



Association pour la santé environnementale du Québec
Environmental Health Association of Québec



EHAC • ASEC

Environmental Health Association of Canada
Association pour la Santé Environnementale du Canada

Accessible justice and human rights for persons with Multiple Chemical Sensitivity

A disability with growing prevalence

Manitoba

Speakers

September 19, 2024



John Molot, MD

Dr. John Molot began his focused medical practice on environmental health in Ottawa in the 1980s and is a former staff physician at the Environmental Health Clinic at Women's College Hospital in Toronto. He is an adjunct professor in the Faculty of Medicine at the University of Ottawa.

Dr. Molot has developed an expertise in indoor air quality and health effects. In the 1990s, he was appointed as Medical Advisor to the Federal Task Force on Material Emission Standards, chaired by Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) and from 2014 to 2016, he was a member of the National Research Council Task Group on Ventilation and Indoor Air Quality.

In 2007, he collaborated in developing *The Medical Perspective on Environmental Sensitivities* for the Canadian Human Rights Commission, which led to the Commission's recognition of environmental sensitivities as a disability with the legal right to accommodation. In 2013, he wrote the *Academic and Clinical Perspectives* segment of a business case proposal to build a Centre of Excellence in Environmental Health, which led to the creation of the Ontario Task Force on Environmental Health (2016-18) to which Dr. Molot was appointed by the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care of Ontario.

Presently, he is a member of the Canadian Committee on Indoor Air Quality, and medical advisor for Canadians for Properly Built Homes and the Environmental Health Associations of Quebec and Canada. He has recently published peer-reviewed articles on MCS titled, *Neurological susceptibility to environmental exposures: pathophysiological mechanisms in neurodegeneration and multiple chemical sensitivity* and *Multiple Chemical Sensitivity: It's time to catch up to the science*. Dr. Molot has also authored a book called *12,000 Canaries Can't be Wrong*.



Robert Lattanzio, LLB BCL

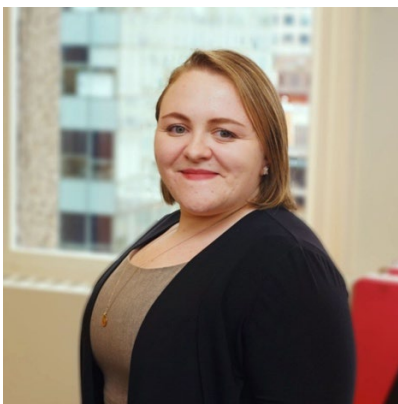
Executive Director, ARCH Disability Law Centre

Robert Lattanzio, who has served as the Executive Director of ARCH Disability Law Centre since 2015, embarked on his journey with ARCH back in 2003.

Over the years, he has made significant contributions to the field, arguing influential test cases up to the Supreme Court of Canada. As a recognized authority, Robert is a frequent guest lecturer on pivotal topics such as human rights law, education law, and disability rights.

His profound commitment to disability rights and social justice is evident in his extensive work and volunteer involvement within various equity-seeking communities. A recipient of the Law Foundation of Ontario's Guthrie Award in 2022, Robert's contributions to access to justice are unparalleled. He earned his LL.B and B.C.L. degrees with distinction from McGill University in 2003.

In his forthcoming presentation, Robert will discuss the role of medical professionals within the duty to accommodate process and highlight some key considerations when determining what information is needed within the context of human rights law.



Megan Fultz
Human Rights Advocate/Lawyer, Manitoba’s Office of the Human Rights Commissioner

Megan is in-house legal counsel for The Manitoba Human Rights Commission (“the Commission”). The Commission is an independent agency of the Government of Manitoba, responsible for carrying out the objectives of The Human Rights Code. The Commission administers Manitoba’s human rights complaints process and is also responsible for promoting and protecting human rights principles in the public’s interest, through education, research, and advocacy.

