

# Research Canada Stakeholder Action Roundtable

**Date:** June 11, 2026

**Time:** 7:45 am – 2:00 pm (Breakfast and registration opens at 7:45 am)

**Location:** Delta Hotels Ottawa City Centre, 101 Lyon Street North, Ottawa, ON

| Time     | Topic and speakers  |
|----------|---|
| 7:45 am  | <b>Networking breakfast</b>   |
| 8:20 am  | <b>Welcome Remarks</b><br>Speaker: <b>Alison Evans</b> , President & CEO – Research Canada  |
| 8:26 am  | <b>Address</b><br>Speaker: <b>MP Maggie Chi</b> – Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health<br><br><i>Opening remarks on behalf of the Minister of Health outlining the Government of Canada’s priorities for strengthening the health system and advancing health research and innovation.</i>   |
| 8:30 am  | <b>Keynote Address and Fireside Chat</b><br>Speaker: <b>Kirsten Hillman</b> – former-Canadian Ambassador to the U.S.<br>Moderator: <b>Alison Evans</b> , President & CEO – Research Canada<br><br><i>A forward-looking perspective on the geopolitical and economic forces reshaping health, innovation, and advanced technologies. Drawing on international experience, this session will highlight key trends influencing how countries compete and collaborate, and what they mean for Canada.</i>   |
| 9:30 am  | <b>Panel 1: Canada’s Health Economy in a Competitive and Fragmented World</b><br>Moderator: <b>Lauren Fischer</b> , Lead, Government Affairs – AbbVie<br>Panelists:<br><ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>MP Karim Bardeesy</b> – Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Industry</li> <li>• <b>Martin LeBlanc</b>, Co-founder and Vice-Chairman – CellCarta</li> <li>• <b>Dr. Brad Wouters</b>, Executive VP, Science and Research – University Health Network</li> </ul> <i>An examination of the shifting global landscape and emerging trends shaping Canada’s health and research ecosystem. Panelists will translate these dynamics into implications for competitiveness, offering both a grounded diagnosis and a forward-looking view of where the health economy is heading.</i> |
| 10:30 am | <b>Networking break</b>   |

| Time     | Topic and speakers   |
|----------|--|
| 11:00 am | <p><b>Panel 2: Turning Canadian Strength into Strategic Advantage</b><br/>           Moderator: <b>Dr. Stéphanie Michaud</b>, President &amp; CEO – BioCanRX<br/>           Panelists:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Kimberley Hanson</b>, Chief External Relations Officer – Breakthrough T1D Canada</li> <li>• <b>Andrew Booth</b>, Chief Financial Officer – AbCellera</li> <li>• <b>Dr. Stephen Lucas</b>, CEO – Mitacs</li> <li>• <b>Ritu Banerjee</b>, Assistant Deputy Minister – Health Emergency Readiness Canada (HERC), Ministry of Innovation, Science and Economic Development (ISED)</li> </ul> <p><i>A solutions-focused discussion on how to translate Canada's strengths into impact in a rapidly evolving policy, economic, and geopolitical environment. Panelists will explore practical actions, partnerships, and approaches to accelerate innovation and strengthen Canada's global position.</i></p> |
| 12:00 pm | <p><b>Reflections on the Morning</b><br/>           Speaker: <b>Alison Evans</b>, President &amp; CEO – Research Canada</p>  |
| 12:05 pm | <p><b>Lunch and networking</b></p>   |
| 1:00 pm  | <p><b>From Insight to Action: The Health Economy Lab</b><br/>           Facilitator: <b>Bill Dempster</b>, President – 3Sixty Public Affairs</p> <p><i>An interactive session where delegates will engage and define practical actions to strengthen Canada's health and life sciences competitiveness. Outputs will inform the conference report and used to guide policy dialogue in key consultations, such as the 2026 Federal Budget.</i></p>   |
| 2:00 pm  | <p><b>Roundtable event concludes</b><br/>           Guests attending the Annual General Meeting remain in the room</p>   |

## 2026 Annual General Meeting

**Date:** June 11, 2026

**Time:** 2:00 pm – 4:00 pm

**Location:** Delta Hotels Ottawa City Centre, 101 Lyon Street North, Ottawa, ON

After the official Roundtable proceedings conclude, participants are invited to join Research Canada's 2026 AGM, featuring a keynote by **David Coletto**, Founder, Abacus Data.

