

PEOPLE NEWS



AllerGen investigator Timothy Caulfield awarded prestigious Trudeau Fellowship

Professor Timothy Caulfield, a health law expert whose work debunks common health myths and informs the development of Canadian health and science policies, was recently awarded a [Trudeau Fellowship](#).

The fellowship, valued at \$225,000 over three years, recognizes exceptional contributions in research, creativity and commitment to solving social issues important to Canada.

Professor Caulfield is the [Canada Research Chair in Health Law and Policy](#) and a professor at the University of Alberta. His research explores the legal, ethical and social implications of emerging health technologies, such as genetic testing and stem cell research; complementary and alternative medicine; the commercialization of research; and access to health care, among others.

He is also a Principal Investigator on several AllerGen research projects that broaden our understanding of how evidence can be used in the development of public policies and legislative initiatives relevant to the asthma and allergy community.

Established in 2001, the [Pierre Elliott Trudeau Foundation](#) supports outstanding scholars in four areas that relate to the life and work of former Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau: human rights and dignity; responsible citizenship; international affairs; and the environment. Each year, the Foundation selects up to five fellows who have demonstrated excellence in one or more of these thematic areas.

The 2013 Trudeau Fellowship winners were announced on October 16, 2013, at the Université de Montréal in Montréal, Québec.

See Prof. Caulfield's Fellowship profile [here](#).



AllerGen investigator joins Board of Directors of Clinical Trials Ontario

Dr. [Anne Ellis](#), a Kingston-based allergy specialist and an AllerGen Principal Investigator, has been appointed to the Board of Directors of Clinical Trials Ontario for a three-year term.

Established in 2012, [Clinical Trials Ontario](#) is an independent not-for-profit organization dedicated to attracting global clinical trials investments to the province. The organization aims to improve the speed and reduce costs of multi-centre clinical trials by

streamlining the research ethics approval process, harmonizing administrative processes, and improving participant recruitment and retention through education about the benefits of clinical trials.

Dr. Ellis is Associate Professor and Chair, Division of Allergy & Immunology, Department of Medicine, Queen's University and Principal Investigator of AllerGen's [Clinical Investigator Collaborative—Allergic Rhinitis](#).

AllerGen Committee Updates

AllerGen wishes to thank the Board of Directors, the Research Management Committee and its many advisory committee members for their time and expertise in guiding the Network's strategic direction and activities. Noted below are recent changes to committee membership.

Board of Directors

Completed terms:

- [Dr. Claude Roy](#), Nov 2012
- [Paul Lucas](#), Mar 2013
- [Dr. Richard Hegele](#), Nov 2013
- [Dr. Bernard Prigent](#), Jan 2014

Appointments:

- [Dr. Harissios Vliagoftis](#), Jan 2014

Research Management Committee

Appointments:

- [Dr. John Gordon](#), Nov 2012
- [Dr. Allan Becker](#), Mar 2013

Network-Supported Intellectual Property (NSIP) Advisory Committee

Appointments:

- [Luc Marengère](#), Mar 2013
- [Neal Lemon](#), Jan 2014

Resignations:

- [Arlene Yee](#), Sep 2013



ALLERGEN PROGRAM UPDATES

AllerGen's Strategic Initiatives Program

AllerGen's Strategic Initiatives (SI) program supports time-sensitive strategic initiatives that enable Network investigators to respond rapidly to new opportunities in two priority NCE mandate areas: knowledge mobilization and commercialization.

The SI program funds up to \$50,000.00 per award and is open to all AllerGen investigators. SI initiatives must be completed within one year of being funded.

Knowledge Mobilization Strategic Initiatives (SI-KM) facilitate the mobilization of AllerGen-funded or related research to enhance innovation, policy and/or social program delivery for the benefit of Canadians. SI-KM funds may be used to: organize knowledge dissemination events; develop educational programs or tools that mobilize research findings; support activities, such as expert workshops, that package and disseminate research evidence to inform policymaking; or realize other initiatives with the mobilization of strong evidence in partnership with a user group or sector.

