Research for Impact: From Local Insights to Global Solutions"** on November 20, 2025.

Read more about the symposium here: <https://canadianbrain.ca/canadian-science-policy-conference-brain-health-and-research-summit-2024/>

The CSPC conference was an opportunity to meet and network with leaders in science policy in Canada, and to broaden our partnership reach.

CAN submits a brief to the House of Commons Science and Research committee study on the Capstone Research Funding Organization Announced in Budget 2024 (November 2024)

Read our submission to the House of Commons Science and Research Committee study on “The Mission, Mandate, Role, Structure and Financing of the New Capstone Research Funding Organization Announced in Budget 2024”

<https://can-acn.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/CanadianAssociationForNeuroscience-e.pdf>

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 recently launched a new website to promote the economic value of brain research in Canada, modeled partly on the “Impact of NIH Research” webpage (<https://www.nih.gov/about-nih/what-we-do/impact-nih-research>).

The website is available here:

<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/>