



Life Sciences Ideas to Action Forum

Speaker Bios

September 23rd, 2025

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8:00 am - 8:30 am | **Registration & Networking Breakfast**

8:30 am - 8:40 am | **Welcome**

8:40 am - 9:00 am | **Opening Remarks**



Hon. Sylvia Jones, MPP – Dufferin-Caledon, Deputy Premier and the Minister of Health of Ontario

Sylvia Jones is the Member of Provincial Parliament for Dufferin-Caledon. She is currently Ontario's Deputy Premier and Minister of Health, where her focus is building a more connected and convenient health care system for all Ontarians. In her role, Minister Jones has worked with health care partners from across Ontario to:

- Introduce and pass the Your Health Act to ensure Ontarians have faster access to publicly funded surgeries and procedures, while growing the health care workforce.
- Introduce and pass the Convenient Care at Home Act to modernize and better integrate home care services
- Make the largest investment in pediatric care in the province's history
- Connect over 300,000 more people to primary care through the largest expansion of primary care teams since they were established in Ontario
- Break down barriers to make it easier and faster for internationally and interprovincially educated health care workers to register and start working in Ontario
- Get shovels in the ground for over 50 hospital redevelopment projects that will add more than 3,000 new hospital beds within the next 10 years.

Previously, Minister Jones served as Solicitor General, where she led Ontario's COVID-19 vaccine rollout and championed public safety initiatives, including leading the country with a \$307 million anti-human trafficking strategy and legislation.

She has lived in Dufferin-Caledon for over 30 years with her husband, David.

9:00 am - 9:45 am | **Keynote Address: Attack on Science**



Timothy Caulfield, Professor in the Faculty of Law and the School of Public Health, and Research Director of the Health Law Institute at the University of Alberta

Timothy Caulfield is a Professor in the Faculty of Law and the School of Public Health, and Research Director of the Health Law Institute at the University of Alberta. He was the Canada Research Chair in Health Law and Policy for over 20 years (2002 – 2023). His interdisciplinary research on topics like stem cells, genetics, research ethics, the public representations of science, and public health policy has allowed him to publish almost 400 academic articles. He has won numerous academic, science communication, and writing awards, and is a Member of the Order of Canada and a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada, the Canadian Academy of Health Sciences, and the Committee for Skeptical Inquiry. He contributes frequently to the popular press and is the author of national bestsellers, including: *The Cure for Everything: Untangling the Twisted Messages about Health, Fitness and Happiness* (Penguin 2012); *Is Gwyneth Paltrow Wrong About Everything?: When Celebrity Culture and Science Clash* (Penguin 2015), and *Relax, Dammit!: A User's Guide to the Age of*



Anxiety (Penguin Random House, 2020). His most recent book, a #1 national bestseller, is *The Certainty Illusion: What You Don't Know and Why It Matters* (Penguin Random House, 2025). Caulfield is also the co-founder of the science engagement initiative #ScienceUpFirst and has written, hosted and produced documentaries, including the award-winning TV show, *A User's Guide to Cheating Death*, which has been shown in over 60 countries, including streaming on Netflix in North America.

9:50 am – 10:50 am | Debate Panel: Competing Visions for Canada's Life Sciences



Moderator: Garrett Tone, Executive Director, Life Sciences, Invest Ontario

Garrett Tone is the Executive Director, Life Sciences for Invest Ontario, the province's economic development agency. Over the last 17 years, Garrett has held a variety of senior leadership roles for both large multinationals and health tech start-ups across an array of industries including MedTech, In-vitro Diagnostics and Biotech. He's worked with clients around the world, namely the US, Europe, Asia and Australia and with his experience, Garrett brings a unique, well rounded and pan-industry approach to securing high-profile investments on behalf of the province.



Parimal Nathwani, President and CEO, Toronto Innovation Acceleration Partners

A highly regarded life sciences industry leader and advocate with strong relationships across the academic and health research community, global industry, and investors, Parimal Nathwani has been with Toronto Innovation Acceleration Partners (TIAP) since its inception in 2008, first serving as Vice President and subsequently taking on the role of President and CEO in 2020. Parimal brings to TIAP more than 25 years of experience advancing health innovation including forming and scaling innovative new life sciences companies. His expertise includes technology transfer, intellectual property management, technology development, corporate finance, business development, alliance management and operations.

