

**Future Aligned**  
A Platform for Partnership

2024–2025 Annual Report





## Board of Directors and Committees

### Patron

The Right Honourable David Johnston, C.C.,  
C.M.M., C.O.M., C.D.  
Former Governor General of Canada

### Chair

Naomi Azrieli, O.C., DPhil  
Chair & CEO, The Azrieli Foundation  
● AFIRM, ● GNEC, ● RC, ● SC

### Directors

Shernaz Bamji, PhD  
Professor & Co-Director, Djavad Mowafaghian  
Centre for Brain Health,  
University of British Columbia  
● RC

### Wayne E. Bossert

Deputy Chairman & Global Head of Ultra-High-  
Net-Worth Clients & Canadian Private Banking,  
RBC Wealth Management  
● AFIRM-Chair, ● SC

### Anne-Marie Boucher, L.L.B., M.Fisc.

Co-Founder & Member of Investment  
Committee, BCF Ventures  
● GNEC-Chair

### France Chrétien-Desmarais, C.M.

Founding Member & Executive President of  
Precinomics Health Solutions Canada Inc.  
● SC-Chair

### Graham Collingridge, PhD, CBE, FRS

Professor & Director, Tanz Centre for  
Research in Neurodegenerative Diseases,  
University of Toronto  
● RC

### Peter P. Dhillon, OBC

CEO of the Richberry Group of Companies  
● SC

### Jane Enright

Canadian Author & Wellness Expert,  
CEO of My Super Awesome Life Inc.  
● SC

### Mark Krembil

President & Chief Executive Officer,  
Krembil Foundation  
● AFIRM, ● GNEC

### Blair Levinsky

President & CEO, Waratah Capital Advisors Ltd.

### Ravi Menon, PhD, FCAHS, FRSC

Professor & Co-Scientific Director, BrainsCAN,  
Western University  
● AFIRM, ● RC

### Kate Pal, HBCom, CLU, FEA, CFP, CHS

President & Estate Planning Advisor at  
Pal Insurance  
● SC

### David S. Park, PhD, FRSC

Professor & Director, Hotchkiss Brain Institute,  
University of Calgary  
● RC-Chair, ● SC

### Joel Reitman, C.M.

Founder & President of Jilcoy Capital Corp.  
● AFIRM

### Lawrence M. Tanenbaum, O.C. / Vice-Chair

Chairman & CEO, Kilmer Van Nostrand Co. Ltd.;  
Chairman, Maple Leaf Sports & Entertainment Ltd.

### Franco J. Vaccarino, PhD, FCAHS

Former President & Vice-Chancellor,  
University of Guelph  
● RC

### External Committee Members

Edward A. Fon ● RC

Sheena Josselyn ● RC

Lawrence Korngut ● RC

Milka Lukovich ● RC

Darren Edward ● SC

Andrea Frossard ● SC

Paula Murphy-Ives ● SC

### Legend

● Audit, Finance, Investment & Risk Management  
Committee Member (AFIRM)

● Governance, Nominating & Ethics Committee  
Member (GNEC)

● Research Committee Member (RC)

● Sustainability Committee Member (SC)

**Table of Contents**



- 4** Our Chair’s Message
- 6** Our Year in Review
- 8** Our President & CEO’s Message
- 10** News & Activities
- 12** Our Allied Approach
  - 12 Connect, Convene, Converge
  - 13 Heartfelt Generosity, Brian Health Progress
  - 15 Full Circle Funding
- 16** Our Funded Research
  - 16 Innovation Partners
  - 18 Health Charity Partners
  - 20 Commercialization Partners
  - 21 Platform Partners
- 23** Our Journey
- 24** Our Donors
- 25** Our Financials

**Our Vision**  
Bold Science for Brain Health

**Our Mission**  
Accelerating, Amplifying and Funding  
Brain Research Across Canada

**Our Chair's Message**

# Many Wings, Greater Heights



As I conclude my tenure as Chair of Brain Canada, I reflect with immense pride on our collective achievements. Over the past eight years, Brain Canada has solidified its position as a pivotal funder, convenor, and catalyst within the national brain research ecosystem. Our commitment to fostering interdisciplinary collaboration has been instrumental in advancing understanding, diagnosis, and treatment of brain conditions.

A highlight of my tenure has been the establishment of the Future Leaders in Canadian Brain Research program, launched in 2019 with the generous support of the Azrieli Foundation and other partners. I am enormously proud of this initiative, which has empowered more than 100 early-career researchers with the resources to pursue bold and innovative research directions. This program not only nurtures emerging talent but also ensures a robust pipeline of scientific excellence for the future.

This year alone, Brain Canada awarded 169 grants, supported more than 484 researchers, and launched 22 competitions. These milestones were achieved through strategic partnerships with private foundations, health charities, industry leaders, and provincial governments. Our work is made possible thanks to the Canada Brain Research Fund, our unique arrangement with the federal government through Health Canada, exemplifying our role as a collaborative platform and bridge builder in science.

While I step down as Chair this year, I am delighted to continue serving as a Director on the Board. I extend my deepest gratitude to our dedicated team, partners, researchers, and donors. Together, we have laid a strong foundation for continued progress in brain health research, both in Canada and globally.

Warm regards,

**Naomi Azrieli, O.C., DPhil**  
Brain Canada Chair



We are at a critical point in scientific history, poised to make major discoveries about the brain which will improve human lives. Brain Canada plays a vital role in this progress, acting as a trusted partner that unites a nation-wide community of scientists, clinicians, stakeholders, and funders.”

---

Naomi Azrieli, O.C., DPhil  
Brain Canada Chair

## Our Year in Review

## Common Bonds, Uncommon Impacts

April 1, 2024 – March 31, 2025

## Inputs

**\$37.4M**

invested in research

**119**

active partners

**51**

engagement events with stakeholders

## Process

**22**

competitions launched

**149**

clinicians and researchers who took part in Brain Canada-led peer review panels

**26**

peer review panels held

**3**

new programs launched

## Results

**169**

grants awarded

**484+**

researchers supported

**59%**

proportion of projects w/ SGBA+ and/or EDI as a focus or consideration

**9**

Black scholars supported through a targeted partner program

**141**

institutions supported

## Our Year in Review

April 1, 2024 – March 31, 2025

### Outputs

**459**

students, trainees and highly-qualified personnel engaged

**25**

active clinical trials supported by Brain Canada (and other funders)<sup>1</sup>

**9,511**

people accessing Brain Canada-funded clinical trials<sup>2</sup>

### Outcomes

**197**

peer-reviewed publications resulting from Brain Canada funding

**190,000+**

citations of Brain Canada-funded publications (cumulative since 2011)

**7**

patents, licences, intellectual property rights registrations, and spin-off companies resulting from Brain Canada funding

<sup>1,2</sup>As reported in the ClinicalTrials.gov database

**Our President & CEO's Message**

# By Playing Together, We Change the Game



In this year's Annual Report, as we celebrate more than a quarter-century of bold science for brain health, we honour our legacy of fostering partnerships that drive transformative brain research. Our success is deeply rooted in collaboration—uniting researchers, institutions, funders, and communities to accelerate discoveries that improve lives.

I extend heartfelt thanks to our outgoing Chair, Dr. Naomi Azrieli, whose visionary leadership has been instrumental in shaping our strategic direction. Her commitment to initiatives like the Future Leaders in Canadian Brain Research program has been pivotal in cultivating the next generation of neuroscientists. We are fortunate that she will continue to contribute her expertise as a valued Director on our Board.