### Thank you to our sponsors



## Speaker Bios



### **Ritu Banerjee**

*Interim Head – Health Emergency Readiness Canada (HERC), Department of Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada*

Ritu is the Interim Head at Health Emergency Readiness Canada (HERC), formerly the Office of Life Sciences and Biomanufacturing Readiness (OLSBR) at Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada. Prior to that she was the Executive Director of the Results Division, Expenditure Management Sector at the Treasury Board Secretariat. Ritu has also worked at Employment and Social Development Canada on youth policy and has held various executive positions at Public Safety

Canada, primarily working on national security policy issues. She started her career in the federal government at the Department of Justice.

In addition to a Bachelor of Arts degree from McGill University, she has a Master of Arts in Political Science from the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London and a Law degree from the University of Ottawa. She has been a member of Ontario Bar since 2000.



### **MP Karim Bardeesy (Liberal - Taiaiko'n–Parkdale–High Park, Ontario)**

*Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Industry*

Karim is the Member of Parliament for Taiaiko'n–Parkdale–High Park and Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Industry, where he supports efforts to advance innovation, economic growth, and Canada's competitiveness.

Prior to entering public office, Karim co-founded The Dais, a public policy lab focused on the intersection of technology, education, and democratic renewal.

Earlier in his career, he worked in journalism and went on to serve as Executive

Director of Policy under Premiers Dalton McGuinty and Kathleen Wynne, where he played a key role in advancing major infrastructure and public policy initiatives in Ontario.

Karim is also an accomplished educator, having taught public policy and leadership at Toronto Metropolitan University and the University of Toronto, earning teaching awards for his work. He holds degrees from McGill University and Harvard University and has been recognized with the King Charles III Coronation Medal for his contributions to strengthening Canada's democracy.



### **Andrew Booth**

*Chief Financial Officer – AbCellera*

CFO at AbCellera, a clinical-stage biotechnology company focused on discovering and developing antibody medicines. Andrew joined the company in 2019 after previously serving on its Board of Directors, and played a central role in leading AbCellera's successful public listing on the Nasdaq stock exchange in 2020.

Andrew brings over two decades of experience in finance, business operations, and growth strategy within the life sciences sector. Prior to AbCellera, he spent 10 years at STEMCELL Technologies, where he served as both CFO and Chief Commercial Officer, helping scale the company during a period of rapid expansion. Over that time, he played a leadership role in attracting more than \$3 billion in investment into the Vancouver biotech ecosystem.

Earlier in his career, he worked at General Electric in senior roles focused on corporate strategy and major business transactions, including leading company acquisitions and partnerships across Europe, the Middle East, and Africa, as well as in its global life sciences business. He remains active in the sector as an advisor and board member, including with 5AM Ventures, Aspect Biosystems, and Karius Diagnostics.



**MP Maggie Chi (Liberal - Don Valley North, Ontario)**

*Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health*

Maggie was first elected as Member of Parliament for Don Valley North in 2025 and was subsequently named Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, where she supports national priorities related to healthcare policy and system innovation. She brings a background in public service and community engagement to her role in Parliament.

Prior to her election, Maggie built more than a decade of experience at Toronto City Hall, serving in senior advisory roles to councillors and as a policy and project advisor in the City's Parks and Recreation division. In these roles, she worked on issues including public safety, infrastructure, and local services.

Maggie brings a background in municipal policy and advisory work, with experience addressing community priorities such as infrastructure, public services, and local planning. Her approach to public service reflects a focus on practical implementation and coordination across different levels of government.



**Bill Dempster**

*President - 3Sixty Public Affairs*

As President of 3Sixty Public Affairs, Bill develops and implements high-impact government relations, policy and business strategies for clients in the health and life sciences sector. Drawing on over twenty years of business, legal and government experience, he helps clients successfully navigate dynamic political and policy environments to achieve their objectives. Bill represents 3Sixty on speaking opportunities, boards, working groups and workshops, in addition to leading teams of consultants on client mandates across the country.