Parimal has been actively involved in launching and managing more than a dozen start-up companies with activities such as raising early-stage capital, establishing strategic partnerships, recruiting management and advisors, and driving in- and out-licensing activities. Under Parimal's leadership, TIAP has launched impactful programs such as LAB150, a collaboration with global companies Evotec SE and Amgen that has brought considerable new financial and mentorship resources to Ontario's life sciences ecosystem to accelerate early-stage drug development. Before joining TIAP, Parimal was a healthcare analyst with a boutique investment bank where he conducted equity research on publicly traded biotechnology companies in Canada and the U.S. He also led commercialization activities at BC Women's and Children's Hospital as part of his role at the University of British Columbia's Industry Liaison Office. Parimal started his career as a research scientist at a start-up biotechnology company involved in drug discovery targeting ABC Transporters. Parimal is currently Chair of Vasomune Therapeutics, a Director of Fibrocor Therapeutics, TRIUMF Innovations, and the Nanomedicine Innovation Network, and an Observer on the Boards of Zucara Therapeutics and Radiant Biotherapeutics. He received his MBA from Simon Fraser University and his M.Sc. from the University of British Columbia.



Alison Symington, Principal, Life Science Strategic Consulting

Alison Symington provides consultancy services to a variety of industry, academic and government clients in the area of life science strategy particularly in the development of new technologies with a focus on “omics”. She has facilitated strategic workshops, developed large scale funding proposals and worked with clients to obtain both dilutive and non-dilutive capital resulting in more than \$500M in funding over the last 10 years. Clients include large academic institutions, not for profit innovation hubs, government, foundations and SMEs as well as international clients in the UK, USA and Australia. Alison works across multiple sectors including healthcare, agriculture, natural resources and the environment. In addition, she provides expert reviews on funding proposals that have been submitted to various levels of government. Previous to starting her own consultancy business, Alison was the Vice President, Research and Corporate Development at Ontario Genomics. In this role, she was responsible not only for the development but also the management of large-scale research projects as well as external stakeholder engagement including government relations. Alison was a Professor at Seneca where she taught molecular biology and biopharmaceutical development and also coordinated the post-graduate Regulatory and Quality Assurance program. Before joining Seneca College, she was the Manager of Viral Development Laboratory and a research scientist at Sanofi Pasteur for almost 10 years, where she led several new viral vaccine development processes from bench to clinical trials. She received her Ph.D. in molecular and cell biology in 1991.



Patrick Veit-Haibach, MD, FRCPC, Deputy Radiologist-in-Chief, Joint Department Medical Imaging.

Dr. Veit-Haibach is a dual-certified Radiologist and Nuclear Medicine Physician currently working at the Joint Department Medical Imaging, Toronto. He completed Medical School in Germany, Switzerland, US and New Zealand. He spends his residency and training in Germany and mostly in Switzerland. Dr. Veit-Haibach joined the JDMI in Toronto in April 2017 as the Director of PET/MR program. Since then, he assumed the position of the Division Head Abdominal Imaging in JDMI, was also appointed afterwards as Deputy Radiologist-in-Chief and currently also serves as the Managing Director of Neuroradiology. In addition, he assumed the role of the Theranostic Lead at JDMI and is the Co-Director of the Silber Family Theranostic Centre at UHN. Dr. Veit-Haibach is Full Professor for Radiology and Nuclear Medicine at the University of Toronto. His clinical research focuses on various aspects of Molecular Imaging and Theranostics. So far, he has published >250 peer reviewed articles, authored book chapters about Molecular Imaging in >10 books and served as editor on 4 books. He holds several competitive and well as industry supported grants for Theranostics and Molecular Imaging Research. Peter holds degrees from the Schulich School of Business (MBA finance and policy) and Queen's University (M.Sc. (pathology), B.Sc. (honours life sciences)).