This past year, Brain Canada awarded a total of 169 grants. Of these, 14 were Platform Support Grants, which injected a combined envelope of \$36.8M into the brain research ecosystem in this country. This flagship program continues to facilitate open science, providing researchers with access to essential resources and fostering interdisciplinary collaboration.

Looking ahead, we remain committed to our mission of accelerating, amplifying, and funding brain research across Canada. By serving as a platform for partnership, we aim to translate scientific discoveries into tangible health outcomes, ultimately striving for a future where brain conditions can be effectively treated, diagnosed, and cured.

Sincerely,

**Viviane Poupon, PhD**  
Brain Canada President & CEO



Brain Canada fosters a platform for partnership, driving bold science that unites researchers, donors and communities. Together, we're accelerating breakthroughs in brain health and transforming discoveries into real-world impact.”

---

Viviane Poupon, PhD  
Brain Canada President & CEO

## News &amp; Activities

## Sharing the Known, Unlocking the Unknown



**1.** More than 70 youth leaders, clinicians, and researchers came together at CAMH for an open exchange on youth mental health. **2.** Bell Let's Talk founder Mary Deacon toured the labs of Bell Let's Talk-Brain Canada Mental Health Research Program recipients, in advance of Bell Let's Talk Day. **3.** The Canadian Pediatric Imaging Platform research team held a forum in Montreal in November.

### Transforming Together Igniting Hope

Brain Canada, with support from RBC, hosted the Igniting Hope Conference, a day-long event in Toronto uniting over 70 youth leaders, advocates, clinicians, researchers and policymakers to address the pressing challenges in youth mental health. The forum fostered open dialogue, allowing participants to share their experiences, form meaningful connections, and envision actionable solutions. Topics ranged from school-based mental health and substance use to the transformative power of storytelling. This collaborative gathering underscored the importance of youth engagement in shaping a more responsive and inclusive mental health landscape in Canada.

[▶ Watch video](#)

### Visionary Visit Bell Let's Talk Lab Immersion

In a dynamic showcase of knowledge exchange in advance of Bell Let's Talk Day, Brain Canada and partner Bell Let's Talk visited Dr. Daniel Blumberger's cutting-edge lab at the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health. Dr. Blumberger's innovative research is testing accelerated intermittent theta-burst brain stimulation (iTBS) to treat treatment-resistant depression—offering hope for symptom relief within just one week. The visit highlighted how shared investments in science can unlock solutions for those struggling with mental illness, particularly Canada's youth facing a rising mental health crisis.

[▶ Watch video](#)

### Collaboration on Display C-PIP Research Forum

Brain Canada's commitment to knowledge exchange drew inspired participation as the Canadian Pediatric Imaging Platform (C-PIP) team convened in Montreal for a two-day forum last fall. Bringing together leading researchers from across Canada—including Drs. Signe Bray, Catherine Lebel, Patricia Conrod, Sarah Lippé and Anne Wheeler—this gathering underscored the power of collective insight in advancing research on child brain health. Special guest MP Rachel Bendayan shared her personal experience with brain injury recovery and highlighted the government's dedicated support of science and innovation.

[▶ Watch video](#)

**News & Activities**

4. A sold-out crowd attended the Amazing Brain Science Talks at the PHI Centre in Montreal last October. 5. Quebec Minister for the Economy, Christopher Skeete (centre), Brain Canada CEO & President Dr. Viviane Poupon (second from left), and CQDM's Diane Gosselin (far left) with members of the research community at a joint partnership event in Montreal. 6. Dr. Naomi Azrieli (centre) with RBC's Paula Murphy Ives (left) and Laura Arrell of the Arrell Family Foundation (right) at Brain Canada's public AGM in October 2024.



**Innovation Celebration  
A Decade of Discovery**

Brain Canada and its longtime partner CQDM celebrated a decade of propelling drug advancements with a stimulating evening highlighting the power of partnerships in brain research. The event featured a dynamic panel discussion exploring opportunities for collaboration between industry and academia and the pivotal role that research funders like Brain Canada play in fostering innovation and accelerating discovery. By combining resources, sharing a commitment to science, and working toward a common goal, we are helping drive progress in neuroscience research.

[▶ Learn more](#)

**Words to Connect By  
Amazing Brain Science Talks**

Brain Canada collaborated once again with McGill University's Healthy Brains, Healthy Lives on the 2024 edition of the Amazing Brain Science Talks, held in Montreal. This annual event illustrates our commitment to public engagement by making cutting-edge brain research accessible to all. Attendees explored topics ranging from the effects of cannabis on adolescent brain development to the neuroscience of eye contact and lived experience. The event also featured interactive Q&A sessions and a vibrant student-led art and poster exhibition.

[▶ Learn more](#)

**Great Minds Think Aligned  
Annual General Meeting**

At Brain Canada's 2024 Annual General Meeting, we proudly spotlighted the next generation of neuroscience leaders. Held in Toronto and hosted by RBC, the event featured presentations from recipients of our Future Leaders in Canadian Brain Research and Rising Stars Trainee Award programs. Topics included sex-specific benefits of exercise for Alzheimer's patients, mobile mental health apps for youth, advanced deep brain stimulation for Parkinson's, and novel treatments for pediatric brain cancer. A keynote by Dr. Mark Cembrowski highlighted collaborative efforts using live human brain tissue to test new epilepsy treatments.

[▶ Learn more](#)

