2026 CONFERENCE PROGRAM

HEALTH RESEARCH SYMPOSIUM

Saint John, New Brunswick
November 18-19, 2026

Saint John Convention Centre
1 Market Square, Saint John, NB

research recherche nb

About ResearchNB

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

About the Health Research Symposium

The Health Research Symposium is an annual must-attend event for healthcare leaders, research innovators, and policy makers. Our theme, "(Re)Building Trust in Science", goes beyond discussion, focusing on restoring public confidence, strengthening transparency, and turning evidence into meaningful action.

The event has four presentation streams across the Canadian Institutes of Health Research pillars:

- Biomedical Breakthroughs: Advancing Health Through Discovery
- Clinical Conversations: From Trials to Treatment
- Health Systems in Focus: Enhancing Health Services and Policies
- People and Places: Insights into Population and Environmental Health

Join us on November 18-19, 2026, at the Saint John Convention Centre in Saint John, NB for an unforgettable event!

75 ReBuilding trust in 21 Science

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OUR SPONSORS

The 2026 Health Research Symposium would not be possible without the generous contributions of our sponsoring partners:

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KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

DAVID COLLETTO

Founder, Abacus Data

Expert on Generational Change, Politics, and Public Opinion Trends

Infinitely curious, passionate, and eternally optimistic, David Coletto is the founder, chair, and CEO of Abacus Data and one of Canada's best known and most respected public opinion analysts, pollsters, and social researchers. Recently named one of the Top 100 Most Influential People in Canadian politics by The Hill Times, Coletto is the official pollster of the Toronto Star, co-host of the podcast Hub Politics, and curator of the popular Substack "inFocus with David Coletto". In his timely, data-driven presentations, he delivers strategic advice customized to his audiences and the industries they serve, from generational shifts and political trends to consumer behaviour and workplace dynamics.

Since launching in 2010, Coletto has grown Abacus Data into one of Canada's most respected, full-service market research and strategy firms. He has worked with many of the world's leading brands, associations, corporations, and non-profits, including Google, Airbnb, TD Bank, Interac, Canadian Medical Association, Government of Canada, Dairy Farmers of Canada, WorkSafe BC, Imperial Oil, BMW, and the LCBO, among others. He is also frequently called upon by local, national, and international news organizations to assess public opinion and has advised political leaders at all levels of government.

Having devoted his life to exploring what people think and feel about their work, lives, and politics, Coletto is an in-demand keynote speaker. He has spoken to thousands of people in audiences ranging from massive national conferences to intimate briefings in boardrooms across North America and Europe. Coletto believes that by understanding what motivates and informs people's worldview, we can create a more understanding, empathetic, and action-driven world.

Coletto earned a PhD in political science from the University of Calgary. He is currently a professor in the Graduate Program of Political Management at Carleton University, where he teaches courses in polling, political marketing, and designing public affairs strategies.

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

DR. KATHARINE SMART

Medical Leader & Advocate Against Misinformation

Dr. Katharine Smart is the past president of the Canadian Medical Association (CMA), where in 2021, she became the 10th woman to serve in the organization's 155-year history. A fierce and authentic leader, she has become a recognized and respected medical voice in Canada. Dr. Smart has been recognized as one of Canada's 100 Most Powerful Women, with the Medical Post's Changemaker Media Award and the Waterfalls Global Award.

In recognition of her advocacy for primary care and family medicine, she received an honorary membership from the Canadian Family Physicians of Canada. She has held many leadership positions, including president of the Yukon Medical Association and sits on the board of Ronald McDonald House Charities and Actua, Canada's largest STEM outreach organization.

Dr. Smart is a passionate communicator and sought-after media expert, keynote speaker, panelist and podcast guest. She is the host of SPARK: Conversations, Children's Healthcare Canada's monthly podcast series.

Dr. Smart's clinical work has spanned the breadth of Pediatrics. She started her career as a pediatric emergency medicine physician at the Alberta Children's Hospital in Calgary. She has worked in Australia, Vancouver and across Canada's north. Her current clinical focus is providing care to children who have experienced adverse childhood events using a model of social pediatrics in the Yukon.