Commercialization Strategic Initiatives (SI-C) develop the commercial potential of discoveries emerging from Network research and/or aligned with AllerGen's mission and vision. SI-C funds may be used to: facilitate the establishment of "proof of principle" or the protection of intellectual property; develop a business plan; identify a path-to-market; support commercialization-oriented follow-on research associated with a completed Network project; or realize other intellectual property protection, development and uptake initiatives with commercial potential.

SI applications are accepted twice a year. The next submission deadline is April 30, with decisions announced by June 30.

For more information about eligibility requirements, the application process or any other aspect of the SI program, contact:

José J. Mangles, Manager, Research and Partnerships, at 905-525-9140 x26092 or josemangles@allergen-nce.ca



New Brochure Supports Path to Commercialization

Commercializing your research: *From Lab to Life* is a new AllerGen brochure that guides Network investigators through the steps involved in assessing and developing the commercial potential of AllerGen-supported research results.

This brochure outlines the initial steps in research commercialization—from discovery

through disclosure and “pre-incubation” planning—as well as the types of support available from university technology transfer offices (TTOs) and the AllerGen Administrative Centre.

Commercializing your research: From Lab to Life can be downloaded [here](#).

RECENT EVENTS

AllerGen at the DOHaD World Congress

The [8th World Congress on Developmental Origins of Health and Disease](#) (DOHaD) took place November 17-20, 2013, in Suntec, Singapore.

Dr. Judah Denburg (AllerGen’s Scientific Director and CEO), Dr. Malcolm Sears, Dr. Anita Kozyrskyj, Dr. Meghan Azad, Sarah Bridgman (AllerGen HQP) and Rishma Chooniedass (CHILD Study site coordinator, University of Manitoba) represented the Network at this international meeting.

Themed *From Science to Policy and Action*, the Congress brought together researchers, academics, policymakers and healthcare providers from across the world to present on the latest science and developments in basic, clinical, public health and programmatic research into the early-life and developmental origins of health and disease.

Plenary sessions spanned multi-disciplinary topics ranging from epigenetics to economics. The programme also included a series of satellite symposia, workshops,

special programmes for students and emerging researchers, as well as number of panel discussions on controversial topics.



Back: R. Chooniedass, M. Azad, J. Denburg. Front: M. Sears, A. Kozyrskyj, S. Bridgman. Photo courtesy of M. Azad.

A plenary session on the topic of epigenetics included presentations by [Keith Godfrey](#) (University of Southampton) and [Joe Nadeau](#) (Boston University), which emphasized: the paradigm shift away from Mendelian laws to think about heritability in new ways (e.g., trans-generational environmental heritability); the critical need for major bioinformatics platforms; and the convergence of common (epigenetic and genetic, as well as microbiome-dependent) pathways, which may underlie the inexorable development of many chronic, non-communicable diseases from pre-conception through pregnancy and into the life course.

Dr. Judah Denburg participated in a satellite meeting of Canadian DOHaD researchers, including [Dr. Shoo Lee](#)

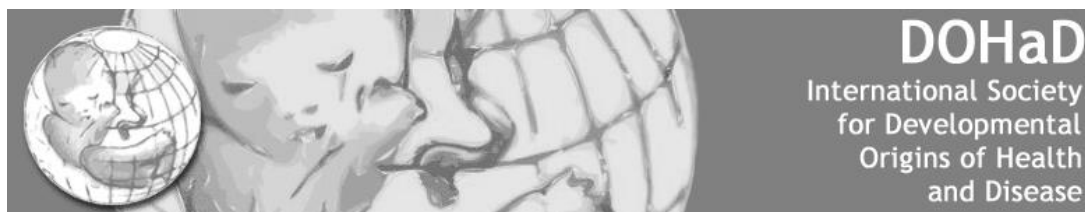


(Scientific Director of CIHR's Institute of Human Development, Child and Youth Health), to discuss CIHR's upcoming DOHaD funding initiative and to explore the formation of a Canadian DOHaD affiliate. Dr. Denburg offered AllerGen's support for the initiative.

Dr. Meghan Azad presented abstracts entitled *Role of maternal distress in the perinatal programming of allergic disease, Impact of cesarian section delivery and breastfeeding on infant gut microbiota during the first year of life, and Antibiotic exposure during infancy and development of overweight in childhood*. The conference offered Dr. Azad the opportunity to receive "invaluable feedback from expert DOHaD researchers that will help guide my future research plans."

