



ATLANTIC CANADIAN IMMUNIZATION CONFERENCE
Not just a conversation - it's a commitment to action.

CONFERENCE PROGRAM



Institute of
Population Health

Conference Agenda

7:45 - 8:30

Registration & Coffee

8:30 - 9:05

Opening Remarks

9:05 - 9:50

Keynote Speaker: Dr. Eileen de Villa

9:50 - 10:50

Panel: Regional Vaccine Trends & Community-Level Trust Gaps

10:50 - 11:00

Health Break

11:00 - 12:00

Panel: Media, Algorithms, and Misinformation Ecosystems

12:00 - 12:55

Networking Lunch

12:55 - 13:55

Roundtable Session 1: Actioning on Misinformation

- A: Digital Media & Communications
 - B: Trust-building with Marginalized Communities
 - C: Public Education
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13:55 - 14:10

Health Break

14:10 - 15:40

Roundtable Session 2: Actioning on Misinformation

- A: Digital Media & Communications
 - B: Trust-building with Marginalized Communities
 - C: Public Education
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15:40 - 15:55

Words from the Health Minister, Dr. John Dornan

15:55 - 16:10

Closing Remarks

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Keynote Speaker



Dr. Eileen de Villa

*FORMER MEDICAL OFFICER
OF HEALTH, CITY OF
TORONTO*

Dr. Eileen de Villa served as the Medical Officer of Health for the City of Toronto from 2017-2024, leading Toronto Public Health—the largest local public health agency in Canada—serving over 3 million residents. She holds a Doctor of Medicine and MHS in Health Promotion from the University of Toronto, as well as an MBA from York University's Schulich School of Business. Dr. de Villa is also a Senior Fellow and Adjunct Professor at the Dalla Lana School of Public Health.

During her tenure, she guided Toronto through major public health challenges, including leading the city's largest vaccination campaign during COVID-19 and responding to the ongoing drug toxicity crisis. She championed efforts to address health inequities, with a focus on mental health, substance use, and improving outcomes for Indigenous peoples and racialized communities.

Dr. de Villa has contributed extensively to public health research and policy, publishing and presenting on topics such as urban health, communicable disease control, and emergency preparedness. Her leadership has been recognized nationally through numerous awards, including the Naimark Award, the York University Alumni Award for Outstanding Achievement, Communicator of the Year from IABC Toronto, and most recently the King Charles III Coronation Medal. She has also been honoured as one of the "100 Most Influential Filipina Women in the World" and as a "Pioneer for Change."

Panel Moderator

Dr. Jennifer Russell

*EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE
INSTITUTE OF POPULATION
HEALTH, UNB*



Dr. Jennifer Russell is the Executive Director of the University of New Brunswick's Institute of Population Health and President of the New Brunswick College of Family Physicians. Known for her visionary leadership and grounded compassion, she served as New Brunswick's Chief Medical Officer of Health from 2018 to 2024 - a defining period marked by her steady guidance through the COVID-19 pandemic.

Her career spans clinical practice in family medicine, mental health and addictions, as well as senior leadership roles within the Canadian Armed Forces. From 2014 to 2018, she served as Deputy Chief Medical Officer, where she helped shape public health policy through a systems lens rooted in empathy, prevention, and collaboration.

Dr. Russell holds a Bachelor of Arts from Dalhousie University, a Bachelor of Science from the University of New Brunswick, and a Doctor of Medicine from Memorial University of Newfoundland. She completed her Family Medicine Residency in 2001. She was named New Brunswick's Physician of the Year in 2020 and invested into the Order of New Brunswick in 2021- both recognitions that reflect her enduring commitment to the health and well-being of her province.

At the Institute of Population Health, Dr. Russell continues to champion prevention, equity, and systems transformation, bridging science and story to build healthier, more connected communities.

Panel 1 Speakers



Dr. Noni Macdonald

Dr. Noni MacDonald is Professor Emerita of Paediatrics (Infectious Diseases) at Dalhousie University and the IWK Health Centre in Halifax, Nova Scotia and a former Dean of Medicine; the first woman in Canada to be a Dean of Medicine. Her two current major areas of interest are Vaccines including vaccine safety, hesitancy, demand, pain mitigation, education and policy locally, nationally and globally and the MicroResearch program, she helped cofound in 2008. She has published over 500 papers and since 2023 has ranked yearly in the top 1% by citations in her field(s) over past decade by the Web of Science.

Dr MacDonald is recognized in Canada and internationally, as an advocate for child and youth health, as a leader in paediatric infectious disease and global health. She is an elected Fellow of the Canadian Academy of Health Sciences, the Royal Society of Canada and is an Officer of the Order of Canada, a recipient of the Order of Nova Scotia and is a laureate of the Canadian Medical Hall of Fame.