Megan has been an advocate for the equal rights, inclusion, dignity, and empowerment of all people throughout her life. She has been involved in many equality-seeking initiatives, including the organization of the inaugural Manitoba Judicial Roundtable, bringing judges together from all over the world to discuss the importance of access to justice. Megan has also served on the Board of Directors for Winnipeg’s Legal Help Centre, Barrier-Free Canada/Canada Sans Barrières, and Our Own Health Centre, and has held positions with the Women’s Legal Education and Action Fund in Ottawa as well as Working in Support of Equality Manitoba Inc.

During law school, Megan worked with the International Humanitarian Law Division of the Canadian Red Cross, ARCH Disability Law Centre, and the Feminist Alliance for International Action. She was also a Student Fellow with the Global Health Law Clinic at the University of Ottawa and a clinic placement student at South Ottawa Community Legal Services. Megan has had the privilege of speaking to a variety of groups on human rights issues and was honoured to speak about global citizenship and disability rights to an audience of 17,000 youth. She is currently pursuing her LLM in Health Law, Policy, and Ethics, with a particular focus on law and policy affecting the health of disabled people. She is a proud member of the 2sLGBTQIA+ and disability communities.

She lives in Winnipeg with her wonderful spouse and their two amazing children.



Sandra Krahn
Executive Director of the Manitoba Association for Rights and Liberties
(MARL)

Dr. Sandra Krahn is the Executive Director of the Manitoba Association for Rights and Liberties (MARL) and teaches at Menno Simmons College at the University of Winnipeg. She has a master's and Ph.D. in Peace and Conflict Studies and explores how societal structures create barriers to full inclusion in education, employment, and local communities.

Talk Description:

Individuals with Multiple Chemical Sensitivity (MCS) face systemic barriers across education, healthcare, employment, and legal systems. These barriers include inadequate accommodations in educational settings, insufficient recognition of MCS within healthcare, challenges in finding accommodating workplaces, and gaps in legal and policy frameworks for disability accommodations. There's a growing need to move from a legal-focused approach to an ethics of care, emphasizing individual needs and acknowledging broader environmental factors contributing to MCS. Addressing these barriers requires collaborative efforts among societal institutions to provide tailored support, raising public awareness, and minimize chemical exposures for those affected by MCS.



Heather Walkus

The Council of Canadians with Disabilities is now 48 years old and our current National Chair, Heather Walkus, brings a lifelong personal understanding and expertise of the intersection of disability and identity in her work based on Disability Justice, Human Rights and Community Development principles.

Through that work she clearly articulates that it is the people impacted that must have the agency over their voice and supported to build capacity, in which to develop and have that voice listened to. *“You cannot make substantive and effective systemic changes by using the same beliefs in systemic patterns and organizational practices that has led to the oppression. The support and use of the medical charity model and systemic oppression structures that are based on ableism, racism, queer phobia, misogyny, agism, and exclusion and many demeaning practices including the acceptance of poverty, unattainable basic housing and inaccessible housing, need to evolve and change.*

There are many ways of knowing and organizing from many cultures that are not seen as valid and must be utilized to support change”. Heather believes we are all able bodied. “All of our bodies are able as they are and it is the environment, attitudes and systems that disable us and push us to the margins. There is nothing wrong with us, and the way forward to inclusion must have that fundamental belief as a principle to engage with all of us from community. That is the only way to bring about a respectful and knowledgeable process and develop meaningful practices of engagement with community to listen, utilize, and learn from those voices and knowledge to make the change that is necessary for true inclusion in our society.”



Rohini Peris
President and CEO, ASEQ-EHAC
Community organizer for over 30 years

Rohini Peris is the President and CEO of the Environmental Health Associations of Québec and Canada.

For close to 30 years, she has volunteered, managed, and grown the Québec group to around 2000 members, built bridges with similar groups in Canada and around the world, including doctors, scientists, universities, and government, to raise awareness about the disability of multiple chemical sensitivity (MCS), and she advocates for help and support this population.

She has presented many workshops across Canada and has developed programs, websites, workshops, and webinars on all aspects, including workplace accommodations for MCS. In 2011, she collaborated with the University of Québec in Montreal (UQAM) and TÉLUQ to develop an education and awareness program funded by the Ministry of Education, Québec.