10:55 am - 11:15 am | Morning Networking Break

11:15 am - 11:35 am | Fireside Chat: In the Trenches - Building a Life Sciences Company



Moderator: Anne Mullin, Principal, Shift Health

Since joining Shift Health in 2009, Dr. Anne Mullin has worked extensively with leading decision-makers around the world on large strategic initiatives. She has supported the sustainability and success of numerous international product development consortia, allowed both industry and academic partners to manage risk of high-impact clinical trials, and helped clients from industry, academia and the not-for-profit sector attract capital, establish partnerships and drive innovation. Anne's clients have included the US National Institutes of Health, Gates Foundation, Canadian Institutes for Health Research, Roche, Sanofi, Merck, Stem Cell Network, Canadian Cancer Society, Toronto Global, University of Toronto and the International Vaccine

Institute. As a member of our Executive and Leadership Teams, Anne helps shape and advance our firm's corporate strategy. As a member of Research Canada's Membership Development and Programs Committee, Anne is an active champion of Canada's health research leadership. Anne graduated with an MSc from the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, a PhD in virology from The University of Cambridge and an MBA from the Richard Ivey School of Business, where she specialized in healthcare and life sciences strategy.



Matt Cahill, CFO, Nomic Bio

Matt currently serves as CFO of Montreal-based Nomic Bio, a life science tools company commercializing a proprietary proteomics technology. He has played a variety of roles in life sciences, including as an early employee at Deep Genomics, where he helped scale the company from seed stage through multiple financings and partnerships, ultimately serving as Chief Strategy Officer and board member. He continues to advise early-stage life science companies on company building, fundraising, and operations. Matt holds a

Ph.D. in Molecular Genetics from the University of Cambridge, and a J.D. and M.B.A. from the University of Toronto.

11:35 am - 12:05 pm | Panel: Ontario's Health Innovation Pathway



Andrew Guy, Director, Advanced Technologies Branch, Ministry of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade

Andrew Guy serves as Director of Advanced Technologies at the Ministry of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade. With a career spanning almost 20 years in public service, Andrew has led strategic initiatives focused on digital technology, life sciences, and innovation. He has played a key role in shaping policies and partnerships that drive innovation across the province, fostering industry partnerships, and supporting the growth of the tech and life sciences in Ontario.



Ian Le, Director, Program Management and Delivery, Supply Ontario

Ian holds a degree from the University of Toronto in Economics. He is passionate about public service and has held various leadership positions in Corporate HR, IT, Policy Development and now, Supply Chain Management. With over 25 years of public service, he is currently the Director of Program Management and Delivery, within the Strategy, Programs and Partnerships department of Supply Ontario. Part of his portfolio includes Centre of Excellence, EPMO, strategic partnerships and innovation.



Jovan Matic, Director, Health Innovation Policy Branch, Ministry of Health

Jovan Matic is the Director of the Health Innovation Policy Branch of the Strategic Policy, Planning and French Language Services Division in Ontario's Ministry of Health. Jovan leads a multi-disciplinary team, driving collaboration across the public and private sectors to accelerate health innovation adoption. Jovan is a seasoned leader with a background in implementing policy and programs to guide transformational change across the health system. Previously, Jovan supported the Ontario Health

Innovation Council and joined the Ministry of Health in 2015 to establish and help lead the ministry's first health innovation office. In 2019, Jovan was appointed by the ministry to sit on the Device Advisory Committee for Canada's Drug Agency, providing advice to advance evidence development about the optimal use of medical devices and technologies. He also serves as a Health [Fast Track program](#) advisor to Communitech, Canada's leading innovation hub. Jovan holds an Honours Bachelor of Arts in Public Policy Administration and Communications from the University of Ottawa.

