



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

## National Conference

### Speakers

**Breaking Barriers:  
Advancing Accessibility and Human Rights for People  
with  
Multiple Chemical Sensitivity (MCS)**

**November 21, 2024**

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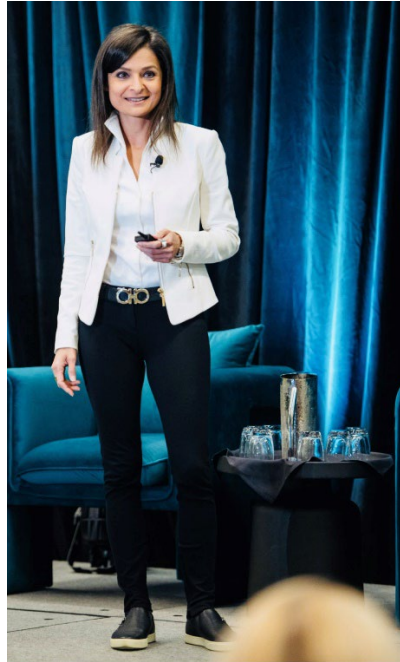


**Dino Zuppa**

**CEO, Accessibility Standard Canada**

Dino Zuppa, currently the CEO, also oversees the development of equity-based accessibility standards supported by pioneering research funded by Accessibility Standards Canada's grants and contributions program.

Dino's career spans more than 25 years. He led a number of strategic initiatives at all orders of government in Canada, and at an American University. Dino holds a Ph.D. and lives in Ottawa with his wife and two kids



## Renu Bakshi

### **Awarded former journalist, News Anchor Top 500 Most Influential Business Leaders in BC (2023)**

Named among *Business in Vancouver's* **Top 500 Most Influential Business Leaders** for her local and global influence, **Renu Bakshi** was born in Vancouver in 1970 and raised on a blueberry farm.

At age 18, she became a journalist and worked her way into a job at **CTV News** (British Columbia) becoming an awarded top-story journalist and anchor. After 21 years in the business – and at the pinnacle of her career – she left the industry in 2010.

She had good reasons. Her mom was dying of never-smoker lung cancer, having suffered from MCS unbeknownst to her for most of her life. And the open-air newsroom with heavily perfumed on-air personalities was making her sick.

For 14 years, she has been a consultant specializing in communication training and crisis management. Before long, Renu's reach became global. Some of the clients she's guided include European executives from **Google, Aston Martin, and Estée Lauder.**

Renu has spoken hundreds of times to audiences around the world for 30 years. The MCS conference will be the first time she publicly addresses her disability.



## **Paul Lupien**

**President, La Confédération des organismes de personnes handicapées du Québec (COPHAN)**

Paul Lupien is President of COPHAN.

He is also a board member of INEEPSH and REQiS. He has been working for the inclusion of people with disabilities for many years. He has also worked for other NPOs, providing advice on individual and collective advocacy.

Before coming to terms with a rare disease that forced him to use a wheelchair, he was an entrepreneur in the restoration business. He is also a person who has crisscrossed Québec during his many past professional occupations.



## **John Molot, MDA**

**Adjunct Professor, Faculty of Medicine, University of Ottawa**

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 is a disability rights lawyer and the Executive Director of ARCH Disability Law Centre. Robert joined ARCH as an articling student in 2003, and continued his legal practice at ARCH as a staff lawyer until taking on the position of Executive Director in 2015.

Robert has acted as legal counsel in test case litigation at all levels of court, including the Supreme Court of Canada, and has made law reform submissions to various levels of government, committees, and administrative bodies. He has been appointed to numerous advisory committees, and has written and guest-lectured on diverse topics including equality and human rights law, disability rights, administrative law, education law, capacity and supported decision making, legislative reform, and medical assistance in dying. He has delivered extensive rights education training to communities of persons with disabilities and continuing legal education to the legal profession. Robert received his LL.B and B.C.L. law degrees with distinction from McGill University in 2003. Robert has a long-standing interest in disability rights and social justice, with extensive work and volunteer experience within disability communities and other equity seeking communities. Robert is the 2022 recipient of the Law Foundation of Ontario's Guthrie Award for his contributions to advancing access to justice.