Bill has previously worked for Pfizer Canada, a Member of Parliament, the United Nations and major Canadian law firms. He is fluently bilingual, and has degrees in history (King's College, University of Western Ontario), law (Queen's University), and a Masters of Arts in international affairs (Norman Paterson School of International Affairs, Carleton University). Bill was called to the Bar of Ontario in 2002.



**Alison Evans**

*President & CEO - Research Canada*

Alison is President and Chief Executive Officer of Research Canada, a national alliance dedicated to advancing health research and innovation. In this role, she represents a broad network of stakeholders including academia, healthcare institutions, industry, and non-profits, to strengthen Canada's research ecosystem and drive improved health and economic outcomes.

With more than 25 years of experience, Alison is a seasoned executive in strategic communications, public affairs, and advocacy, with a career spanning the public, private, and not-for-profit sectors. She has held senior leadership roles at organizations including CARE Canada, Universities Canada, and the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario (CHEO), leading initiatives in public engagement, partnerships, and national-level policy influence.

A recognized leader in stakeholder engagement and collaboration, Alison is known for building strong partnerships across sectors to align strategy, funding, and policy in support of innovation. Her work focuses on amplifying the impact of research and ensuring Canada remains globally competitive in health and science.



**Lauren Fischer**

*Lead, Government Affairs - AbbVie*

Lauren joined AbbVie in February 2022 as Lead, Government Affairs. She is an experienced biopharmaceutical leader who has led teams accountable to achieve access to new medicines for Canadians, by securing drug plan coverage and fostering public policy receptive to innovative medicines. She has expertise across several areas: health technology assessment; price negotiation; stakeholder relations; government affairs and communications. As a committee Vice Chair for the Canadian pharmaceutical industry association, Innovative Medicines Canada,

Lauren received the 2020 Excellence in Leadership Award for leading successful life sciences policy work. She is a current board member of Life Sciences Ontario and Research Canada and served two terms as a board member of the Ontario Chamber of Commerce.

Lauren has global experience as a diplomat in Canada's Foreign Service. She holds an MBA from INSEAD business school in France.



**Kimberley Hanson**

*Chief External Relations Officer - Breakthrough T1D*

Kim is a senior Canadian health sector executive and communications leader, currently serving as Chief External Relations Officer at Breakthrough T1D Canada since October 2025.

She brings extensive experience in advocacy, public affairs, and stakeholder engagement across the health and non-profit sectors. She previously served as CEO of HealthPartners and held senior leadership roles at Hill+Knowlton Strategies and Diabetes Canada, where she led national advocacy efforts and contributed to major policy initiatives in chronic disease prevention and care.

Earlier in her career, she held leadership positions in communications and strategy at Export Development Canada and Payments Canada. She holds an MBA from the University of Ottawa and is a recognized advocate for improving health outcomes in Canada.

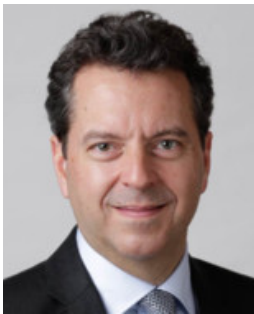
**Kirsten Hillman**

*Former Ambassador of Canada to the United States*

Kirsten is one of Canada's foremost experts in trade, diplomacy, and international affairs, with more than 30 years of experience as a trade lawyer, policy leader, and negotiator. She is widely recognized for her deep expertise in global trade and her ability to navigate complex, high-stakes Canada-U.S. issues.

From 2020 to February 2026, Hillman served as Canada's Ambassador to the United States, leading the relationship through a period marked by trade tensions, the COVID-19 pandemic, and multiple U.S. administrations. During this time, she was a central strategic voice for Canada in Washington.