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

JAMES MULLINGER

Comedian, Writer, Broadcaster, & Editor

James Mullinger is a British-born writer, broadcaster, editor, and keynote speaker who has spent more than two decades working at the highest levels of international media, helping complex ideas reach broad, mainstream audiences.

After building a career in the UK across newspapers, magazines, television, and digital media, James relocated to New Brunswick, where he has become a leading voice on storytelling, communication, and place-based impact. His work has appeared in and been produced for major global platforms, including The Guardian, the BBC, Amazon Prime, Bell TV, GQ, Vogue, and numerous national and international publications. Across formats, his focus has consistently been on translating expertise, research, and lived experience into narratives that connect with the public.

Now based in New Brunswick, James brings a rare dual perspective to his work: global media experience combined with a deep understanding of local communities and audiences. As Editor-in-Chief of The Maritime Edit and a sought-after keynote speaker, he works closely with researchers, clinicians, innovators, and institutions to help ensure important work does not stop at publication, but reaches the people it is intended to serve. His keynotes are educational first and story-driven by design, offering practical insights into communication, knowledge translation, and real-world impact.

COMMITTEE OF REVIEWERS

Thank you to our Committee of Reviewers who generously volunteered their time to complete the peer review of abstracts for Health Research Symposium 2026.

Coming soon...

CONFERENCE AGENDA

Wednesday, November 18, 2026

Time	Event	Description
10:30 am to 12:30 pm	**Registration** Location: Registration Desk	Participants will register and receive their name badge. Posters can be installed in the Loyalist room. Sponsor Booths can set up in the Foyer.
12:30 pm to 1:10 pm	**Welcoming Remarks & Prayer** Location: Marco Polo	ResearchNB's CEO will welcome participants to the 2026 Health Research Symposium and provide an overview of health research in New Brunswick. Welcoming prayer will be offered by Chris Brooks, Elder, Traditional Lodge Keeper, Sacred Pipe Carrier, and Knowledge Keeper from Sitansisk First Nations
1:10 pm to 2:15 pm	**Keynote Speaker** Location: Marco Polo	Keynote Presentation by **David Coletto**, titled **"Health Research in the Age of Precarity - Implications of the public mindset today"** followed by a 12-minute Q&A.
2:15 pm to 2:35 pm	**Health Break**	
2:35 pm to 3:35 pm	**Breakout Sessions** • Marco Polo • Montague II + III	**Panels & Oral Presentations** • Panel: Nuclear Medicine: Radioligand Therapies Paving the Future of Cancer Care • Panel: From Demonstration to Transformation: Advancing Value-Based Health Care Through Precision Medicine in New Brunswick

CONFERENCE AGENDA

Wednesday, November 18, 2026

Time	Event	Description

2:35 pm to 3:35 pm	**Breakout Sessions**
	• Montague I
	• Spencer III
		Panels & Oral Presentations
		• Oral Presentations: Population Health
		  ◦ Mindful Moms, Mindful Meals: A Patient-Oriented Pilot Randomized Controlled Trial Exploring the Feasibility of a Mindful Eating Intervention on Infant Feeding Practices (Jasleen Kaur Dev)
		  ◦ Nutrient Supplementation in Healthy Infants and Toddlers Aged 4–36 Months in High-Income Countries: A Scoping Review (Heidi Lauwerijssen)
		  ◦ Establishing an Active Transportation Baseline for New Brunswick to Support the National Active Transportation Strategy (Sandra Magalhaes)
		• Oral Presentations: Clinical Conversations
		  ◦ Can a Standardized Sleep Bundle Reduce Sleep Disruption After Cardiac Surgery: A Pilot Randomized Controlled Trial (Caroline Fitzpatrick)
		  ◦ Clinical and Genetic Characterization of Retinitis Pigmentosa in New-Brunswick: A retrospective Study (Noemi Chiasson)
		  ◦ A Co-Designed User- and Clinician-Informed Technology-Enabled Mobility Assessment Framework for Older Adults (Dee Carr)

3:40 pm to 5:00 pm	**Poster Presentations & Booths** Location: Loyalist & Foyer	Participants and judges explore poster presentations and conference booths.
5:00 pm to 6:00 pm	**Break**	
6:00 pm to 7:15 pm	**Cocktail Reception** **L**ocation: Foyer	Reception offered in the Foyer of the Saint John Trade & Convention Centre.
7:30 pm to 11:00 pm	**Gala Dinner & Dance** Location: Marco Polo	Dinner, drinks, award ceremony and evening of dancing.