**Our Allied Approach**

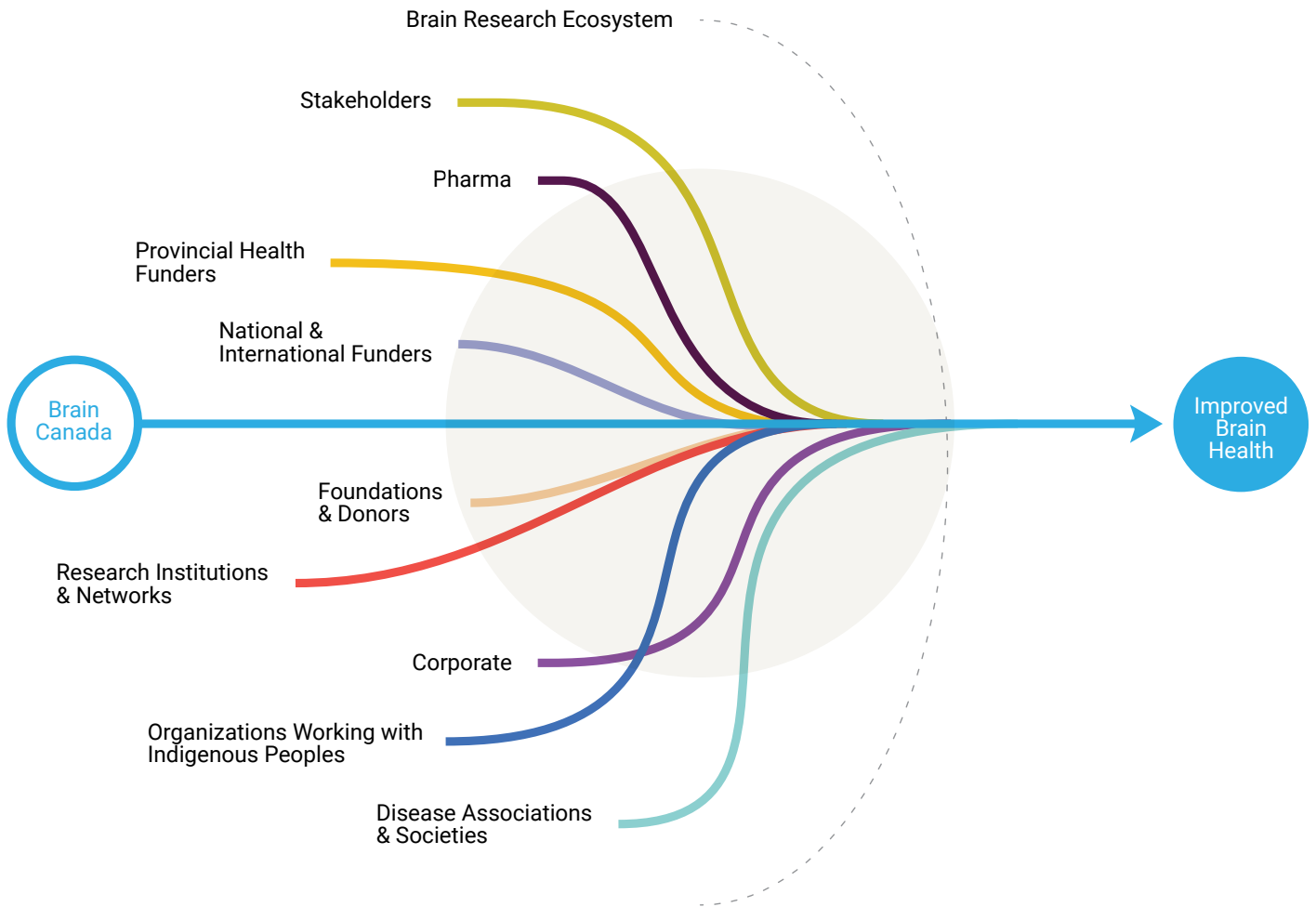
# Connect, Convene, Converge

Brain Canada plays an important role in the brain research ecosystem, acting as a platform for partnership that convenes like-minded organizations and individuals who fund the bold research we need to improve brain health for all. Over its more than 25-year history, Brain Canada has successfully leveraged federal research funding to attract matching investments, significantly amplifying the impact of the government’s investment in brain research. This arrangement enabled a total investment of more than \$400 million in brain research from 2011–2024.

In Budget 2024, the Government of Canada, through Health Canada, committed to renewing Brain Canada’s mandate through to 2028. From 2024–2028, Brain Canada will establish a total envelope of \$160 million for brain research. Brain Canada is using that investment to bring together partners, donors, and researchers who advance our understanding of the brain and develop innovative and commercializable solutions to its diseases and disorders.

# 119

**active partners**



## Our Allied Approach

# Heartfelt Generosity, Brain Health Progress



In memory of their daughter Erika, Sabrina and Bill Elkington are advancing mental health research through their family foundation.

## Honouring Their Child, Furthering Hope The Erika Legacy Foundation

Since 2021, The Erika Legacy Foundation has been generously supporting a range of innovative mental health research projects through Brain Canada. Their giving is inspired by Erika, who died by suicide in 2015. The unexpected death rocked her family—and galvanized them.

**“If we can put some of the same resources into brain science with a proactive lens, we can make a huge dent in our understanding of mental health and create healthier communities as we go forward.”**

In the midst of grief, Erika’s father Bill Elkington and his family launched the foundation to support research into the disease behind suicide, walk alongside families through grief, and connect those struggling with resources to help prevent loss.

Bill notes that mental health research often lags behind other diseases. The work is urgent. Suicide is a significant

cause of death in Canada, and Bill notes that too many people feel alone with their pain. Bill sees the foundation as just one more of Erika’s significant gifts to the world.

“This work honours her, and keeps what she would have provided the world alive: hope and resiliency,” he says. “Erika would have wanted us to try to figure this out.”

## Driving the Future of Research A Game-changing Golf Tournament

Each year, over 95,000 Canadians aged 65 and older are diagnosed with dementia—a number expected to rise as our population grows and ages. The diagnosis not only changes lives for those affected but also places emotional and financial strain on families, caregivers, and the health system.

Recognizing the need to push back on this disease, Wendy Brancato, Denise Paul and Tina Haslip created the Do It for Dementia foodservice golf tournament, an annual fundraiser benefiting Brain Canada. The funds raised support groundbreaking research that advances our understanding of various brain diseases and disorders, such as Alzheimer’s.

For Wendy and her fellow organizers, many of whom work closely with health care and senior living operations across Canada, the cause is both professional and deeply personal. All three have supported loved ones living with dementia, as have many participants.

Complete with raffles, catered meals and a convivial atmosphere, the event has become a fun yet powerful way for a community of colleagues to work together for a common purpose.

**“Somehow and in some way, it affects everybody—whether it’s a parent, a friend, or someone else. Everyone who participates feels compassionate about the cause.”**



**From left to right:** Denise Paul, Tina Haslip, Wendy Brancato, and Brain Canada’s Barbara Celinska at the Do It for Dementia fundraiser.

## Our Allied Approach

### The Joy of Purposeful Giving A Retiree's Benevolence

Over the past five years, Toby Fouks has given more than \$40,000 to Brain Canada to advance high-impact brain research across the country. She is interested in supporting research dedicated to uncovering the mechanisms behind some of the most devastating brain diseases.

Living a quiet life on Salt Spring Island, BC, Toby has gotten much fulfillment in her later years through purposeful giving. She discovered Brain Canada through Charity Intelligence, a website for evaluating the transparency and effectiveness of charitable foundations.

"I want my money to make a difference," she explains. "Neurological problems are one of the worst things people live with, both for the sufferers and their families."

That's why Toby supports forward-looking research that targets the root causes of these diseases. It's this type of research that can lead to real breakthroughs that greatly decrease the suffering caused by devastating brain conditions.

**"If you don't need the money to live on now, you get the joy of seeing it used when you give it away. That's the best part."**

While Toby has included Brain Canada and a few other causes in her will, she prefers to do most of her giving in the present, especially through gifts of securities—a tax-effective way to donate that allows her to see the results during her lifetime.

"I can't tell you how happy and fulfilling it is to be able to do this while I'm alive."



Brain Canada donor Toby Fouks is fulfilled by purposeful giving to charities of her choice.

### Opening the World A Pivotal Travel Fellowship

When Dr. Monica Seger was 25, she received a grant to do a postdoctoral fellowship in the Netherlands. It was an experience that changed the trajectory of her life and research.

As a young neuroendocrinologist, Monica benefited immensely from collaborating with scientists in a different culture. She also met her husband, neuroscientist Dr. Hubert van Tol, during the fellowship.

When Dr. van Tol died tragically in a bike accident in 2006, Monica and her family decided to honour his legacy by establishing the Dr. Hubert Van Tol Travel Fellowship with Brain Canada, which supports master's students, doctoral students and postdoctoral fellows researching the brain by providing them with funds to attend a prominent international conference/symposium or training course.



**Top:** Brain Canada donors Dr. Marianne Seger and her daughter, Dr. Monica Seger. **Below:** Dr. Seger with recipients of the Rising Stars Trainee Awards at the 2025 Canadian Association for Neuroscience conference, with Brain Canada.

**"When I see the letters and reports from recipients of what this award meant for them, they've all benefited in the way I had hoped."**

Since its inception, scientists have benefited from the award, which gives trainees the same transformative opportunity Monica received as a young researcher.

Monica's mother, Dr. Marianne Seger, also regularly supported the award as a way to honour her son-in-law—truly making this a family legacy. The elder Dr. Seger believed strongly in the need to decode our understanding of brain function so that neurologists, like herself, could provide better care.

"The grant has broadened the scope of their research and allowed them to collaborate with people from all over the world," Monica says.