Dr. Yves Leger

Originally from Grande-Digue, New Brunswick, Dr. Leger began his medical journey at the University of Sherbrooke. Initially set on a path toward family medicine, it was during one of his clinical rotations that he unexpectedly discovered a deep passion for Public Health—a turning point that reshaped his career trajectory.

He went on to complete his residency training in Public Health and Preventive Medicine at the University of Toronto, earning his fellowship from the Royal College of Physicians of Canada in 2007. That same year, he returned to his home province, bringing with him both expertise and a renewed sense of purpose, as he began his public health career within the Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health. Over the years, Dr. Leger has held a number of positions within public health, including as Regional Medical Officer of Health, Acting Deputy Chief Medical Officer, and Acting Chief Medical Officer of Health. Since early 2025, he serves as New Brunswick's Chief Medical Officer of Health.

Panel 1 Speakers



Dr. Heather Morrison

Dr. Heather Morrison was appointed Chief Public Health Officer of PEI in 2007. As Prince Edward Island's first female Rhodes Scholar, she completed Master's and Doctoral degrees at the University of Oxford before returning to Canada for her medical degree from Dalhousie University and specialist training in public health at the University of Toronto. She has completed a Master's certificate in Physician Leadership from the Schulich Business School at York, a certificate in Media & Medicine from Harvard Medical School, and earlier this year graduated from the ICD-Rotman Directors Education Program.

As Chief Public Health Officer, Dr. Morrison has provided steady, trusted and visionary leadership during public health emergencies such as the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as issues including opioid use and chronic disease risk factors. She chaired the Canadian Council of Chief Medical Officers of Health for 5 years and has served on the Public Health Network Council of Canada and its Special Advisory Committees.

Dr. Morrison has been recognized with major alumni awards, an honorary Doctor of Laws from UPEI, the US Consul General's Award for Public Service, and the Order of PEI. She has also practiced as an emergency physician in PEI or Saipan for 18 years and continues to provide episodic care and focused latent tuberculosis clinics.

About Research New Brunswick

ResearchNB supports research in New Brunswick. With a mission to power discovery together, ResearchNB funds leading-edge research, promotes research excellence, and connects the dots across the agriculture, forestry, oceans, health, and energy sectors to build a well-funded and impactful research ecosystem.



Panel 2 Speakers



Jaigris Hodson, PhD

Jaigris Hodson is a Professor and Canada Research Chair in Digital Misinformation, Polarization and Online Anti-Social Media at Royal Roads University in Victoria, BC. She is also a Resident Fellow at the Cascade Institute, Research Collaborator at the Social Media Lab, and a Research Advisor for the Clarity Foundation. Her grant funded research concerns health misinformation, and how it intersects with growing polarization, online hate, and socio economic challenges. Recently her research has examined COVID-19 misinformation on masks and vaccines, Cancer influencers and misinformation, the rhetoric of the Children's Health Defense on Telegram, and misinformation on gender identity on popular podcasts.



William Montelpare, PhD

William Montelpare is a senior professor and the Margaret and Wallace McCain Research Chair in Human Development and Health at UPEI. He has been a professor for more than 39 years, teaching graduate and undergraduate courses in health, human physiology, research methods and design, biostatistics and epidemiology, beginning at Brock University, Lakehead University, the University of Leeds, and currently at UPEI. Through teaching, research, and community service, he has gained tremendous experience working with a diverse group of colleagues from around the world in multiple areas of health and well-being.

Panel 2 Speakers



Dr. Lawrence Loh

Dr. Lawrence Loh is Medical Officer of Health with Newfoundland and Labrador Health Services. His career has spanned public health agencies at all three levels of government in two provinces, including the Public Health Agency of Canada, Fraser Health Authority in British Columbia, Public Health Ontario, the Ministry of Health in the Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health of Ontario, and Peel Public Health.

Loh served the Region of Peel, one of Canada's worst hit communities, during the COVID-19 pandemic. His work with his team has been recognized with a Key to the City of Mississauga, a Queen's Diamond Jubilee Medal, and an Honorary Degree from Toronto Metropolitan University, as well as recognition in the 2021 list of Toronto Life's 50 most influential Torontonians.

Loh completed undergraduate training and medical school at Western University and residency at the University of Toronto, during which he also earned a Master of Public Health at Johns Hopkins. He holds fellowship certifications in public health and preventive medicine both Canada and the United States.

Dr. Loh also holds Adjunct Professor status at the Dalla Lana School of Public Health at the University of Toronto.

About IPH

At the Institute of Population Health (IPH), we aspire to establish ourselves as a preeminent centre for population health research, innovation and advocacy. Through interdisciplinary collaboration and evidence-based approaches, we seek to catalyze positive change and enhance health outcomes for all residents of New Brunswick.