

AllerGen Renewal 2012-2019

AllerGen is currently in the last year of its first seven years of NCE funding. The written components of the renewal process, including a progress report, strategic plan 2012-2019, letters of support from current and prospective partner organizations and CVs of investigators were submitted to the NCE on August 11th. Development of these materials began last July and involved Network investigators, trainees, partners and stakeholder organizations. We sincerely thank all involved and a special thank you to those who

provided letters of support, testimonials and advice along the way. Your participation in the renewal process ensured that AllerGen is best positioned for renewal for a final seven years of NCE support. The next step in the review process is a full-day meeting on September 20, 2011, with an international expert review panel selected by the NCE. AllerGen should know the results of its application for NCE funding renewal by mid-December 2011.

AllerGen Emerging Clinician-Scientist Fellowships - \$250,000 over two years

Inaugural Announcement

On April 11, 2011, at the Meakins-Christie Laboratory, McGill University, Montreal, QC, AllerGen announced Dr. Moshe Ben-Shoshan, from McGill University and the Montreal Children's Hospital, as the inaugural winner of its prestigious Emerging Clinician-Scientist Fellowship award. This award is an innovative solution to the shortage of allergy and clinical immunology

researchers and specialists in Canada.



Dr. Ben-Shoshan completed his pediatric residency at Sourasky medical center in Tel-Aviv, Israel and

subsequently completed his fellowship in Pediatric Allergy/Clinical Immunology at Montreal Children's Hospital in 2009. Over the past year, he worked as a research fellow under the mentorship of Dr. Ann Clarke, Associate Professor, Department of Medicine, McGill University. His primary research interest is the epidemiology of food allergy. He is currently a physician in the Department of Allergy and Immunology at Montreal Children's Hospital and is

involved in several AllerGen research initiatives on food allergy and anaphylaxis.

2nd Call for Proposals – Deadline October 14th

Following on the success of its first competition, AllerGen encourages all eligible clinicians completing a Clinical Immunology and Allergy Sub-specialty programme in Canada to apply for its AllerGen Emerging Clinician-Scientist Research Fellowship 2011-2012. This Fellowship aims to enable Canadian Clinical Immunologists and Allergists to pursue allergy, asthma and/or anaphylaxis academic research training immediately following their Clinical Immunology and Allergy sub-specialty training in order to:

- Strengthen the academic capacity of Canadian Clinical Immunology and Allergy sub-specialists
- Increase Canadian capacity for translational Clinical Immunology and Allergy research
- Facilitate enhanced patient care through excellence in basic and clinical Allergy and related immune disease research.

Eligible academic foci include basic and/or clinical research related to allergy, asthma and/or anaphylaxis. The application form can be found on AllerGen's home page at www.allergen-nce.ca

AllerGen's 7th Annual Research Conference

Toronto, Ontario will be host to the next annual research conference. This conference is the premier event for Network researchers, students, research partners and stakeholder organization representatives to share their research results, listen to student presentations and network with national and international colleagues. Registration will open in the fall and we encourage you to mark your calendars and save the date for February 5-7, 2012.

Niagara MP Reintroduces Motion To Raise Awareness For Anaphylaxis



On June 16, 2011, Niagara West – Glanbrook Member of Parliament, Dean Allison gave notice for a motion in the House of Commons. Motion-230 reads: That in the opinion of the House, anaphylaxis is a serious concern for an increasing number of

Canadians and the government should take the appropriate measures necessary to ensure these Canadians are able to maintain a high quality of life.

This anaphylaxis awareness motion is one that Mr. Allison championed in the last session of Parliament, working with his colleagues and the Health Minister,

and leading a House of Commons debate where Motion-546 received all-Party support.

The federal election was called before a vote could be held, and therefore, the reintroduction of the MP's motion is welcomed by hundreds of family members of the Canadian Anaphylaxis Initiative (CAI), a volunteer network of concerned families who have been working with MPs over the past year to raise awareness of severe allergies in Ottawa.

AllerGen NCE has met with MPs in Ottawa, including Dean Allison and Joy Smith, as part of a delegation organized by the Niagara Anaphylaxis Support & Knowledge (NASK) to promote federal support for such measures and for additional research funding for related diseases.

AllerGen's 6th Annual Research Conference

Last February, AllerGen held its sixth annual research conference in picturesque Vancouver, British Columbia. This event was our largest to date, with over 225 attendees including national and international speakers and partner organizations, AllerGen investigators, researchers, students and new professionals, stakeholder organizations, sponsors and members of the general public.