[▶ Learn more](#)

**Our Allied Approach**

# Full Circle Funding

Through its platform for partnership model, Brain Canada designs and administers programs critical to advancing brain research in this country. Brain Canada programs are developing a pipeline of research talent, supporting the pursuit of fresh ideas and new technologies by early-career scientists and teams, and enabling platforms that researchers need to accelerate progress.

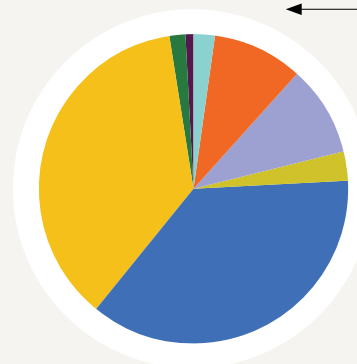
At the core of these programs is the recognition that research impact is made possible with support encompassing everything from fundamental research to clinical trials to knowledge mobilization—spanning neurodevelopment to neurodegeneration and myriad brain conditions, including mental health. Our programs award grants through open, fair and transparent processes based on scientific merit, as determined by independent peer review panels.

**Platform Grants** help develop and/or enhance capabilities and accessibility of resources essential for research.

**Capacity-Building Grants** invest directly in trainees and early-career researchers.

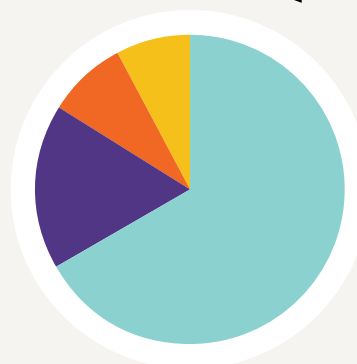
**Team Grants** bring together scientists from across Canada to advance collaborative research.

**Knowledge Mobilization Grants** support synthesis, distribution, implementation and/or commercialization of research results.



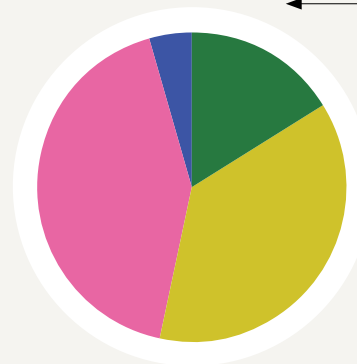
**2024-25  
Grants Awarded by  
Province**

- CAN / 4 (2.3%)
- BC / 16 (9.5%)
- AB / 16 (9.5%)
- MB / 5 (2.9%)
- ON / 62 (36.7%)
- QC / 62 (36.7%)
- NS / 3 (1.8%)
- NL / 1 (0.6%)
- SK, NB 0 (0%)



**2024-25  
Grants Awarded by  
Grant Type**

- CBG / 113 (66.9%)
- TG / 29 (17.1%)
- PG / 14 (8.3%)
- KM / 13 (7.7%)



**2024-25  
Funds Invested by  
Grant Type**

- CBG / \$6.1M (16.2%)
- TG / \$13.9M (37.3%)
- PG / \$15.8M (42.2%)
- KM / \$1.6M (4.3%)

Total / \$37.4M

## Our Funded Research

# Innovation Partners

Brain Canada's innovation partners include individuals, private foundations, corporate donors and others who share Brain Canada's vision for pushing the boundaries of knowledge about the brain. For example, Brain Canada's Future Leaders in Canadian Brain Research program is made possible with an anchor gift from the Azrieli Foundation, with support from other major donors. Thanks to this collective generosity, Brain Canada has awarded 109 grants and invested over \$10.9 million in seed funding since 2019 for early-career researchers, helping them pursue their bold ideas.



### Looking Back:

#### Pioneering Cancer Neuroscience

Nerve cells have long been thought of as mere bystanders in the spread of cancer, but Dr. Sebastien Talbot (2018 Azrieli Foundation – Brain Canada Early-Career Capacity-Building Grant recipient) and his team showed that nerve cells are actually key factors in how cancer tumours grow and resist treatment.

Dr. Talbot's Brain Canada-funded research has helped to establish an emerging field called cancer neuroscience that is revealing how neurons contribute to tumour growth and identifying new ways to treat cancer. Dr. Talbot's research has resulted in two patents, more than \$2 million in additional research funding, citations by dozens of researchers around the world, and fame in the form of mention in the New York Times.



Dr. Sebastien Talbot



### Looking Back:

#### Rethinking Concussions

Dr. Anne Wheeler (2020 Azrieli Future Leader in Canadian Brain Research) and her team found that female children who experienced a concussion had increased emotional challenges including anxiety and depression, beyond pre-injury levels. In this group, the increase in emotional challenges was correlated with less change in superficial white matter. In other words, the maturation of white matter—an important factor in brain development during childhood and adolescence—was disrupted in the brains of female children after concussion. These findings are setting groundwork for targeted interventions during the critical period of brain development that may improve quality of life post-concussion.



Dr. Anne Wheeler (second from left)



### Looking Back:

#### Decoding Depression and Anxiety

Sensitivity to ongoing stress is linked to higher levels of inflammation in the body and a weakened blood-brain barrier (BBB) that lets this inflammation enter the brain, according to research by Dr. Caroline Ménard (2020 Azrieli Future Leader in Canadian Brain Research) and her team. Stress resilience is connected to maintenance of brain barrier integrity, and this maintenance is facilitated by an increase in what are called CB1 receptors on astrocytes, star-shaped cells that line the BBB like a fence. Dr. Ménard hopes that these findings will inform the development of targeted therapies for depression and anxiety to help the 30-50% of individuals for whom currently available treatments aren't effective.



Dr. Caroline Ménard

# \$65.1M

## in additional funding secured by Future Leaders since 2019

## Our Funded Research



### Looking Forward:

#### Grants Awarded in 2024–25 with Innovation Partners

##### Capacity-Building Grants

2024 Future Leaders in Canadian Brain Research (21 grants)

2024 Brain Canada Momentum Grants (5 grants)

2024 Rising Stars Trainee Awards (31 grants)

##### Team Grants

Brain Canada & Weizmann Institute of Science Team Grants (3 grants)

Canadian Brain Health and Cognitive Impairment in Aging Research Knowledge Mobilization (KM) Hub (with CIHR and the Azrieli Foundation) (1 grant)

European Union Joint Programme on Neurodegenerative Disease (JPND) Research – Understanding the mechanisms of non-pharmacological interventions (with CIHR Institute of Aging) (1 grant)

Innovation Grants for Research Impact in Traumatic Brain Injury (with Brain Changes Initiative) (3 grants)

▶ [Learn more](#)



### Looking Forward:

#### Spotlight on New Program in 2024–25

In 2024, Brain Canada awarded five Momentum Grants, a new funding program that enables researchers to build upon their previously funded Future Leaders in Canadian Brain Research projects. This additional funding allows recipients to explore new dimensions of their work with the potential to generate breakthroughs in our understanding of the brain and translate them into real-world benefits for individuals affected by brain diseases and disorders. Recipients include:

**Dr. Annie Ciernia**, University of British Columbia, for her work on how gut health affects children's brains

**Dr. Michèle Desjardins**, Université Laval, for her work on the mechanisms behind cognitive decline

**Dr. Mark Cembrowski**, University of British Columbia, for his work on drug-resistant epilepsy

**Dr. Mark Brandon**, Douglas Mental Health University Institute, for his work on the brain's GPS system

**Dr. Stuart Trenholm**, McGill University, for his work on restoring vision



Brain Canada was the first funder to support me out of my post-doctoral training. It kick-started my independent research career, and now my lab receives funding from all sorts of funding agencies.”

