



CAN-ACN

CANADIAN ASSOCIATION FOR NEUROSCIENCE
ASSOCIATION CANADIENNE DES NEUROSCIENCES

Edmonton, March 1, 2026

From: Dr. Douglas Zochodne,
President, Canadian Association for Neuroscience

To: The Right Honourable, Mark Carney, P.C., M.P.
Office of the Prime Minister
80 Wellington Street
Ottawa, ON
K1A 0A2

Subject: Strengthening Canada's Research Ecosystem: A Collaborative Path Forward

Dear Prime Minister Mark Carney,

On behalf of the Canadian Association for Neuroscience (CAN) and the broader health research community, we are writing to express our commitment to working with your government to secure Canada's position as a global leader in research and innovation.

Canada is home to some of the world's most brilliant minds. Our researchers are at the forefront of tackling the most pressing challenges of our time, from understanding the complexities of the human brain to developing life-saving medical interventions. However, to maintain this momentum and ensure that Canadian discoveries drive Canadian economic growth, we must address the growing pressure on our federal funding systems. We are writing to build on earlier correspondence from colleagues to your office and to reiterate the urgency of this matter.

Recent results from the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) Project Grant competitions highlight a significant opportunity for growth. Current data indicates:

The Canadian Association for Neuroscience

Douglas Zochodne, MD PhD
President
University of Alberta

Alyson Fournier, Ph.D.
Vice-President
McGill University

Soheila Karimi, Ph.D.
Secretary
University of Manitoba

Steve Prescott, PhD
Treasurer
University of Toronto

Directors:

Melanie Woodin, Ph.D.
Past President
University of Toronto

Mark Cembrowski, PhD
University of British Columbia

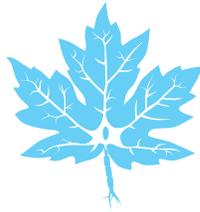
Simon Chen, PhD
University of Ottawa

Annie Ciernia, PhD
University of British Columbia

Ravi Rungta, PhD
Université de Montréal

Arezu Jahani-Asl, PhD
University of Ottawa

Craig Moore, PhD
Memorial University



CAN-ACN

CANADIAN ASSOCIATION FOR NEUROSCIENCE
ASSOCIATION CANADIENNE DES NEUROSCIENCES

- Funding rates are steadily decreasing and are now at 13.6%, down from 30% in the early 2000s, meaning the vast majority of highly-ranked, "excellent" research projects remain unsupported.
- Significant across-the-board budget reductions (often exceeding 23%) are applied to even the most successful grants to stretch limited resources.
- While our international peers continue to increase per-capita investment, Canadian researchers are finding it increasingly difficult to remain competitive on the global stage. Even longstanding laboratories with exceptional track records are at risk of closure and unable to maintain training and employment of Highly Qualified Personnel given recent inaccessibility of CIHR support.

We view the government's recent initiatives, such as the *Canada Impact+ Research Chairs* program, as a positive step toward attracting world-class talent. However, to make these investments sustainable, we must ensure that the "engine" of our Canadian research ecosystem, CIHR, is equipped to support both incoming stars and our dedicated domestic researchers.

We believe that a strategic, predictable increase in research investment, particularly in Project Operating Grants, will yield high returns for Canada by:

1. Retaining Talent: Preventing the "brain drain" of our best and brightest to countries with more robust funding.
2. Driving the Economy: Turning basic discovery into the biotechnology and health care industries of tomorrow.
3. Improving Health Outcomes: Directly translating lab breakthroughs into better care for Canadians.

Canada has an opportunity to support research in areas of expertise where our leadership is recognised across the globe. Brain research is one area in which Canada shines particularly brightly. Canadians rank amongst the most productive in the world in the field of neuroscience, and Canadian neuroscience research publications ranked in the top 4 in the world. Canadian neuroscientists work tirelessly to identify cures and therapies for Canadians who live with these diseases and conditions. It is an investment in our health, our economy, and a better future for all Canadians.



CAN-ACN

CANADIAN ASSOCIATION FOR NEUROSCIENCE
ASSOCIATION CANADIENNE DES NEUROSCIENCES

The Canadian Association for Neuroscience is eager to serve as a constructive partner to your office. We would welcome the opportunity to discuss how we can align our research goals with the government's vision for a prosperous, innovation-driven economy.

We are ready to provide expert insights, data, and stories of Canadian success to help inform a sustainable path forward for the tri-council funding agencies.

Thank you for your time and for your ongoing service to Canadians. We look forward to the possibility of a productive dialogue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. Zochodne', with a large, stylized flourish extending downwards from the end.

Dr. Douglas Zochodne,

President

Canadian Association for Neuroscience