CONFERENCE AGENDA

Thursday, November 19, 2026

Time	Event	Description
8:15 am to 9:00 am	**Breakfast Buffet** Location: Marco Polo	Full hot breakfast served in the Foyer and Marco Polo room.
9:00 am to 9:10 am	**Welcoming Remarks** Location: Marco Polo	ResearchNB's CEO will welcome participants to Day 2 of the 2026 Health Research Symposium
9:10 am to 10:10 am	**Keynote Speaker** Location: Marco Polo	Keynote Presentation by **Katharine Smart**, titled **"Why Facts Aren't Enough: Building trust, navigating misinformation, and communicating science in an age of uncertainty,"** followed by a 12-minute Q&A.
10:10 am to 10:30 am	**Health Break**	

10:30 am to 11:30 am	**Breakout Sessions**
	• Marco Polo
	• Montague II + III
	• Montague I
		Panels & Oral Presentations
		• Panel: From Labs to Living Rooms: Making Science Matter Again
		• Oral Presentations: Health Systems
		  ◦ Mystery Caller Study of Medication Abortion Access in the Maritime Provinces in Canada (Martha Paynter and Christine Mason (on behalf of Brenna Whalley))
		  ◦ Optimizing Patient Flow: Machine Learning Approaches for Diagnosis Classification and Hospital Discharge Prediction (Richard Levesque)
		  ◦ Compensating Patient Partners on Health Research Teams: Barriers, Facilitators, and Implications for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (Alison Luke)
		• Oral Presentations: Biomedical
		  ◦ Development of an Optimized CRISPR-Cas9 Ribonucleoprotein Electroporation Platform for Cardiovascular Functional Genomics (Babak Nami)
		  ◦ Examining the role of sucralose toxicity in inflammatory bowel disease (Peter Oni)
		  ◦ Lysophosphatidic acid signaling promotes triacylglycerol and lipid droplet accumulation in cardiomyocytes (Anu Jose)

CONFERENCE AGENDA

Thursday, November 19, 2026

Time	Event	Description

10:30 am to 11:30 am	**Breakout Sessions**
	• Spencer III
		Panels & Oral Presentations
		• Oral Presentations: Population Health
		  ◦ Genetic analysis of Acadian populations in New Brunswick's northern coast shows enrichment for multiple clinically-relevant pathogenic variants (Alex Boudreau)
		  ◦ Microbial Source Tracking (MST) for Beach Water Quality Analysis: enhancing public health risk assessments in Atlantic Canada (Corrie Maston)
		  ◦ Mayhem, Mellitus, and The Mind: Exploring the Impact of Midlife Stressors on Diabetes and Dementia (Sophie Larsen)

11:30 am to 12:30 pm	**Poster Presentations & Booths** Location: Loyalist & Foyer	Participants and judges explore poster presentations and conference booths.
12:30 pm to 1:20 pm	**Lunch** **L**ocation: Marco Polo	

1:20 pm to 2:20 pm	**Breakout Sessions**
	• Marco Polo
	• Montague II + III
		Panels & Oral Presentations
		• Panel: (Re)Building Trust: Indigenous Leadership in Health Research
		• Oral Presentations: Health Systems
		  ◦ Compressed Out of Support: Integrating Women's and Service Providers' Perspectives to Reimagine Suicide Ideation Care in New Brunswick (Petrea Taylor)
		  ◦ Co-designing a Patient-Directed Mailout to Build Trust and Promote Engagement with Sedative Deprescribing Resources Among Older Adults (Sarah Bridges)
		  ◦ Patient Navigation for Youth Mental Health and Addiction Services: Mapping Interest-Holder Perspectives to National Frameworks (Lillian MacNeill)