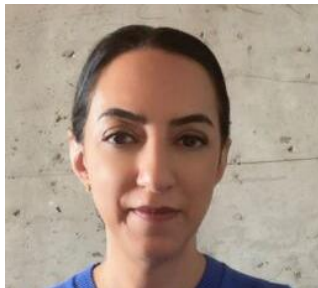


Jillian Paul, Director, Research, Analysis & Evaluation Branch, Ministry of Health

Jillian Paul is the Director of Research, Analysis and Evaluation within the Strategic Policy, Planning and French Language Services Division, Ministry of Health. Since she began with the Ministry in April 2010, she has taken on many roles related to health system improvement including:

- leading the policy and planning of Ontario Health Teams
- supporting the implementation of Ontario's quality Legislation
- designing the policy framework for the introduction of the Ministry's first Patient Ombudsman as well as the Minister's first Patient and Family Advisory Council
- designing policy and programs to advance integrated funding and quality improvement.

Previous to the Ministry, Jillian worked at Cancer Care Ontario and the Hospital Report Research Collaborative out of the University of Toronto. She is currently working to accelerate the advancement of evidence into policy and program decision making.



Arshia Raafat, Director, Health Innovation and Technology Assessment, Ontario Health

Arshia Raafat is a senior healthcare executive with deep expertise in operations, program design, and strategic innovation. As Director of Health Innovation and Technology Assessment, she leads transformative initiatives that evaluate and integrate emerging technologies to improve system performance and patient outcomes.

Arshia has played a central role in Ontario's COVID-19 Pandemic Response, providing guidance and leadership across a rapidly evolving landscape. She has led strategic initiatives within the pandemic response portfolio, established Ontario Health's framework for responding to health care supply shortages, and provided strategic oversight of critical supply shortages in collaboration with the Ministry of Health, Supply Ontario, and other key partners.

With a Bachelor of Science in Electrical Engineering and an MBA from the Schulich School of Business, Arshia brings a unique blend of technical insight and business strategy to her work. She is known for her ability to lead cross-portfolio teams, manage complex stakeholder relationships, and deliver results under pressure. Her sound judgment and risk mitigation strategies have been instrumental in navigating urgent, high-impact challenges across institutional settings.

Arshia is passionate about building sustainable, evidence-informed programs that support long-term health system resilience. Her work continues to bridge innovation, policy, and operational excellence in service of a more responsive and equitable healthcare system.

12:05 pm - 12:55 pm | Buffet Lunch (Provided)

12:55 pm - 1:55 pm | Panel: Health System Readiness & Technology Adoption



Moderator: Christine Elliott, Partner, Fasken, former Minister of Health, Ontario

Christine Elliott, former Ontario Minister of Health and Deputy Premier, is Counsel with the Fasken Health Law group in our Toronto office. With over 15 years of experience in public service, she is ideally positioned to assist clients with navigating existing and emerging complexities in the healthcare space.

During her tenure as Ontario's Minister of Health from 2018 to 2022, Christine played an integral part in overseeing the province's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. In this role, she also sponsored The People's Health Care Act and

enacted the Connecting Care Act. The Connecting Care Act gave rise to Ontario Health, a Crown agency that merged the 14 Local Health Integration Network and other agencies including Cancer Care Ontario, Gift of Life Network, eHealth Ontario and HealthForce Ontario in order to facilitate integrated care delivery systems also known as local Ontario Health teams. Christine also served as Ontario's Deputy Premier (2018 to 2022) and as Ontario's first Patient Ombudsman (2016 to 2018).

Christine, along with her husband James Flaherty (Jim) was a founding partner of Flaherty, Dow, Elliott & McCarthy. Later, Christine and Jim co-founded Abilities Centre in Whitby, Ontario, which supports and celebrates the abilities of all people and is a place where everyone belongs, regardless of their challenges. In addition, she has held positions on a range of boards in the health care sector since becoming involved as a volunteer with several charities including the Lakeridge Health Whitby Foundation, Durham Mental Health Services, and Grandview Children's Centre.

Christine graduated from the University of Western Ontario law school and was admitted to the Ontario Bar in 1980.



Connie Cote, CEO, Health Charities Coalition of Canada

Connie Côté has over twenty-five years of experience in the not-for-profit, regulatory, and charitable health sectors. She currently serves as Chief Executive Officer of the Health Charities Coalition of Canada (HCCC) and as a member of the Board of Directors for the Brockville General Hospital. In her role at HCCC, Ms. Côté leads national advocacy efforts focused on health research, health policy, and the integration of lived experience and community perspectives into health system decision-making.