Keynote presentations:



Dr. Wesley Burks, MD, Kiser-Arena Professor of Pediatrics and Chief of the Division of Pediatric Allergy and Immunology, Duke University Medical Centre
Developing New Treatment Options for Food Allergy and Anaphylaxis



Dr. Geoffrey Maksym, PhD, Director and Associate Professor, School of Biomedical Engineering and Physics and Atmospheric Science, Dalhousie University
Capacity Building for Commercialization in Canada: Bridging the Interdisciplinary Gaps

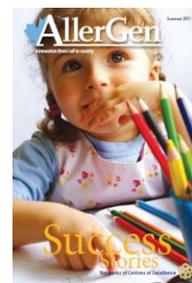
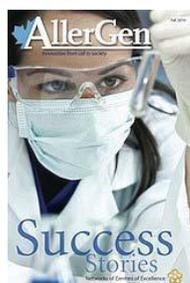


Dr. Mark Rothenberg, MD, PhD, Director of the Division of Allergy and Immunology, Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Centre; Professor, Pediatrics, Cincinnati Children's and the University of Cincinnati College of Medicine
Bench-to-Bedside-to-Community: Eosinophilic Disorders of the Gastrointestinal Tract

One of the highlights of this year's event were the trainee poster presentations. The previous year's record of 51 posters was significantly increased by 33%! Of the 68 posters on display this year, 61 competed for awards. AllerGen also added a new capacity building opportunity for students to develop their presentation skills and showcase their work this year. Students presented a one-minute "elevator pitch" style presentation about the "what, so what, now what" of their research during oral "lightning" round sessions.

AllerGen Success Stories

Three issues of AllerGen's Research Success Stories have been mailed to Network partners and are available in soft copy on the AllerGen website. These volumes are part of an ongoing series of publications intended to make Network research results accessible to lay audiences. It is our hope that these publications offer those living with allergic disease and their families and friends practical information about new, leading-edge research undertaken by Canadian researchers, trainees and partners.



Stakeholder and Partner Highlights

The **Asthma Society of Canada (ASC)** is pleased to announce the expansion of the former National Asthma Helpline into the Allergy and Asthma Education and Support Program. The **Allergies Count Too (ACT)** initiative will provide those living with asthma and/or allergies, their family members and health care professionals with relevant, up-to-date information about asthma, as well as enhanced education and support for allergy management. www.asthma.ca/allergies/



Anaphylaxis Canada launched a Public Service Announcement for teens titled The First Kiss. You can view this video on their home page at www.anaphylaxis.ca



Allergic Living Magazine Expands into USA

The purpose of *Allergic Living* magazine is to engage, inform and assist readers living with food and environmental allergies and asthma. It offers in-depth articles about these conditions as well as useful tips and advice columns. The magazine expanded distribution to the USA with the first US issue published in Summer 2011. www.allergicliving.com



AllerGen-funded research findings inform government decision to update Canadian food labelling regulations

On February 14, 2011, Canada's Health Minister, Leona Aglukkaq, announced new regulations that will require food manufacturers and importers to clearly indicate certain food allergens, gluten sources, and added sulphites on the labels of most prepackaged food products. Industry was given 18 months to implement the new regulations, with compliance required by August 4, 2012. Changes to Canadian Food and Drug Regulations will require the declaration in plain language of allergens in food products including almonds, Brazil nuts, cashews, hazelnuts, macadamia nuts, pecans, pine nuts, pistachios, walnuts, peanuts, sesame seeds, wheat and triticale, eggs, milk, soybeans, crustaceans, shellfish, fish and mustard seed.

AllerGen congratulates the Minister on this announcement and supports the introduction of these changes in order to better protect Canadians with food allergies. AllerGen's research into food labelling, in partnership with Health Canada, contributed key research evidence that factored into the Minister's decision to announce new regulations.

AllerGen research teams led by investigators Drs. Ann Clarke (McGill University) and Susan Elliott (University of Waterloo) are actively involved in food allergy studies and continue to work closely with patient stakeholder organizations including Anaphylaxis Canada, and policy makers such as Health Canada.

Given the findings of the *The Surveying Canadians to Access the Prevalence of Common Food Allergies and Attitudes towards Food Labelling and Risk* (SCAALAR) study and with a particular focus on vulnerable Canadian populations including low income families, Aboriginals and new Canadians, another AllerGen-funded research project partnered with Health Canada, the *Surveying Prevalence (of food) Allergy (in) All Canadian Environments* (SPACE) Study, is in progress and set to be completed in early 2012.