CONFERENCE AGENDA

Thursday, November 19, 2026

Time	Event	Description
1:20 pm to 2:20 pm	**Breakout Sessions** • Montague I • Spencer III	**Panels & Oral Presentations** • Oral Presentations: Biomedical ◦ Activation of mitochondrial Gs signaling improves brain bioenergetics and synaptic transmission, and restores memory in mouse models of dementia (Etienne Hebert Chatelain) ◦ From mitochondrial metabolism to cognition: the novel role of Gαq (Katrin Kjolbro) ◦ SAR1 Proteins Remodel Lipid Droplet Turnover and Oxidative Metabolism in Muscle (Aryan Vesuna) • Oral Presentations: Clinical ◦ Near-Infrared Spectroscopy For The Early Detection Of Lower Limb Ischemia In Femoral Venoarterial Extracorporeal Membrane Oxygenation (Abdul Nassan) ◦ Functional Characterization of a Novel ALG11 Variant Associated with Congenital Disorder of Glycosylation Using Complementary Human and Yeast Models (Inas Al-Younis) ◦ Routine Next Generation Sequencing Reveals Distinct Biological Phenotypes in Colorectal Cancer (Gurpreet Singh Ranger (on behalf of Jaskaranvir Singh-Ranger))
2:20 pm to 2:40 pm	**Health Break**	
2:40 pm to 3:40 pm	**Keynote Speaker** Location: Marco Polo	Keynote Presentation by **James Mullinger** titled **"HOW TO MAKE PEOPLE CARE: The Story Behind the Science"**, followed by a 12-minute Q&A.
3:40 pm to 4:00 pm	**Awards Presentation & Closing Ceremony** **L**ocation: Marco Polo	Prizes are announced for the poster presentation competition. Closing remarks are offered by the Mayor of Saint John, Mayor Donna Noade Reardon & ResearchNB's CEO, Candice Pollack.

PANEL PRESENTATIONS

Nuclear Medicine: Radioligand Therapies Paving the Future of Cancer Care

Panelists

Celina Bountalas
Horizon Health Network

Melody Greaves
Canadian Nuclear Isotope Council

Dr. Thais Megid
Vitalité Health Network

Moderator
Amanda Bullock
Novartis Canada

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PANEL PRESENTATIONS

From Demonstration to Transformation: Advancing Value-Based Health Care Through Precision Medicine in New Brunswick

Panelists

Mark Oatway
AstraZeneca Canada

Dr. Natalie Banville
Vitalité Health Network

Dr. Pierre O'Brien
Vitalité Health Network

Heather Hogan
Patient Partner

Moderator
Candice Pollack
ResearchNB

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PANEL PRESENTATIONS

From Labs to Living Rooms: Making Science Matter Again

Panelists

Dr. Jennifer Russell
Institute of Population Health

Jill Rourke
Mount Allison University

Michael Edwards
Science East

Moderator
Karine Bengualid
ResearchNB

PANEL PRESENTATIONS

(Re)Building Trust: Indigenous Leadership in Health Research

Panelists Coming Soon...

PARTNER EVENT

Atlantic Canada Metabolism Research Network Launch Symposium

Join the **Atlantic Canada Metabolic Research Network (ACMRN) Launch Symposium**, a pre-event to the 2026 Annual ResearchNB Health Research Symposium, to explore how regional collaboration can advance metabolic science and translate it into improved health. This newly formed network unites investigators from six Atlantic Canadian universities: the University of New Brunswick, Dalhousie University (including Dalhousie Medicine New Brunswick), l'Université de Moncton, Mount Allison University, Memorial University, and the University of Prince Edward Island.