Ms. Sarah Bridgman presented preliminary data from the SyMBIOTA study, which uses biological samples from AllerGen's CHILD Study. This conference "furthered my personal development as a trainee epidemiologist with an interest in nutrition and child health, and provided insights that may lead to the development of interesting questions/hypothesis that could be applied to the SyMBIOTA/CHILD cohort study here in Canada."

The [2014 DOHaD Conference](#) will take place April 9-10 in Perth, Australia.





Food Safety a Priority for Health Canada's Food Directorate

On November 18, 2013, in Scarborough, ON, AllerGen's Managing Director and COO, Diana Royce, represented AllerGen at the *Information Exchange Forum with Ontario Food Stakeholders*, organized by the Health Canada Food Directorate.

The event was hosted by the Director General of the Food Directorate, [Dr. Samuel Godefroy](#). Dr. Godefroy was the lead partner in the AllerGen-funded project *Surveying Canadians to Assess the Prevalence of Common Food Allergies and Attitudes towards Food Labelling and Risk (SCAAALAR)*, which informed a change to federal food labelling regulations in 2011. (Read more about the project [here](#).)

The information exchange event strengthened links between the Directorate and invited stakeholders—health professionals, consumer/patient groups and members of academia. Recent changes in

government—the trend toward centralization at the federal level, and the transition of the food safety portfolio of the [Canadian Food Inspection Agency \(CFIA\)](#) from the Minister of Agriculture to the Minister of Health—drives this new approach to community engagement. Regional fora, to be held on a regular basis, will keep stakeholders informed about and engaged with the Directorate through this transition.

Dr. Godefroy presented the 2013-2014 Directorate business plan and provided an update on the CFIA transition to Health Canada oversight. The event highlighted the importance of food safety in the Directorate's portfolio.

Health Canada's [Food Directorate](#) is the federal health authority responsible for establishing policies, setting standards, and providing advice and information on the safety and nutritional value of food.





Former AllerGen Investigator Delivers Prestigious Alf Nachemson Lecture

On November 21, 2013, former AllerGen investigator Dr. Mieke Koehoorn delivered the [2013 Alf Nachemson Memorial Lecture](#) in Toronto, ON. AllerGen's Managing Director and COO, Diana Royce, attended.

[Dr. Koehoorn](#) is a senior scientist for [The Partnership for Work, Health and Safety](#) at The University of British Columbia, and a professor in the university's School of Population and Public Health. She was also Principal Investigator for the AllerGen Public Health, Policy and Society project *Asthma and BC workers*, completed during AllerGen's first funding cycle (2005-2012). The project investigated the association between asthma rates and work characteristics among British Columbians. (Read about the project [here](#).)

Dr. Koehoorn spoke to the theme of *Research informing policy: How to make an impact*, drawing upon her experience bringing research to bear on worker compensation policy in British Columbia.

In her talk, Dr. Koehoorn emphasized:

- The importance of strong relationships with policymakers: "A research partnership must be a long-term, sustained relationship not unlike a common-law union."
- The need to generate results for the partner's use (especially when seeking access to a partner's data): "Policymakers want access to knowledge..." When using data owned by

policymakers, one should negotiate up front a "holding period" on results, to allow the government agency use of the results for a certain period before one can share or publish the results oneself.

By leveraging strong relationships with policymakers, Dr. Koehoorn gained access to valuable provincial data sets, one outcome of which is the creation of the online [Population Data BC](#) resource, which offers researchers "access to one of the world's largest collections of health care, health services and population health data."

At the event, Dr. Koehoorn was introduced by the current president of IWH, [Dr. Cameron Mustard](#) (School of Hygiene and Public Health, The Johns Hopkins University), a founding research co-leader in AllerGen's first funding cycle for Theme V: Prevention, Control & Public Policy.

Dr. Mustard was also the Principal Investigator for the AllerGen-supported project *Antenatal steroid therapy for fetal lung maturation: Is there an association with childhood asthma?* The project studied the long-term effects on lung health of steroid use to assist the breathing of prematurely born infants. (Read about the project [here](#).)