These projects are part of a national research focus in food allergy research and development in association with AllerGen's CanGoFAR research team, led by Dr. Jean Marshall at Dalhousie University in Halifax, Nova Scotia.

AllerGen Regional Partner Consultations

From December 7, 2010 to March 29, 2011, AllerGen held six Regional Partner Meetings. These meetings were held in Ottawa, Montreal, Vancouver, Edmonton, Toronto and Burlington (Ontario). Meetings were attended by 57 representatives from 40 partner organizations, affiliations and groups. These meetings informed AllerGen's development of its strategic plan 2012-2019 by enabling us to:

- Better understand our partners' strategic priorities and needs
- Share AllerGen's emerging research, commercialization and knowledge mobilization priorities to 2019
- Identify alignment with AllerGen's strategic priorities and opportunities for collaboration that best address our partner's needs and gaps.

Thanks to all those who participated. We look forward to a follow-up series of meetings beginning Fall 2011.

AllerGen Participation at Stakeholder Events

April 28-30 – AllerGen participated in the *2011 Canadian Respiratory Conference* in Niagara Falls presented by the Canadian Thoracic Society, The Lung Association and the Canadian COPD Alliance with collaboration from the Lung Association of Ontario. The event featured national and international presenters including several AllerGen investigators including: Drs Teresa To, Brian Rowe, James Martin and Paul O’Byrne, who provided the closing keynote presentation.

May 7 – *Anaphylaxis Day Spring Conference*, hosted by Anaphylaxis Canada. AllerGen attended the one-day event which took place at the Ontario Science Centre. This patient-oriented day is an excellent opportunity to learn about anaphylaxis and network with people living with anaphylaxis and their families.

ASTHMA SYMPOSIUM 2011 **July 9** – AllerGen organized and hosted the *1st International Symposium on the Economics of Asthma and Asthma Care* as a pre-conference to the *International Health Economics Association World Congress*. The purpose of this event was to explore existing economic research on asthma and plan a future research agenda for examining the broad range of economic implications and impacts of asthma in Canada and abroad. AllerGen would like to thank the Asthma Society of Canada and GlaxoSmithKline for their contributions to this event.

AllerGen Featured Speakers included:

Mark Fitzgerald, MD, MB, University of British Columbia, Vancouver General Hospital Respiratory Medicine Division and Centre for Lung Health, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada

Larry Lynd, PhD, University of British Columbia

Wendy Ungar, PhD, University of Toronto and The Hospital for Sick Children, Toronto

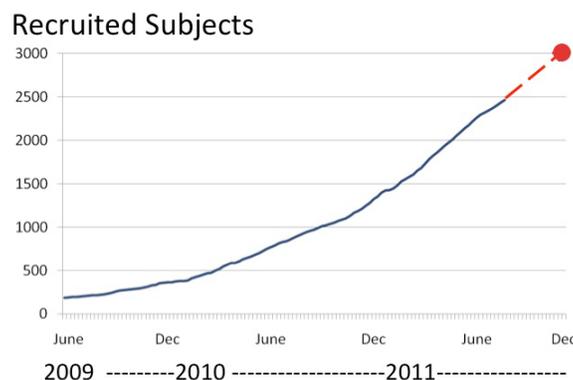
AllerGen’s Managing Director, **Diana Royce, EdD**, facilitated the Roundtable Discussion on Future Research Opportunities.

The CHILD Study Update

This groundbreaking birth cohort study will position Canada as a leader in understanding and halting the global allergy and asthma epidemic; it is a 21st century, “made-in-Canada” study, similar to the notable US Framingham study.

- Researchers are creating the most comprehensive immunological, psycho-social, geographical, genetic and environmental profiles of the Study’s parents/children ever gathered to date, anywhere.
- The CHILD Study will enable researchers to track and understand the development of allergies, asthma, and other chronic diseases across a large, highly representative Canadian population.
- The groundbreaking CHILD Study was featured in *Science* (VOL 330 26 NOVEMBER 2010) as an example of a critically-important platform for understanding the development of many chronic diseases.

Figure 1. Recruitment CHILD Study



CHILD Study reach is extensive and growing

- **Over 2,500 pregnant mothers** have already been recruited, representing some 7,500 participants (babies-to-be, mothers and some fathers). 3,000 subjects will be recruited by December 2011. The final target is 5,000 babies recruited by 2013.
- **41 investigators in 4 provinces** are directly involved with the CHILD Study.
- CHILD Study has **created 71 full-time equivalent new research jobs** at locations across Canada.

Figure 1 illustrates recruitment progress and targets to December 2011.