



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



MULTIPLE CHEMICAL SENSITIVITY: THE STRATEGIC PATH FORWARD

ROUND TABLE

MARCH 25, 2024

PANELISTS



Philip Rizcallah – Chief Executive Officer

Philip Rizcallah is the Chief Executive Officer and Deputy Head of Accessibility Standards Canada. Since 2019, he has led this departmental corporation in setting initial policy, receiving accreditation, and establishing strong governance practices. With his team, he spearheads the development of accessibility standards to deliver on the organization’s mandate to help achieve a barrier-free Canada by 2040.

Between 2014 and 2019, Mr. Rizcallah led teams at the National Research Council of Canada as Program Director, and prior to that as Director for the Building Regulations Resource Unit. He provided both strategic direction and technical and policy advice to Codes Canada, which covers accessibility requirements for buildings.

Known for his ability to manage programs involving multidisciplinary teams effectively and efficiently, Mr. Rizcallah has led strategic project proposals, secured financial commitments, and built teams to execute these projects. He has developed and leveraged client relationships with many strategic government and construction industry partners, including Canadian accessibility groups.

Between 2010 and 2018, Mr. Rizcallah was a key player with the Regulatory Reconciliation and Cooperation Table (RCT) as a federal representative with the Federal Provincial Territorial Working Group. While in this role, he worked to align National Codes in the country and introduced codes accessible free of charge. He also contributed to the development of the ongoing RCT Agreement, which will be key in harmonizing accessibility requirements across Canada.

A registered Professional Engineer in the province of Ontario, Mr. Rizcallah holds a Bachelor of Mechanical Engineering (Technical University of Nova Scotia) and a Bachelor of Science, Honours Mathematics (Dalhousie University).



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.



Heather Walkus

The Council of Canadians with Disabilities (CCD) 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.”



William Adair

William Adair is the Executive Director of Spinal Cord Injury Canada. The organization assists people with spinal cord injuries and other physical disabilities in achieving independence, self-reliance and full community participation.

Mr. Adair has extensive professional and community experience in the areas of healthcare and disability. He is a founding member of the Canadian Disability Policy Alliance, the Ontario Neurotrauma Foundation and the Dorothy Ley Hospice. He has recently lent his leadership and expertise to the Government of Canada through the Federal Accessibility Legislation Alliance, the Working Group on Alternate Format Materials and the Parliamentary Precinct Advisory Panel.

Mr. Adair is on Minister Kherra's Disability Advisory Group and is a member of the Board of Directors at Accessibility Standards Canada.

Mr. Adair has a Bachelor of Science and is a graduate of the Executive Leadership Course on the Management of Non-Profit Organizations (Harvard University). He received a Meritorious Service Medal in 2016 from Canada's Governor General.



**Strategic Advisor and Coordination
La Confédération des organismes de personnes handicapées du Québec (COPHAN)**

André Prévost has worked for nearly 40 years in public health, notably as director of customer service at CHA Hôtel-Dieu de Lévis, CSSS analyst, director of social services at Agence de santé et des services sociaux de la Côte-Nord and coordinator of the public health department. He holds a doctorate in measurement and evaluation, a master's degree in political science, a bachelor's degree with a major in political science and a minor in economics, as well as a certificate in business administration. He has been a lecturer at Université du Québec à Rimouski and Université Laval, and currently teaches at ÉNAP. Most recently, he was political advisor to the Minister responsible for Seniors, and then to the Independent Member for Bonaventure. He was corporate affairs advisor to the general management of the Conseil québécois d'agrément, visitor evaluator and team leader at Accreditation Canada. He is currently Strategic Advisor and Coordinator for **COPHAN**.





John Molot, MD

Dr. John Molot began his focussed medical practice on environmental health in Ottawa in the 1980s. 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.

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*.



Rohini Peris

President and CEO

Environmental Health Associations of Québec and Canada

For close to 30 years, she has volunteered, managed, and grown the groups 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.



Michel Gaudet
Vice-President & Executive Director
Environmental Health Associations of Québec and Canada

Michel Gaudet has worked on environmental health issues for close to thirty years. He is the Vice President and Executive Director of the **Environmental Health Associations of Quebec and Canada**.

In 2012 he collaborated with the University of Quebec in Montreal (UQAM), TELUQ and SAC of UQAM to develop a project on the biological, social and legal aspects of environmental sensitivities entitled 'When the environment makes you ill: Need to understand, need to act'. He has been trained by the University of Québec in Montreal (UQAM) and has given many workshops on this project in more than ten regions of Quebec.

Presently, his work with the Environmental Health Associations of Québec and Canada puts him in contact with people who are disabled with multiple chemical sensitivities. Michel works closely with expert physicians at the environmental health clinic at the University of Toronto, and other expert physicians and scientists.

He has also participated as a speaker at many conferences in the United States and Canada