**Dr. Sebastien Talbot**

Associate Professor, Queen's University

## Our Funded Research

# Health Charity Partners

Brain Canada's commitment to advancing our understanding of the brain and identifying solutions to its diseases and disorders takes a targeted approach with health charity partners. Through these partnerships, we're able to amplify funding aimed at specific diseases and disorders, from Alzheimer's disease and ALS to brain cancer and stroke.



Dr. Sylvain Baillet



### Looking Back: Trailblazing Alzheimer's Findings

A research project led by Dr. Sylvain Baillet, funded via the Alzheimer's Association International Research Grant Program in partnership with Brain Canada, generated new insights into early brain changes in Alzheimer's disease. He and his team studied healthy older adults at risk for Alzheimer's and found that early amyloid buildup in the brain is linked to increased brain activity. However, they found that when tau protein also builds up—especially in memory-related areas—brain activity slows down and early signs of cognitive decline appear. These findings, which mirror patterns seen in animal studies, help us better understand how Alzheimer's develops before symptoms appear, bringing us closer to early detection and targeted treatments for Alzheimer's disease.



Dr. Amy Yu (right)



### Looking Forward: A New Era in Stroke Research

StrokeGoRed, a pan-Canadian research network led by Dr. Amy Yu involving over 50 collaborators, is addressing critical gaps in stroke research by studying sex and gender differences in prevention, care, and recovery. The network is funded through the Research Networks of Excellence in Women's Heart and Brain Health Program, a partnership between Heart & Stroke, Brain Canada, and CIHR's Institute of Gender and Health. After decades of male-dominated studies that inadequately represented women's unique stroke experiences, the network will fill knowledge gaps that will inform more personalized, inclusive stroke care that better serves all patients.

# 28

health charities  
Brain Canada  
partnered with  
in 2024–25



Dr. Thalia Field



### Looking Forward: Remapping the Heart-Brain Connection

Dr. Thalia Field received a Congenital Heart Disease Team Grant from Heart & Stroke, Brain Canada, and CIHR's Institutes of Circulatory and Respiratory Health and Genetics to investigate how being born with a heart defect affects brain health throughout life. Congenital heart disease occurs in 1% of births, and medical advances now enable 90% of these children to survive to adulthood—which has created a growing population with lifelong health challenges and unknown long-term risks to brain health. Dr. Field and her team will map brain health trajectories by analyzing existing data, following children with repeat brain imaging, and examining sex-based differences in stroke risk and cognitive and psychological impacts.

## Our Funded Research



### Looking Forward:

#### Grants Awarded in 2024–25 with Health Charity Partners

##### Capacity-Building Grants

ALS Canada – Brain Canada Trainee Program 2024 (6 grants)

ALS Canada – Brain Canada Career Transition Award 2024 (1 grant)

ALS Canada – Brain Canada Clinical Research Fellowship 2024 (1 grant)

Alzheimer Society Research Program (ASRP) 2023–2024 – New Investigator Operating Grant (2 grants)

Alzheimer Society Research Program (ASRP) 2023–2024 – Proof of Concept Grant (14 grants)

Alzheimer’s Association (US) International Research Grant Program (5 grants)

2024 Canadian Cancer Society Research Training Awards (3 grants)

2024 Cancer Research Society Doctoral Research Awards (2 grants)

2024 Cancer Research Society Operating Grants (4 grants)

2024 Heart & Stroke Personnel Awards for Women’s Heart and Brain Health (5 grants)

2024 Heart & Stroke Personnel Awards for Black Scholars (5 grants)

Huntington Society of Canada – Brain Canada Undergraduate Student Fellowship (7 grants)

2023 Turnbull-Tator Award in Spinal Cord Injury and Concussion Research (1 grant)

##### Team Grants

ALS Canada – Brain Canada Discovery Grants 2024 (8 grants)

Alzheimer’s Association (US) Advancing Research on Care & Outcome Measurement 3.0 (ARCOM-3) (1 grant)

2024 Canadian Cancer Society Breakthrough Team Grants (2 grants)

Congenital Heart Disease Team Grants (with Heart & Stroke and CIHR Institutes of Circulatory and Respiratory Health and Genetics) (1 grant)

Therapeutic Development Opportunities Addressing MS (National Multiple Sclerosis Society/Fast Forward) (1 grant)

Research Networks of Excellence in Women’s Heart and Brain Health (with Heart & Stroke and CIHR Institute of Gender and Health) (1 grant)

##### Knowledge Mobilization Grants

Alzheimer Society of Canada – Brain Canada Foundation Knowledge Translation and Exchange Accelerator Grants (8 grants)

Women’s Brain Health Initiative Mind Over Matter – Volumes 19–22

[▶ Learn more](#)



Partnering with health charities allows us to connect directly with people with lived experience of brain conditions and their families. Together we can accelerate discoveries, bridge critical gaps, and ensure that the science we fund translates into meaningful impact for those affected by these conditions.”

**Viviane Poupon, PhD**  
Brain Canada President & CEO

Our Funded Research

# Commercialization Partners

Brain Canada has a proven track record of successful collaboration with industry and academia to accelerate brain health innovations. For example, Brain Canada has partnered with the Quebec Consortium for Drug Discovery, CQDM, since 2014.

➔ 24 grants funded, 150 research personnel engaged, 225 new resources and 29 publications generated, \$31M leveraged funds and \$50M follow-on investments harnessed<sup>3</sup>

## ↗ ↘ Looking Back: Taming Insomnia and Neuropathic Pain

Dr. Gabriella Gobbi's CQDM and Brain Canada-funded research breakthrough could transform treatment for insomnia and neuropathic pain. The compound they discovered uniquely targets brain receptors that control circadian rhythms, promoting deep, restorative sleep while reducing chronic pain at lower doses. With 24% of Canadians suffering sleep disorders and limited neuropathic pain treatments available, this dual-action therapy addresses massive unmet medical needs. Dr. Gobbi and her team worked with academic and industry partners to transform the compound into a viable drug formulation, and are now looking ahead to first human trials.



Dr. Gabriella Gobbi

## ↗ ↘ Looking Forward: Targeting Neurodegeneration

Dr. Thomas Durcan's new project, funded via the Quantum Leap funding program and in collaboration with Merck, is dissecting microglia's role in neurodegeneration. Microglia are brain cells crucial for neural network maintenance and injury repair. By better understanding how dysfunction in these cells drives brain aging and neurodegeneration, Dr. Durcan and his team hope to identify new targets that could transform treatment approaches for Alzheimer's disease, which affects millions of people worldwide.



Dr. Thomas Durcan

# \$103.1M

## in overall economic impact generated via CQDM partnership since 2014

## ↗ ↘ Looking Forward: Grants Awarded in 2024–25 with Industry Partners

### Team Grants

CQDM-Brain Canada Call for Collaborative Research Projects on the Brain (7 grants)

MEDTEQ+ Beachhead Innovation Grants (1 grant)



Photo: McGill University Health Centre

<sup>3</sup> Based on progress report data collected since 2014

## Our Funded Research

# Platform Partners

Platform Support Grant (PSG) recipients secure their own sponsors to match Brain Canada's investments. These sponsors vary from academic institutions and research centres to foundations and corporations. Between 2014–25, Brain Canada has awarded 60 PSGs in partnership with over 80 unique sponsors, for a total investment of \$162.5 million.