Prior to her tenure at HCCC, she held several senior leadership roles at the Canadian Lung Association, where she notably directed the development and implementation of the National Lung Health Framework. Her previous

professional experience also includes roles with the Federation of Medical Regulatory Authorities of Canada and the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada.

Ms. Côté is recognized for her collaborative approach to leadership, her capacity to navigate organizational change, and her commitment to fostering strategic partnerships across disciplines and sectors.



Alaine Grand, VP Market Access & Strategic Customers, Johnson & Johnson Innovation Medicine

Alaine Grand is the Vice President, Market Access & Strategic Customers. Alaine and her team lead the development of strategies to effectively navigate Canada's drug reimbursement and health policy environment to obtain access for J&J's innovative medications for Canadian patients. Alaine has over 20 years experience working in the pharmaceutical industry. She initially began her career in the legal function and later transitioned into a business leadership role.



Gus Grant, Registrar and CEO, College of Physicians and Surgeons of Nova Scotia

Dr. Douglas A. (Gus) Grant is the Registrar and CEO of the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Nova Scotia. With degrees from Harvard in literature, McGill in law, and Dalhousie in medicine, Dr. Grant has practiced law and medicine in the United States and Canada. Dr. Grant has held leadership roles on many national and provincial organizations. He is a Past President of the Federation of Medical Regulatory Authorities of Canada and is the chair of the Committee on Medical Licensure in Canada. Dr. Grant is a co-author of the national

Guidelines on the Use of Opioids for Chronic Non-Cancer Pain and served for many years as the chair of Nova Scotia Prescription Monitoring Program. Dr. Grant was a member of the Health Canada Task Force on Medical Assistance in Dying and has testified to the Senate and to House of Commons-Senate Joint Committees on MAID. A proud Haligonian, Dr. Grant maintains an active interest in any areas where the circles of law, medicine and the humanities overlap. With knees too old for hockey, and with five children having almost all left the house, he chases golf balls and salmon without much success.



Paul Woods, MD, President and CEO, Southlake Health

Dr. Woods is a senior healthcare leader with a wide range of clinical and executive experience in both Canada and the United States, highly regarded for his proven ability to lead positive change in complex environments. Prior to joining Southlake, Paul served as the President & CEO of London Health Sciences Centre (LHSC), one of Canada's leading academic hospitals, where he led the organization to achieve Exemplary Standing with Accreditation Canada for the first time in 12 years. Under his leadership,

LHSC opened Ontario's first publicly owned ambulatory surgery centre, as well as an Office of Health Equity through a new Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Strategy.

While working state-side as Senior Vice President at the not-for-profit system Trinity Health in Michigan, Paul led strategies that improved quality of care as well as enhanced patient and provider experience. Through strong engagement with physicians, nurses and other clinicians, he implemented successful initiatives at Trinity to serve more patients and improve health outcomes while promoting sustainability. Paul has also held various other leadership roles in the health system including at Alberta Health Services, the University of Calgary's Department of Family Medicine, and the Michigan Center for Clinical Systems Improvement. His insights have been sought through Board appointments, most recently as President of the Board of Directors for Trinity Health Coordinated Care, a four state Accountable Care Organization. He has also served as a Board member of Chicago Mercy Hospital, the first chartered hospital in Chicago which focuses on serving disadvantaged populations. Originally from Ontario, Paul obtained his medical degree from Western University after attending high school in Newmarket. He received his Master of Science degree from the Institute for Health Policy and Clinical Practice at the world-renowned Dartmouth College in New Hampshire.

A father of four adult children, Paul is married to Dr. Kristen Woods, a physician executive and business coach. He enjoys staying active with his two German Shepherds, cycling, playing hockey and golf.

1:55 pm - 2:15 pm | TED Talk #1: Cell and Gene Therapies: The Future is Here – Is Canada Ready?