**Devin Glim**  
**ARCH Disability Law Centre**  
**Stagiaire en droit**

Devin Glim joined ARCH in August 2023 as part of Osgoode Hall Law School's Disability Law Intensive program and returned to ARCH in August 2024 as an Articling Student. Devin was a strong advocate for disabled students and the disability community during his time at Osgoode, holding various leadership roles in social-justice oriented organizations, including as president of the Disability Collective of Osgoode. Prior to law school, Devin completed his undergrad at McMaster University in the Honours Life Science program, where he developed a passion for health policy development. Devin has also worked in a variety of leadership roles with the Disability Justice Network of Ontario.



**Zoë Merkley**  
**Policy Analyst, Canadian Human Rights Commission**

Zoë Merkley joined the Canadian Human Rights Commission in 2022 as a Policy Analyst with the Policy, Research and International Division. In this role, Zoë supports the Commission’s mandate to advance human rights in Canada, for example, by developing public resource guides and providing public policy advice, including to the Commission’s complaints assessment division. Her passion for disability justice and human rights arose from her studies in law and lived experience with disability.

Zoë has a Bachelor of Arts in Honours History from Wilfrid Laurier University, a Juris Doctor from the University of Ottawa Faculty of Law, and a Graduate Certificate in Human Resources Management from Algonquin College.



## **Bruce Zevallos**

### **Paralegal at RCR Legal Services Professional Corporation**

Bruce Zevallos is a paralegal at RCR Legal Services Professional Corporation, a firm in Toronto, Ontario, where he practices in the area of Workers' Compensation law in Ontario for 15 years. For the past 15 years, Mr. Zevallos has advocated for injured workers in their claims and appeals at the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) and the Workplace Safety and Insurance Appeals Tribunal (WSIAT). As a result of this experience, Mr. Zevallos has special expertise in presenting appeals before the WSIB and WSIAT. Some noteworthy decisions at the WSIAT include:

Decision No. 1346/17, 2017 ONWSIAT 1377 (CanLII) -08-May-2017: HVAC Mechanic's acute occupational exposure to a mist of oil and refrigerant R134A was a significant contributing factor in the development of his cardiomyopathy.

Decision No. 3095/17, 2018 ONWSIAT 1973 (CanLI) -15-Jun-2018: Autobody Mechanic's permanent rheumatoid arthritis related to silica dust occupational exposure rated in accordance with spinal cord ratings in Chapter 4.1b of the AMA Guides.

Decision No. 174/21R, 2023 ONWSIAT 563 (CanLII) – 12-Apr-2023: The threshold test for reconsidering the determination of the worker's NEL award for an organic brain injury and headaches had been met.



## 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 and CEO, ASEQ-EHAC**  
**Community organizer for over 30 years**

Rohini Peris, President and CEO of the Environmental Health Associations of Québec and Canada, has dedicated nearly three decades to expanding the group, forging national and global connections, and advocating for Multiple Chemical Sensitivity (MCS). Her efforts include workshops, programs, and webinars covering all aspects of MCS, supported by collaborations with institutions like the University of Québec in Montreal (UQAM) and TÉLUQ.

She leverages her lived experience to support individuals with MCS, contributing to best management practices and advocating for legal recognition. In 2006, she collaborated nationally for the recognition of environmental sensitivities as a disability protected under Canadian law.

Rohini leads the Empowering Community and Removal of Barriers (ECRoB) project and the Accessible Indoor Air in the Built Environment research project, advocating for MCS accommodation measures in numerous workshops nationwide. Both projects have been funded in part by the Government of Canada. Over two years through the ECRoB project she has participated in organizing and providing accommodation measures for MCS in over 100 workshops across Canada that were provided to Human Rights Commissions, Law Societies, civil society, medical students, health professionals, and several government bodies.

A passionate advocate for MCS individuals and equity, Rohini collaborates with diverse stakeholders to drive policy reforms, increase awareness, and build supportive communities, striving for a society that accommodates MCS needs through collaborative advocacy and community organizing.