→ **1,075 trainees, HQP<sup>4</sup> and 802 team members engaged across 89 institutions, 22 industry partnerships and 6 spin-off companies created, and 19 patents, licenses and IP rights registrations generated<sup>5</sup>.**



Dr. Ravi Menon (left)



### Looking Back:

#### Expanding the View on Concussions

Dr. Ravi Menon (PSG 2015, 2019) runs the Centre for Functional and Metabolic Mapping based at Western University. This platform operates some of the most sophisticated magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) instrumentation in the world. A series of studies made possible by the platform found that even minor concussions cause structural and brain network changes in the brains of young adults and that these changes persist far longer than was previously suspected. These findings informed a series of policies to protect youth while playing contact sports like soccer and hockey.

<sup>4</sup> Highly Qualified Personnel

<sup>5</sup> Based on progress report data collected since 2014

<sup>6</sup> Based on survey data from 46 PSGs funded and reporting since 2014



Dr. Deborah Kurrasch



### Looking Back:

#### Bringing Brain Therapies to Life

Through her zebrafish-based platform, Dr. Deborah Kurrasch (PSG 2014) and her team developed and patented a technology called MitoREAD that screens drug targets for brain diseases. She launched a spin-off company called Path Therapeutics to license that technology, raised more than \$5 million in public and private funding, and hired eight staff to apply the technology in identifying and testing drug targets. Now, Dr. Kurrasch is growing her second spin-off company, Stream Neuroscience, which is developing a new drug that binds one of the targets identified using MitoREAD. To date, they've filed patents for this therapy, which blocks epileptic seizures and improves cognitive function in animal models.



Dr. Gustavo Turecki



### Looking Back:

#### Breakthroughs in Suicide Prevention

The one-of-a-kind Douglas-Bell Canada Brain Bank, led by Dr. Gustavo Turecki (PSG 2014, 2019), houses more than 3,600 brains maintained in the best possible conditions for cutting-edge scientific research. It distributes more than 2,000 brain samples on an annual basis to dozens of researchers across Canada and around the world. It has enabled countless breakthroughs on everything from the effects of early-life adversity on the brain, to why disparities in depression rates and treatment efficacy differ between men and women. And according to the Overton Index, the world's largest policy and grey literature database, one of the Brain Bank's seminal publications has informed suicide prevention policy documents globally.

# 4,806

**researchers using Brain Canada-funded platforms to advance their research<sup>6</sup>**

## Our Funded Research



### Looking Forward:

#### Platform Support Grants Awarded in 2024–25

##### The Canadian Open Neuroscience Platform

Dr. Alan Evans, Montreal Neurological Institute and Hospital, McGill University

##### The Mesoscopic Integrated Neuroimaging Data (MIND) Platform

Dr. Ali Khan, Western University

##### The Douglas-Bell Canada Brain Bank: Supporting Human Brain Research in Canada and Beyond

Dr. Gustavo Turecki, Douglas Hospital Research Centre

##### Expanding CNDR as an Open Science, Multi-modal Data Platform

Dr. Lawrence Korngut, University of Calgary

##### Advancing Brain Research Through Spatial Histology

Dr. Marie-Christine Guiot, McGill University

##### The SLEEP HUB: An Open Science Ecosystem For Transforming Sleep Research

Dr. Nadia Gosselin, CIUSSS du Nord-de-Île-de-Montréal

##### Etholab: A Platform For Neurophysiological Studies of Natural Behavior

Dr. Paul Cisek, Université de Montréal

##### The NECTAr Platform: A Pan-Canadian Platform Dedicated to Neonatal Hypoxic-ischemic Encephalopathy – For Patient Care Optimization, Training, and Education

Dr. Pia Wintermark, Research Institute of the McGill University Health Centre

##### Building Reproducible AI Frameworks for Brain Health with The Brain Health Data Challenge Platform

Dr. Tristan Glatard, Centre for Addiction and Mental Health

##### The Canadian Optogenetics and Vectorology Foundry

Dr. Yves De Koninck and Dr. Marie-Eve Paquet, Université Laval

##### The University of British Columbia Genes, Cells and Circuits (UBC-GC2) Platform For Next-generation Multiscale Brain Research

Dr. Mark Cembrowski, University of British Columbia

##### Promoting Global Spinal Cord Injury Research Through Human Biobanking

Dr. Brian Kwon, University of British Columbia

##### Advanced Multi-modal Neuroimaging Platform for Psychiatry

Dr. Georg Northoff, University of Ottawa, Institute of Mental Health Research

##### A Translational Platform in CNS Drug Development

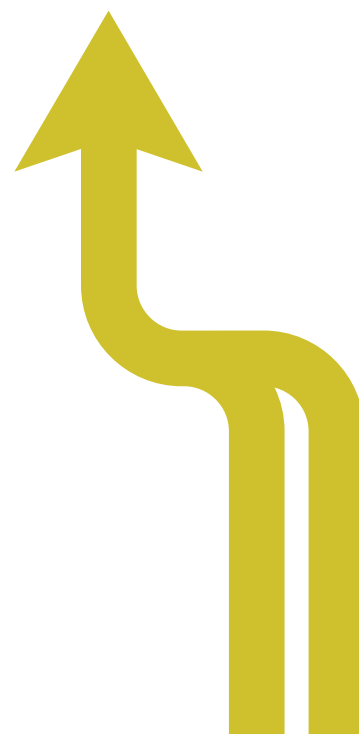
Dr. Philippe Sarret, Université de Sherbrooke



It's so important that Brain Canada continues to support platform development, there's such a need for it. There's a paucity of places to get money for technology development in this country, yet many researchers across Canada need this type of funding to advance their innovative ideas."

