



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

ECO-JOURNAL

December 2024

News from ASEQ-EHAQ

Dear members and friends,

As we step into the final month of 2024, we reflect on a year filled with both challenges and accomplishments.

Amid the unfolding events of the year, ASEQ-EHAQ remained steadfast in its mission to protect environmental health, with a dedicated focus on Multiple Chemical Sensitivity (MCS). Our achievements this year highlight the positive strides made and reinforce our commitment to keeping MCS advocacy and awareness at the forefront.

As we look ahead to 2025, we renew our pledge to prioritize this vital work and invite you to join us on this journey. Your support has been invaluable, and with your continued participation, we can achieve even greater progress.

News on upcoming events

- Please join us for a [festive holiday celebration](#) on Friday, December 13th at 6:30 PM. To register, [please click here](#).
- SAVE THE DATE! Read about our [International Conference on MCS](#) to be held on May 1 and 2, 2025. If you would like to volunteer, please [contact us](#).

If you missed the November 21st event, *Breaking Barriers: Advancing Accessibility and Human Rights for People with Multiple Chemical Sensitivity*



514-332-4320



bureau@aseq-ehaq.ca
office@aseq-ehaq.ca



(MCS), we will be releasing event videos in the coming days and will notify you via email. Below is a summary of a significant presentation from Mr. Dino Zuppa, CEO of Accessibility Standards Canada, highlighting critical insights for MCS.

Dino Zuppa, CEO of Accessibility Standards Canada (ASC), opened his presentation by acknowledging the Environmental Health Associations of Québec and Canada for their leadership, award-winning work, and commitment to accessibility and inclusion, particularly for individuals with Multiple Chemical Sensitivity (MCS). He emphasized ASC's alignment with ASEQ-EHAQ's goals and highlighted their collaborative efforts to include MCS in national accessibility standards.

Mr. Zuppa outlined ASC's mandate under the Accessible Canada Act to develop accessibility standards, fund and conduct research, and recommend policy and regulatory changes. He positioned ASC as a global leader in accessibility, with an inclusive approach ensuring 50% of those involved in standards development and 40% of ASC staff identifying as persons with disabilities.

A significant focus of Mr. Zuppa's presentation was ASC's technical work on integrating MCS-specific criteria into accessibility standards, particularly in the built environment. In partnership with ASEQ-EHAQ, ASC is addressing requirements for housing and other built spaces to meet the needs of individuals with MCS. The aim is to embed MCS considerations into all ASC standards, such as employment and transportation, ensuring systemic and widespread inclusion.

Mr. Zuppa also encouraged participation in ASC's work through technical committees, public meetings, and research collaborations. He concluded by emphasizing that accessibility benefits everyone and called for collective efforts to create equitable environments for all Canadians. ASEQ-EHAQ's



contributions were highlighted as integral to advancing these efforts, particularly in shaping MCS-specific standards.

Other notable speakers included:

- **Renu Bakshi**, a public figure who delivered a heartfelt and eloquent presentation about living with MCS. Her story resonated deeply, and we look forward to collaborating with her in the future to advance MCS advocacy.
- **Dr. John Molot** and **Rohini Peris** provided an insightful overview of MCS, highlighting the key takeaways from the ECRoB project.
- **Robert Lattanzio**, Lawyer and Executive Director of ARCH Disability Law Centre, and **Devin Glim**, Articling Student at ARCH Disability Law Centre, presented the findings of the ECRoB Legal Research.
- **Zoë Merkley**, Policy Analyst at the Canadian Human Rights Commission, discussed accommodations for MCS, focusing on scent-free and least-toxic products.
- **Bruce Zevallos**, Paralegal and Injured Worker Advocate, shared details about his recent success in winning three cases related to MCS. For those seeking assistance, his contact information is provided at the end of this article.
- **Michel Gaudet**, participated in the panel discussion.

Sincere thanks to our partner, ARCH Disability Law Centre, for providing essential accommodations for the November 21 event, including ASL, LSQ, and CART. We are deeply grateful for your ongoing supportive partnership.



Immediately following the November 21st event, key takeaways were shared with Ministers from key government departments to advocate for inclusion and accessibility for individuals with MCS.

We are delighted and proud to share this outstanding news with you, hoping it brings warmth to your hearts this joyful season and sets an inspiring tone for the year ahead. ASEQ-EHAQ is deeply grateful to its funders, partners, supporters, members, volunteers, staff, and its extremely supportive board, whose dedication and collaboration have made this achievement possible.

Stay Healthy This Holiday Season! The holidays are a time of joy and connection, but they can also bring added stress and exposure to triggers. Remember to prioritize your well-being!

With gratitude and hope for the year ahead.

Yours in health,

Rohini Peris, *President and CEO*

Michel Gaudet, *Executive Director*

Contact information for Bruce Zevallos

RCR Legal Services Professional Corporation has been a trusted leader in Workers' Compensation law in Ontario since 2011, with a strong focus on occupational disease claims and appeals. Their expertise includes successfully securing benefits for clients, such as two public nurses with Multiple Chemical Sensitivity (MCS), as demonstrated in the recent WSIAT decisions:



Decision No. 953/21, 2024 ONWSIAT 1319 (CanLII),
<https://canlii.ca/t/k7mcp>

Decision No. 954/21, 2024 ONWSIAT 1318 (CanLII),
<https://canlii.ca/t/k7mcq>

If your WSIB claim and benefits for MCS have been denied, contact Bruce to help you navigate every step of the process and fight for the benefits you deserve.

Bruce Zevallos, Injured Worker Representative, RCR Legal Services Professional Corporation, Defending the Rights of Injured Workers.

Phone Direct (416) 222-2213,

Address: 55 University Avenue, Suite 1100, Toronto, ON M5J 2H7

Website: www.rcrlegalservices.com