ACMRN aims to address the regional burden of obesity, type 2 diabetes, cardiometabolic disease, neurodegeneration, cancer, and aging through collaborative research, shared infrastructure, joint training of highly qualified personnel, and coordinated submissions for large program grants. Marking its formal public launch, this symposium will connect academic, government, health, and industry stakeholders to identify priorities for the Network's first three-year roadmap.

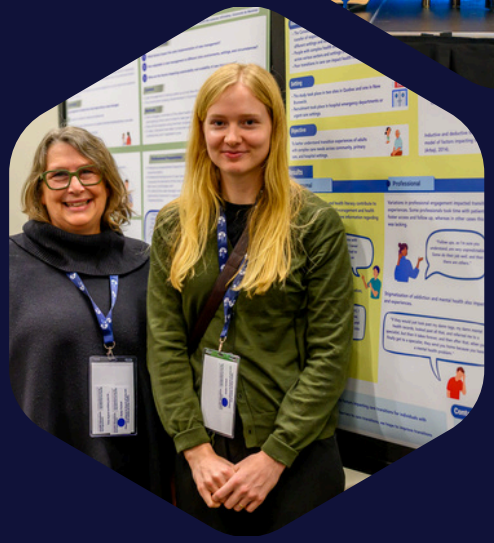
The half-day program features two scientific sessions, Discovery Metabolism and Translational Metabolism, comprising six trainee oral presentations and four early-career investigator presentations. A networking coffee break with trainee and early-career poster viewing will provide opportunities to exchange ideas and explore partnerships. A closing Network Membership Strategic Roundtable will focus discussion on shared infrastructure, collaborative priorities, and network development.

Approximately 35–40 principal investigators, trainees, research staff, and regional research and health partners are expected. Stakeholders are invited to engage with emerging research, contribute perspectives, and help shape a coordinated regional approach to translating metabolic discoveries into therapies, diagnostics, and public health interventions.

Time	Atlantic Canada Metabolism Research Network (ACMRN) Launch Symposium-Wednesday, November 18, 2026, 8.00 am Saint John Convention Center, Saint John, NB. A pre-event to Research NB Health Conference
08:00 – 08:30	Registration
08:30 – 08:45	**Welcome, framing address & network mission and vision** *Opening Remarks: Launch of Metabolism Research Network* *Dr. Thomas Pulinilkunnil (DMNB, Dalhousie University)*
08:45 – 10:00	**Session 1 — Discovery metabolism (75 min)** *Co-Chairs: Dr. Joe Gordon, Dr. Pichaud, Dr. Petra Kienesberger* Trainee oral presentations (10 min talk + 3 min Q&A) 1. Harish Babu Kolla- DMNB/Dalhousie University 2. Yaan Baussan- University of Moncton 3. Adia Oulette- University of Moncton Early-career investigator presentations (15 min talk + 3 min Q&A) 1. Dr. Qutuba Karwi- Memorial University 2. Dr. Jillian Rourke- Mount Allison University
10:00 – 10:20	**Networking coffee break with poster viewing** *Trainee and early-career posters open throughout the break.*
10:20 – 11:35	**Session 2 — Translational Metabolism (75 min)** *Co-Chairs: Dr. Martin Sénéchal, Dr. Adam Johnson, Dr. Etienne H Chatelain* Trainee oral presentations (10 min talk + 3 min Q&A) 4. Amy Thomson- University of New Brunswick 5. Christelinda Laureijs- Mount Allison University 6. Ethan Finnigan - DMNB/Dalhousie University Early-career investigator presentations (15 min talk + 3 min Q&A) 3. Dr. Kevin Pottie- Dalhousie University 4. Dr. Pegah Poursharifi- Dalhousie University
11:35 – 12:00	**ACMRN PI Strategic Roundtable & Closing** *Facilitated discussion of shared infrastructure, joint training, and coordinated funding priorities (CIHR, Diabetes Canada, NSERC, HSFC, CCS, Research NB). Closing remarks and transition to the Research NB Conference (12:30 pm, same venue)*

*To register for and attend this event, please direct all enquiries to Professor Dr. Thomas Pulinilkunnil at tpulinil@dal.ca; tpulinil@unb.ca.

Thank you for joining us!



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