Cate Murray, President and CEO, Stem Cell Network

Cate Murray is President and CEO for Canada's Stem Cell Network (SCN). Cate is an experienced not-for-profit executive with a background in government relations, public policy and communications. Cate has been leading and growing the Stem Cell Network for nearly a decade. As the head of SCN, she has secured \$117M in funding that is directly leading to cutting-edge research for the benefit of patients, contributing to the growth of Canada's regenerative medicine sector, and ensuring next generation talent have the skills and expertise needed to compete on the global stage. She has introduced SCN

support for early-stage clinical trials and investments to directly support Canadian regenerative medicine biotech companies. Cate began her career in the mid-90s as a Ministerial policy advisor. After leaving politics she joined the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) where she combined her knowledge of government and communications to support Canada's health research community. Building on her experience at CIHR, Cate joined the Council of Canadian Academies as a member of the senior leadership team where she worked with over a dozen expert panels to raise awareness of their work and see its adoption into public policy.

Today, Cate leads a team of approximately 20 talented professionals, Board members, and stem cell and regenerative medicine scientists and scholars who share a passion for delivering Canadian innovations to patients. She serves on the strategic advisory committees for the Canadian Longitudinal Study on Aging



and the Praxis Spinal Cord Institute. Cate is also a member of the Public Policy Forum's Life Sciences Leadership Table and the Resilient Health Care Coalition.

Cate has an Honours Degree from King's College at the University of Western Ontario. She is a mother of two daughters and stepmother to two sons. Cate is passionate about STEAM and lives by the mantra that *every great scientist needs an arts major*.

2:15 pm - 2:35 pm | Afternoon Break

2:35 pm - 2:55 pm | TED Talk #2: How Fiscal Turmoil Can Open the Door – for Real Innovation & Collaboration



Suzanne McGurn, President and CEO, Canada Drug Agency

Suzanne McGurn is the President and Chief Executive Officer of Canada's Drug Agency. She leads the organization to deliver credible, objective evidence that helps inform decisions about the best use of drugs and health technologies in Canada. Suzanne joined the organization in July 2020 and is focused on enabling transformative change that helps support evidence-based health system decision-making.

2:55 pm - 3:55 pm | Political Pundits Panel: Inside the Policy Machine



Moderator: Bill Dempster, President, 3SixtyPublic Affairs

Bill develops and implements high-impact government relations, policy and business strategies for clients in the health and life sciences sector. For more than twenty years, Bill has drawn on deep business, legal and government experience to help clients find mutually beneficial solutions to complex regulatory, reimbursement and policy problems. Bill has previously worked for Pfizer Canada, a Member of Parliament, the United Nations and major Canadian law firms. He is fluently bilingual and has degrees in history (King's College, University of Western Ontario), law (Queen's University), and a

Master of Arts in international affairs (Norman Paterson School of International Affairs, Carleton University). Bill was called to the Bar of Ontario in 2002.



Sarah Letersky, Partner, National Health Practice Lead, Rubicon Strategy

Sarah Letersky is a Partner and National Health Practice Lead at Rubicon Strategy, a leading government relations firm advising clients in health care, life sciences, energy, and beyond. She brings over a decade of experience in public policy, communications, and government advocacy. Prior to joining Rubicon in 2020, Sarah held various senior roles in the Ford government, where she led policy development, stakeholder engagement, and crisis response across several complex files. At Rubicon, Sarah works closely with life sciences organizations to accelerate innovation, improve access, and drive health system transformation.