The Nachemson Lecture is the foremost public event of its sponsor organization, the [Institute for Work and Health \(IWH\)](#), and features speakers who have made a significant and distinguished contribution to the application of research evidence to practise.



Rethinking Networks

Networks Leadership Symposium 2013

Should we be re-thinking networks? What do we know about creating and managing networks? How do we know if networks are working? How do we sustain networks over time or wind them down? Under what circumstances are networks the optimal organizational form?

The Networks Leadership Symposium, held November 12-13, 2013, at Royal Roads University in Victoria, BC, addressed these questions, with the participation of AllerGen's Managing Director and COO, Diana Royce.

Themed "rethinking networks," the Symposium attracted leaders of a wide array of networks—NCE, CIHR, non-profit and professional—and conveyed a number of key messages relevant to AllerGen as it prepares for its mid-term review in 2015, including:

- Networks must be able to define their collaborative advantage/value added, because networks are NOT the most efficient or easy business models to manage or administer.
- Bringing in outside advisors causes actors and managers to experience cognitive variation—preventing "group think" around certain ideas and perspectives.
- A network that is either "too tight" or "too loose" performs poorly.

More information about the Symposium is available [here](#).

Featured speakers included:

- Michael McGuire, *Professor of Public and Environmental Affairs, Indiana University*
- Brint Milward, *Director of the School of Government and Public Policy, University of Arizona*
- Dr Siv Vangen, *Head of the Dept. of Public Leadership and Social Enterprise, The Open University Business School, UK*
- Dr. Jessica Retrum, *Assistant Professor, Dept. of Social Work, Metro State University Denver*
- Bill Tholl, *Founding Executive Director, Canadian Health Leadership Network (CHLNet)*



New mental health ‘app’ announced at The Sandbox Project’s 4th annual conference

On January 23, 2014, national child and youth health charity The Sandbox Project hosted its 4th annual conference, announcing [\\$450,000 in new funding](#) to support young mental health patients across the country.

Funded jointly by TELUS, the RBC Foundation, the Graham Boeckh Foundation and the Echo Foundation, the grant will help The Sandbox Project launch a smartphone application designed to help youth living with mental illness. Through the app, users will be able to access to their personal health records; record and track their symptoms, challenges and successes; and stay connected with their health care providers through instant messaging.

[Dr. Stan Kutcher](#), Sun Life Financial Chair in Adolescent Mental Health and Co-Chair of The Sandbox Project’s Mental Health Working Group, made the announcement during his keynote presentation, stating that the new mobile app gives mental health patients and their families more responsibility and empowerment in their treatment and recovery.

Other conference keynote speakers included the Honourable Dr. K. Kellie Leitch, Minister of Labour and Minister of Status of Women; the Honourable Candice Bergen, Minister of State (Social Development); and Dr. Christine Hampson, President & CEO of The Sandbox Project.

[The Sandbox Project](#), an AllerGen partner, is a national charity devoted to improving health outcomes of Canadian children with respect to injury prevention, obesity, mental health, and the environment.

AllerGen staff, researchers and Network trainee Timothy Chung attended the conference. Chung, an undergraduate student from The University of Toronto, is among a select group of 17- to 26-year-olds from across Canada chosen for The Sandbox Project’s inaugural [Young Canadians Roundtable on Health \(YCRH\)](#).



The Honourable Dr. K. Kellie Leitch (L) and AllerGen Trainee Timothy Chung.



TRAINEE/HQP OPPORTUNITIES

AllerGen Emerging Clinician-Scientist Research Fellowship

Application Deadline: April 11, 2014

\$250,000 AWARD

Applicants must be Canadian citizens or permanent residents who are enrolled in or have completed Clinical Immunology and Allergy sub-specialty training. Individuals who pursue PhD studies following sub-specialty training are also eligible. Applications will be accepted two years prior to and two years after completion of sub-specialty training. The Fellowship must be held in Canada at a Canadian university or research institute.

www.allergen-nce.ca For more information, contact michelleharkness@allergen-nce.ca

2014 AllerGen *Emerging Clinician-Scientist Research Fellowship*

The AllerGen *Emerging Clinician-Scientist Research Fellowship* award enables Canadian clinicians to pursue allergy, asthma and/or anaphylaxis-related academic research training following completion of Clinical Immunology and Allergy sub-specialty training. A \$100,000 stipend plus a \$25,000 research allowance is awarded in each of the two years of the fellowship.