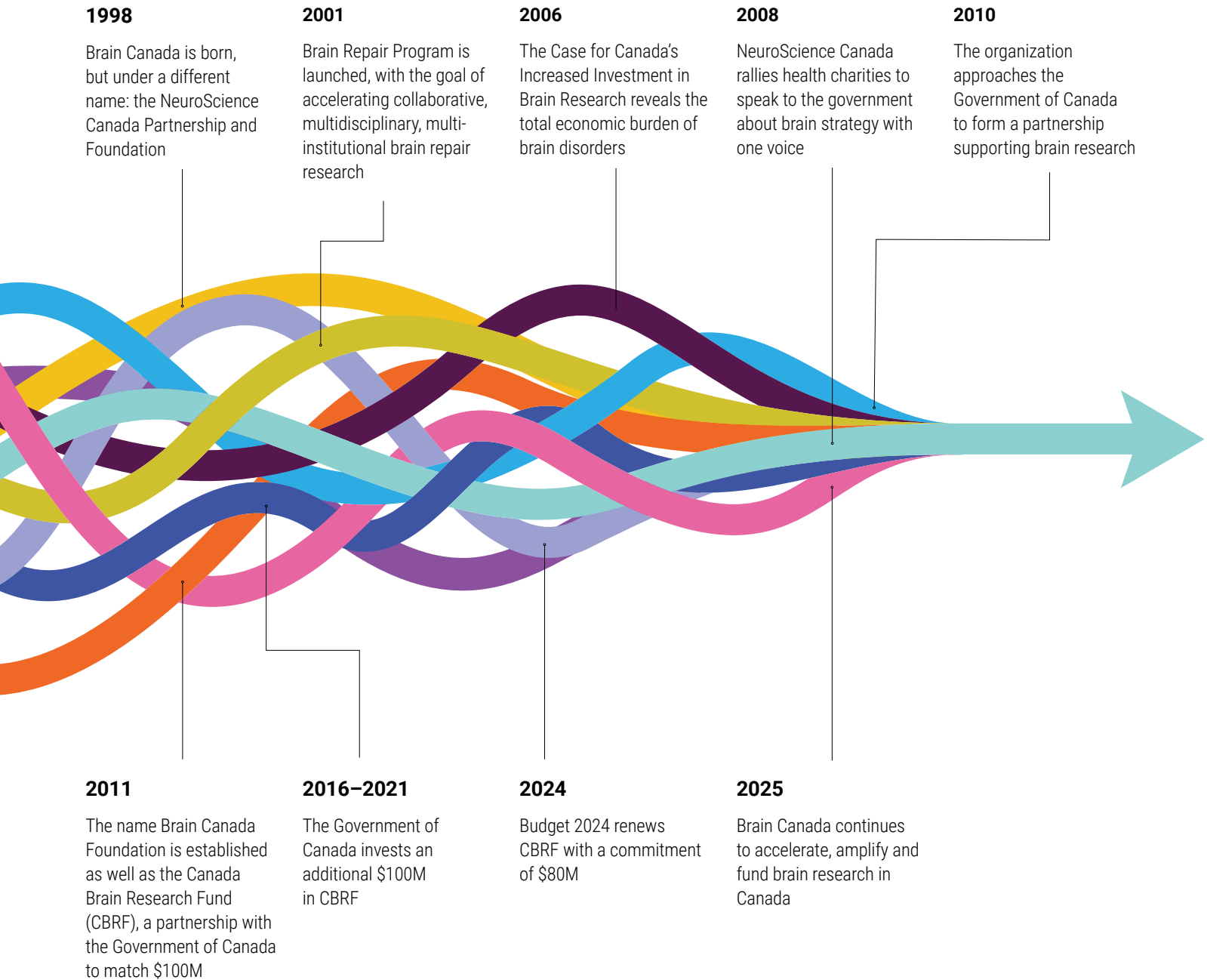
**Dr. Deborah Kurrasch**

Professor, University of Calgary



**Our Journey**

# The Future Has Always Been Our Horizon



**Our Donors**

# Our Deepest Gratitude for Your Selfless Support

We extend profound appreciation to our lead donors, whose caring, transformative contributions are driving research breakthroughs. Each collaboration sets a powerful example and plays a vital role in shaping the future of brain health, in Canada and beyond.

[▶ Learn more](#)

## Donors for the Period of April 1, 2024–March 31, 2025

### \$100,000+ (Lead Donors)

American Iron & Metal (AIM) /AIM Recyclage  
 The Azrieli Foundation  
 Bell Canada  
 Hewitt Foundation  
 Kacharie Foundation  
 The Krembil Foundation  
 The Erika Legacy Foundation  
 Omico Investments Inc.  
 Power Corporation of Canada  
 RBC Foundation  
 Alvin Segal Family Foundation  
 Tavares Family Foundation  
 Larry & Judy Tanenbaum Family Foundation  
 Women's Brain Health Initiative

### \$25,000–\$99,999

The Arrell Family Foundation  
 Ken & Sharron Bowman Foundation  
 Crabtree Foundation  
 John & Mary Crocker  
 GO LLP Chartered Professional Accountants  
 Lotte & John Hecht Memorial Foundation  
 Jane Inch  
 Blair I. Levinsky  
 The Catherine and Maxwell Meighen Foundation  
 The Barbara Turnbull Foundation for Spinal Cord Research  
 Wheeler Family Foundation

### \$10,000–\$24,999

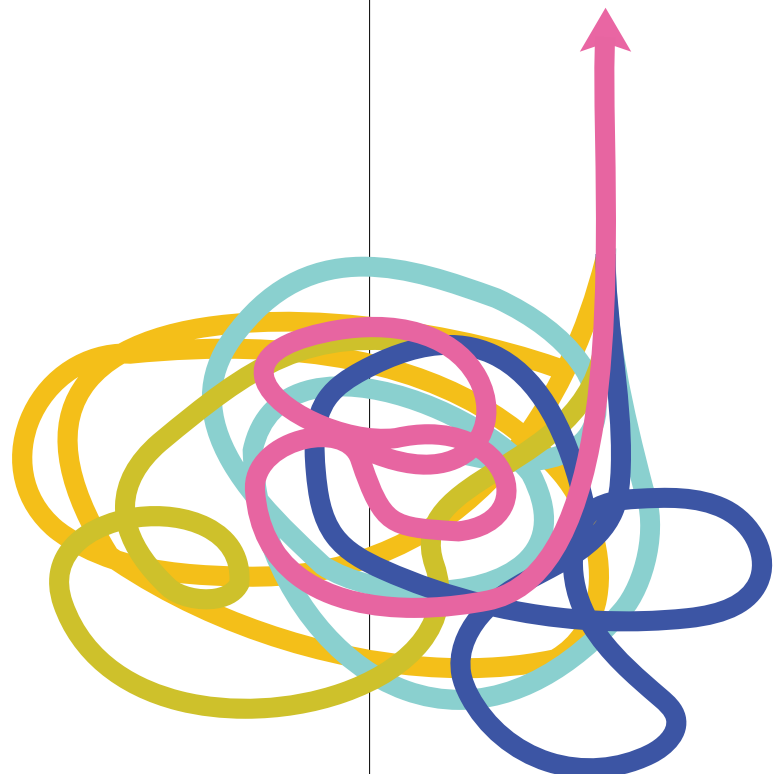
Bondi Produce & Specialty Foods  
 M. Wayne and J. Coleman Family Fund  
 Do It For Dementia  
 London Drugs Foundation  
 Toby Fouks  
 The Henry and Berenice Kaufmann Foundation  
 SHMP Holdings Ltd.  
 The Mireille and Murray Steinberg Family Foundation



Warren Buffet once said, 'Someone is sitting in the shade today because someone planted a tree a long time ago.' Likewise, our family is investing in research today, believing remarkable outcomes will arise tomorrow."

### Mireille and Murray Steinberg

The Mireille and Murray Steinberg Family Foundation



## Our Financials

## Strength in Numbers

2024–25 Audited Financial Statements / Prepared by Ernst &amp; Young

Brain Canada Foundation

**Statement of Financial Position**

As at March 31, 2025

|   | 2025<br>\$       | 2024<br>\$        |
|---|------------------|-------------------|
| <b>Assets</b>                               |                  |                   |
| <b>Current</b>                              |                  |                   |
| Cash and cash equivalents                   | 6,262,005        | 3,123,758         |
| Cash - restricted                           | -                | 89,722            |
| Short-term investment                       | -                | 5,000,000         |
| Accrued interest receivable                 | 41,195           | 18,465            |
| Other receivables                           | 24,189           | 60,621            |
| Contribution receivable from the Government | 2,146,353        | 1,849,666         |
| Prepays and deposits                        | 69,240           | 54,883            |
| <b>Total current assets</b>                 | <b>8,542,982</b> | <b>10,197,115</b> |
| Tangible capital assets                     | 83,313           | 96,748            |
|   | <b>8,626,295</b> | <b>10,293,863</b> |
| <b>Liabilities and net assets</b>           |                  |                   |
| <b>Current</b>                              |                  |                   |
| Accounts payable and accrued liabilities    | 26,606           | 116,998           |
| Salaries and benefits payable               | 406,716          | 362,083           |
| Current portion of deferred contributions   | 5,812,053        | 5,682,007         |
| <b>Total current liabilities</b>            | <b>6,245,375</b> | <b>6,161,088</b>  |
| Deferred contributions                      | 1,948,637        | 2,398,513         |
| <b>Total liabilities</b>                    | <b>8,194,012</b> | <b>8,559,601</b>  |
| Commitments                                 |                  |                   |
| <b>Net assets</b>                           |                  |                   |
| Unrestricted net assets                     | 348,970          | 1,637,514         |
| Invested in tangible capital assets         | 83,313           | 96,748            |
|   | <b>432,283</b>   | <b>1,734,262</b>  |
|   | <b>8,626,295</b> | <b>10,293,863</b> |