Jason Lietaer, President, Enterprise Canada

Jason Lietaer is the President of Enterprise Canada, a national strategic communications firm headquartered in Toronto. Jason is a talented communicator and strategist, specializing in strategic communications, crisis management, and political and marketing campaigns. A regular guest commentator on CBC's Power and Politics and other broadcasts, Jason brings unique insight into policy development at all levels of government. He has a proven track record of aligning goals and objectives of clients with those of government to create a win-win

situation. An expert in the use of digital media, Jason served as the Executive Director of the Conservative Resource Group, providing cutting-edge research and marketing and communications tools to the federal Conservative caucus and Prime Minister Stephen Harper. Jason provides strategic communications advice to some of Canada's largest organizations on highly sensitive issues. He has also provided media training and spokesperson advice to premiers, cabinet ministers, and executives in public, private and not-for-profit organizations. Jason also worked as a senior advisor to a former Ontario Premier as well as a former provincial cabinet minister and MPP. In his senior management positions for both the Prime Minister of Canada and the Premier of Ontario, he developed extensive experience in crisis communication and issues management. A veteran of campaign war rooms where he managed the quick response function for national and provincial political campaigns, Jason had to interact immediately with media as well as outside stakeholders daily and demonstrate an ability to think quickly.



Stevie O'Brien, Principal, Barrack Hill Public Affairs Inc

Stevie O'Brien is a seasoned government relations strategist, public policy advisor, and lawyer with over a decade of senior political experience. She has served as Chief of Staff to several cabinet ministers, including Public Services and Procurement Ministers Anita Anand and Filomena Tassi during Canada's COVID-19 response, leading major vaccine and medical supply procurements, and to Minister of Border Security and Organized Crime Reduction Bill Blair during cannabis legalization. Stevie's background includes senior campaign roles and advising corporations, associations, and non-profits on federal

decision-making, policy shaping, and political risk. She is also a regular political commentator for Canadian and international news outlets.



Kim Wright, Principal and Founder, Wright Strategies

Since 2005, Kim Wright has provided senior public affairs counsel to national and international clients across multiple industries. Kim has engaged in public affairs campaigns across Canada at all three orders of government. Leveraging her deep knowledge of politics and public affairs, she founded Wright Strategies in 2018. Kim has built and executed successful public affairs engagements on a wide range of issues including public health, infrastructure, technology, economic development, transportation, labour relations, and licensing frameworks. Throughout her career, she has developed a well

respected, pan-partisan approach to government relations that allows her and her clients to achieve a trusted advisor status. Kim is best known as a municipal affairs expert; however, she frequently navigates complex interjurisdictional files. She has been involved in politics & campaigning since 1990.

Kim is a frequent media commentator on political issues. She regularly appears on the CBC, TVO, CP24, Global News, SiriusXM, and CPAC.



3:55 pm - 4:10 pm | TED Talk #3: Providing Industry Feedback to Decision Makers



Christopher Alexander, Commercial Officer, U.S. Consulate (Toronto)

Chris Alexander is a Foreign Commercial Service Officer for the U.S. Commercial Service. He arrived within the U.S. Consulate in Toronto in September 2023 for a four-year tour. From 2019 to and August 2023, he served as the Principal Commercial Officer within the U.S. Consulate General in Recife, Brazil covering the 42 million people located within the eight Northeastern states, and also led Mission Brazil's Deal Team in coordinating U.S. interagency on Brazilian infrastructure projects nationwide. From 2017 to 2019, he served within the U.S. Embassy in

Beijing engaged in high level visits for the Energy and Transportation sectors while also leading the Environmental Technology and Energy Efficiency portfolios nationally for CS China.

Prior to that, Chris worked within the SelectUSA office in Washington, DC promoting and facilitating job creating investment from the Western Hemisphere into the United States. Before joining the Foreign Commercial Service in 2015, Chris was Senior Advisor at the Korea Business Development Center for the Korea Trade-Investment Promotion Agency (KOTRA) for 4.5 years where he designed and managed the South Korean business incubator program. Chris received a Doctor of Jurisprudence degree from Indiana University Robert H. McKinney School of Law, and a Bachelor of Arts degree from Wabash College. He speaks Mandarin and Portuguese. Hailing from Indianapolis, Chris enjoys basketball and cycling.