Prior to her appointment, Kirsten served as Deputy and Acting Ambassador in Washington and played a key role in renegotiating NAFTA into the Canada-U.S.-Mexico Agreement (CUSMA). She later served as Canada's Chief Trade Negotiator, overseeing major trade files including the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership. Earlier in her career, she held senior legal and policy roles, including as Canada's senior legal adviser to the World Trade Organization.

**Martin LeBlanc**

*Co-founder and Vice-Chairman - CellCarta*

Martin is Co-Founder and Vice-Chairman of CellCarta, a global contract research organization specializing in precision medicine and laboratory services for the biopharmaceutical industry. He previously served as the company's Chief Executive Officer, leading its growth from a Canadian biotech venture into a global organization with operations across multiple continents.

With more than 30 years of experience in the life sciences sector, Martin has built and scaled companies at the intersection of science, technology, and commercialization. Under his leadership, CellCarta (formerly Caprion Biosciences) experienced sustained growth, including multiple acquisitions and the expansion of its global footprint.

Earlier in his career, Martin worked as a management consultant at McKinsey & Company and held senior leadership roles in the biotech sector, including at Advanced Bioconcept. He remains active across the life sciences ecosystem as a board member, advisor, and contributor to national initiatives focused on strengthening Canada's research and innovation capacity.

**Dr. Stephen Lucas, CM**

*Chief Executive Officer - Mitacs*

CEO of Mitacs, a national organization that supports business-academic collaboration through post-secondary research internships. He assumed the role in October 2024 following a distinguished career of more than 35 years in the federal public service.

Dr. Lucas served as Deputy Minister of Health Canada from 2019 to 2024, where he provided leadership during the COVID-19 pandemic and oversaw major national health policy initiatives. He also held senior roles as Deputy Minister of Environment and Climate Change Canada and as Deputy Secretary of Plans, Consultations and Intergovernmental Affairs at the Privy Council Office, advising on whole-of-government priorities and federal-provincial relations.

A respected leader in public policy and science-based decision-making, Dr. Lucas has received numerous honours for his contributions to Canada, including appointment as a Member of the Order of Canada and the Institute of Public Administration of Canada's Vanier Medal. He is active in the research and health communities, serving on the Board of Directors of the Gairdner Foundation, as Chair of the Research Advisory Committee for Nova Scotia Health, and as a Senior Fellow at the Munk School of Global Affairs and Public Policy.



**Dr. Stéphanie Michaud**

*President and CEO - BioCanRx*

President and Chief Executive Officer of BioCanRx, Canada's Immunotherapy Network, where she leads a national effort to advance the development and commercialization of cancer immunotherapies. She brings more than 20 years of experience across the public, private, and not-for-profit sectors in research, science, technology, and innovation policy and program delivery.

A recognized leader in Canada's life sciences ecosystem, Dr. Michaud focuses on building partnerships across government, academia, and industry to accelerate the translation of cutting-edge research into real-world impact for patients. Throughout her career, she has played a key role in shaping national science policy and strengthening collaboration across the innovation landscape.

Dr. Michaud began her career as a synthetic organic chemist, contributing to several patents, and has since held a range of leadership roles across the sector. She currently serves on the boards and advisory bodies of several organizations, including Research Canada, CQDM, and the Canadian Cancer Research Alliance, and is a member of the Public Policy Forum's Life Sciences Leadership Table.



**Dr. Brad Wouters**

*Executive Vice President of Science and Research - University Health Network (UHN)*

At UHN, Dr. Wouters leads one of Canada's largest hospital-based research programs. An internationally recognized cancer researcher, he oversees strategy and performance across basic, translational, and clinical research, with a focus on fostering excellence and collaboration across disciplines.

Dr. Wouters joined UHN in 2008 as a Senior Scientist and Director of the Princess Margaret Hypoxia Program, and later served as Interim Director of Research at the Princess Margaret Cancer Centre. In his current role, he is focused on creating an environment that supports innovation and accelerates the translation of scientific discovery into improved patient outcomes.

Prior to joining UHN, Dr. Wouters was Professor and Head of Experimental Radiation Oncology at Maastricht University in the Netherlands. He also holds faculty appointments at the University of Toronto, where he contributes to advancing research and training in cancer biology and radiation oncology.