## Our Financials

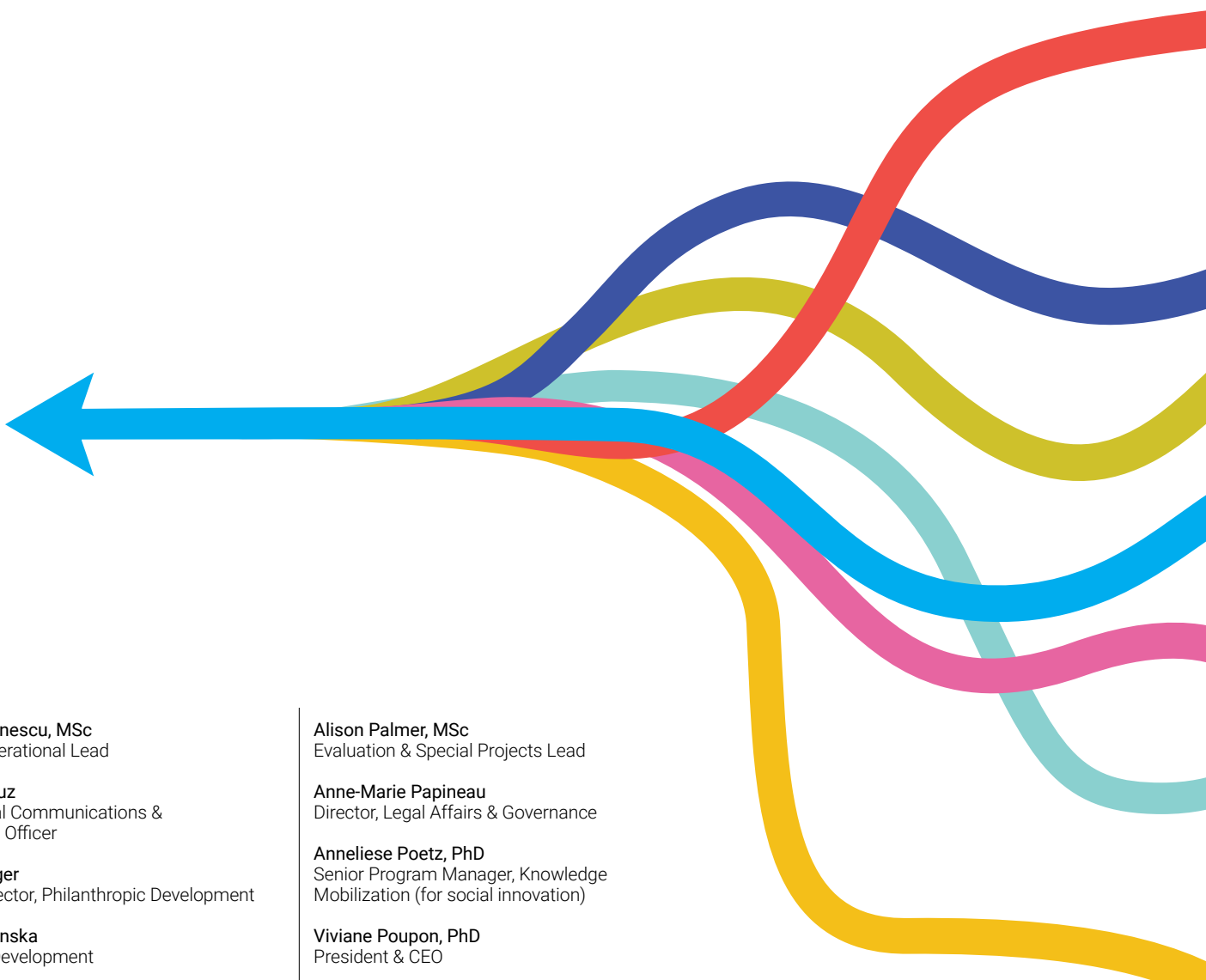
2024–25 Audited Financial Statements / Prepared by Ernst & Young

### Brain Canada Foundation Statement of Operations As at March 31, 2025

|   | 2025<br>\$         | 2024<br>\$ |
|---|--------------------|------------|
| <b>Revenues</b>                                 |                    |            |
| Restricted contributions                        | <b>33,272,729</b>  | 31,884,151 |
| Unrestricted contributions from donors          | <b>571,777</b>     | 212,253    |
| Interest income                                 | <b>587,086</b>     | 685,232    |
|   | <b>34,431,592</b>  | 32,781,636 |
| <b>Expenditures</b>                             |                    |            |
| Grants and awards                               | <b>31,389,924</b>  | 28,630,714 |
| Operating expenses                              | <b>4,330,212</b>   | 4,492,274  |
| Amortization of tangible capital assets         | <b>13,435</b>      | 15,404     |
|   | <b>35,733,571</b>  | 33,138,392 |
| <b>Deficiency of revenues over expenditures</b> | <b>(1,301,979)</b> | (356,756)  |

In addition to the \$31,389,924 in Grants & Awards disbursed by Brain Canada, we included an amount of \$5,963,173 paid directly by donors and partners to institutions as part of Brain Canada's commitments. This is indicated in the audited financial statements available at [braincanada.ca](http://braincanada.ca)





**Staff**

**Sabina Antonescu, MSc**  
Program Operational Lead

**Melissa Arauz**  
Senior Digital Communications &  
Stewardship Officer

**Monica Berger**  
National Director, Philanthropic Development

**Barbara Celinska**  
Director of Development

**Mario Chartrand, CPA**  
Chief Financial Officer

**Jillian Donnelly**  
Marketing and Communications Officer

**Gloria Friedrich**  
Accountant

**Karen Indig**  
Coordinator, Philanthropic Development

**Pamela Kanellis, PhD**  
Chief Research and Program Officer

**Angelina Marchetta**  
Office Manager-Executive Assistant

**Nadia Martin, PhD**  
Data Specialist

**Celina Oliveira-Stipanic**  
Development Officer, Philanthropy

**Alison Palmer, MSc**  
Evaluation & Special Projects Lead

**Anne-Marie Papineau**  
Director, Legal Affairs & Governance

**Anneliese Poetz, PhD**  
Senior Program Manager, Knowledge  
Mobilization (for social innovation)

**Viviane Poupon, PhD**  
President & CEO

**Melissa Russo, MSc**  
Senior Program Manager

**Fiona Sanderson, PhD**  
Senior Program Manager

**Julia Segal, PhD**  
Senior Program Manager

**Kate Shingler**  
Senior Director, Strategic Communications

**Jean-Martin C. Strati, MBA, CPA**  
Director, Finance & Operations

**Sejal Thakrar**  
Administrative Assistant, Programs

**Rebecca Williams-Collin**  
Donations Processing & Donor Relations  
Coordinator



Brain Canada  
Foundation

1200 McGill College Avenue  
Suite 1600, Montreal, Quebec H3B 4G7  
+1 (514) 989-2989  
[info@braincanada.ca](mailto:info@braincanada.ca)



Health Canada Santé Canada

Production of this Annual Report has been made possible with the financial support of Health Canada through the Canada Brain Research Fund. The views expressed herein do not necessarily represent the views of the Minister of Health or the Government of Canada.

This report covers a 12-month period from April 1, 2024–March 31, 2025. This Annual Report is also available in French.

Brain Canada is a national registered charity that enables and supports excellent, innovative, paradigm-changing brain research in Canada.

Registration number: 89105 2094 RR001