4:10 pm – 4:25 pm | Blue Ticket Competition Winner: Joint Announcement by Merck, SpinUp & PA Allsopp



Tyler Allsopp, MPP – Bay of Quinte, Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade

A lifelong Bay of Quinte resident, Tyler Allsopp was elected MPP in a by-election Sept. 19, 2024. Prior to running provincially, Allsopp served as councillor in the City of Belleville. He was first appointed to council in 2021 and was elected with the highest vote total in 2022. While on council he served as chair of the City's Police Services Board. He has also served as treasurer for the Enrichment Centre for Mental Health. A Bayside Secondary School alumnus who studied business marketing at St. Lawrence College, Allsopp spent nearly 12 years as a small business owner/operator at Doug's Bicycle in Belleville. He recently sold

the business. In 2017, he was recognized as Young Entrepreneur of the Year at the Quinte Business Achievement Awards. Allsopp has also spearheaded local initiatives including the Community Cares Holiday Meal, Doug and Henry's 50/50 Fondo for Mental Health, and the Belleville Bike Drive and supported events like the Picton Rotary's annual Lilac Ride. His first foray into politics came at age 11 as part of the Can't Wait to Skate Committee, which lobbied successfully for a skatepark. He has remained engaged in his community for over two decades since.

Allsopp lives in Belleville with his wife Jennifer and their three daughters.



France Gagnon, Vice-Principal, Research and Innovation, University of Toronto Mississauga; Professor, Dalla Lana School of Public Health, University of Toronto

Dr. France Gagnon is a senior academic leader and interdisciplinary scientist with over 20 years of experience advancing Canada's research and innovation ecosystem. As Vice-Principal, Research and Innovation at the University of Toronto Mississauga (UTM), she leads strategic research development, builds cross-sector partnerships, and champions innovation aligned with provincial

and national priorities in health, equity, economic productivity, and technology.

A Professor at the Dalla Lana School of Public Health, Dr. Gagnon's research explores the genetic and epigenetic foundations of chronic diseases, particularly cardiovascular conditions. Her work integrates population health data, genomic science, and sex-based analysis to inform drug development and precision public health. She has secured over \$10 million in competitive research funding from agencies such as the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) and the Heart and Stroke Foundation and has published in high-impact journals. Dr. Gagnon led the creation of STAGE, Canada's first training program in genetic epidemiology, helping to shape its vision and build national expertise in data science and health research.

From 2017 to 2024, Dr. Gagnon served as Associate Dean of Research at the Dalla Lana School of Public Health, where she led the expansion of the school's research portfolio and supported the launch of several interdisciplinary initiatives. Her leadership has been pivotal in promoting collaboration, equity, diversity, and inclusive excellence in research and academic governance.

Dr. Gagnon holds a PhD in Biomedical Sciences from Université de Montréal, an MSc in Experimental Medicine from Université Laval, and undergraduate degrees from the University of Ottawa. She completed postdoctoral training in Genetic Epidemiology at the University of Washington.



Frances Lasowski, CEO, 20/20 OptimEyes Technologies

Frances Lasowski is the Chief Executive Officer of 20/20 OptimEyes Technologies, where she is leading the transformation of an innovative drug delivery platform into a pipeline of ophthalmic and mucosal therapies with significant patient impact. As CEO, she is driving the company's growth strategy, clinical development plans, and partnerships, positioning OptimEyes as a new player in ophthalmology and beyond.

In addition to her leadership at OptimEyes, Frances has been deeply engaged in the entrepreneurial ecosystem, supporting early-stage companies and evaluating technologies for their commercialization potential. She has worked at the intersection of research, innovation, and business, helping to connect promising scientific discoveries with the resources and strategies needed to advance them toward market. Her combination of scientific expertise, commercialization insight, and hands-on leadership now underpins her work at OptimEyes, where she is focused on translating breakthrough delivery science into real-world therapeutic solutions.



Christopher Tan, Executive Director, Business Development, Merck

Christopher Tan is an Executive Director in Business Development & Licensing in Cambridge, MA, USA. His primary responsibility is to serve as a Merck spokesperson and scientific prospector for identifying, evaluating, and championing new research collaborations, preclinical assets, clinical assets and/ or technologies in the New England States and Eastern Canada, through licensing, acquisition, collaborations, co-development agreements, and strategic alliances.



4:25 pm - 6:00 pm | Closing Remarks followed by Cocktail Reception & Networking