Several changes have been made to this award's eligibility criteria:

- Eligible candidates include applicants who pursue PhD studies following completion of Allergy and Clinical Immunology sub-specialty training.
- Eligible candidates include applicants who received their Allergy and Clinical Immunology sub-specialty training outside of Canada, provided they are licensed in allergy/immunology by the Royal College of Physicians of Canada.

- Applications will be accepted two years prior to, or after, successful completion of sub-specialty training or PhD studies.

For more information on the AllerGen *Emerging Clinician-Scientist Research Fellowship*, click [here](#) or contact:

Michelle Harkness, HQP and Events Coordinator, at 905-525-9140 x26633 or michelleharkness@allergen-nce.ca

**Next application deadline:
11 April 2014**

Read about past Fellowship recipients [here](#).



AllerGen *International Trainee Research Visit Program*

Through a competitive process, the *International Trainee Research Visit Program* offers funding for AllerGen graduate students and postdoctoral fellows to spend from six weeks to six months outside of Canada working on research projects with international investigators and their research teams.

Research visits must contribute to the advancement of an AllerGen research project and offer training or skill acquisition experience not available in Canada.

More information on the *International Trainee Research Visit Program* is also available [here](#).

Prior to completing an application, interested trainees must indicate their intention to apply by contacting:

Michelle Harkness, HQP and Events Coordinator, at 905-525-9140 x26633 or michelleharkness@allergen-nce.ca

**Next application deadline:
1 April 2014**

AllerGen's 9th Annual Trainee Symposium

April 30 – May 2, 2014, Richmond, BC

The 9th Annual AllerGen Trainee Symposium will be held April 30 – May 2, 2014, at the Vancouver Airport Marriott Hotel in Richmond, BC.

The symposium offers Network trainees and ASNPN members a unique value-added career development opportunity, imparting skills and knowledge complementary to their academic and scientific training. The event also serves as a forum for networking among trainees and early-career professionals with a shared interest in

allergy and asthma research and clinical practice.

Registration for the Symposium is free and AllerGen will reimburse the cost of flights and accommodations (based on double occupancy) for registered participants.

For more information or to register for the 2014 Symposium, please contact:

Michelle Harkness, HQP and Events Coordinator, at 905-525-9140 x26633 or michelleharkness@allergen-nce.ca



2014 AllerGen Undergraduate Summer Studentships

Allergy, Asthma and Anaphylaxis Research Training Awards

In 2014, AllerGen will award up to 10 summer studentships. These awards are designed to foster an interest in research or clinical practice relevant to allergic and related immune diseases among undergraduate students, leading to the pursuit of advanced studies in these areas.

The awards are funded through a combination of AllerGen and matching partner (non-AllerGen) funding, for a total value of \$6,000 per award.

For more information on the AllerGen Undergraduate Summer Studentships, click [here](#) or contact:

Michelle Harkness, HQP and Events Coordinator, at 905-525-9140 x26633 or michelleharkness@allergen-nce.ca

**DEADLINE REMINDER:
7 February 2014**

Stories recently posted on the AllerGen website

- The CHILD Study helps provide answers about family pets and childhood allergies
- "Dean Befus Asthma Clinic" opens in El Salvador
- Trainee Meghan Azad publishes on probiotics and childhood asthma in *BMJ*
- AllerGen researchers comment on Canadian recommendation to introduce potentially allergenic foods as early as six months
- Dr. Allan Becker brings the CHILD Study to Manitoba television viewers
- "Bold innovation" to develop bronchitis test strip wins Grand Challenges Canada award

Read these stories [here](#) (scroll down for older postings)

Media coverage to watch for

The CHILD Study will be featured in an up-coming episode of CBC's *The Nature of Things*: "The Allergy Fix," set to air February 27, 2014, at 7:00 p.m.

Send newsletter enquiries and comments to:
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