



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



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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

April 25, 2024

Speakers

Saskatchewan



John Molot, MD

Dr. John Molot began his focussed medical practice on environmental health in Ottawa in the 1980s and has been a staff physician at the Environmental Health Clinic at Women's College Hospital in Toronto since 2007. 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*.



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.



Christine Johnston

Admissions and Education Counsel, Law Society of Saskatchewan

Christine Johnston is Admissions and Education Counsel at the Law Society of Saskatchewan. Her role includes working in continuing professional development, publications, and admissions, as well as with the Law Society's Truth and Reconciliation Advisory Group. She previously worked in bar admissions education, in private practice, and as in-house counsel.



Robin Mowat

Director of Systemic Initiatives at the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission

Robin Mowat is the Director of Systemic Initiatives at the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission. He is a graduate of the University of Saskatchewan. Previously, he served with the Canadian Forces Army Reserve for 21 years, retiring as a Warrant Officer in 2015, and worked in communications in the public and private sectors before joining the Commission in 2012.



Julian Bodnar

Julian Bodnar is a former member of the Law Societies of Saskatchewan and Alberta. He began practising law in 1982. Much of his practice was in the areas of public interest law, including matters relating to the environment and to disability. He also strived to be settlement focused on meeting client needs. From 2012 to 2022 he worked with the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission as a Mediator and Lawyer. In keeping with his personal commitment to “*never retire*”, he continues to provide mediation, arbitration, and conciliation services in workplace related, as well as other civil related matters. As a person who has lived all his life having to face *circumstances of disability*, he also continues to maintain and pursue a personal and professional interest in advocating for improved awareness and accommodation of disability needs, interests, and capabilities. In that vein, he provides awareness and equality consulting, advocacy, speaking, and training services. Having now to also face *circumstances of aging*, he similarly provides consulting services in relation to aging and elder awareness and equality.

Julian believes that in our pursuit of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, it is critical that we seek an understanding of the dynamics of human difference, especially when it comes to the realms of understanding and relating to disability. His presentations and work are centered around:

***Bringing Disability Perspectives to Life for
Understanding and Relating to Disability Better***



Heather Walkus

National Chair, Council of Canadians with Disabilities

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 & CEO
Community Organizer for over 30 years

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

For more than 30 years, she has volunteered, managed, and grown the 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.