

## Industry News

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The Canadian Academy of Audiology



**January 10, 2024, Toronto** – CHS Global Partnerships for Research & Innovation, a non-profit organization and strategic global leader in the advancement of research and innovation that improves the quality of life for Deaf and hard of hearing individuals, is excited to announce that it has awarded four additional research grants to institutions leading research that will break down barriers to participation for Deaf and hard of hearing individuals and their families. Since its launch in January 2022, CHS Global Partnerships for Research & Innovations has proudly awarded a total of \$782,425 in research grants.

Each of the winning research projects has the potential to unlock new insights and breakthroughs in the field of hearing health and Deaf studies.

According to the World Health Organization Report on Hearing 2021, more than 1.5 billion people worldwide are affected by hearing loss and approximately 430 million require rehabilitation for disability hearing loss.

By supporting cutting-edge research, CHS Global Partnerships for Research & Innovation, aims to contribute not only to the global scientific community but, most importantly, to deliver on our mission of improving the lives of Deaf and hard of hearing individuals.

“Congratulations to our 2023 research grant recipients! We are honoured to offer research grants and build partnerships that bring together the resources, expertise, commitment, and passion to create impactful change and advance lives together,” says Julia N. Dumanian, President & Chief Executive Officer of Canadian Hearing Services. “The investment we make in pioneering ground-breaking research is critical to improving the quality of life for Deaf and hard of hearing

individuals across the globe.”

As the research and innovation arm of Canadian Hearing Services, and the only and largest private non-profit research foundation in North America to offer research grants that support both hearing health and Deaf studies, we are proud to award the following principal investigators and their host institutions with CHS Global Partnerships for Research & Innovation Research Grants:

**Karen A. Gordon, PhD, The Hospital for Sick Children (SickKids) (Grant Award: \$99,194)**  
**“Look over here!”: Using visual cues to support spatial hearing in children with hearing loss,** submitted by Karen A. Gordon, PhD, will investigate the correlation between head and eye movements and sound localization abilities in children with cochlear implants as despite having cochlear implants, sound localization is a challenge! This study also explores the potential impact of abnormal balance systems for these children. Results from this research will define a novel way to improve hearing for children using cochlear implants. [Learn more.](#)

**Christi Batamula, PhD, Gallaudet University (Grant Award: \$88,315)**  
**Family Language Planning for Deaf & Hard of Hearing Children and their Families,** submitted by Christi Batamula, PhD, will examine how bilingual and multilingual families with young Deaf and hard of hearing children (aged 0 - 8 years old) navigate implementing multiple languages, including sign language, the majority language, and/or home languages in their daily lives. The study has the potential to fill a gap in early intervention services and will provide families and professionals with resources and information on how to navigate bilingualism with their Deaf and hard of hearing children and will increase language and communication opportunities for their Deaf and hard of hearing children to minimize the risks of language deprivation and delays. [Learn more.](#)

**Michelle Carr, PhD, University of Montreal (Grant Award: \$98,500)**  
**Objective and subjective characteristics of sleep and mental health in Deaf and hard of hearing individuals,** submitted by Michelle Carr, PhD, will validate the relationship between objective sleep and mental health in the Deaf and hard of hearing populations and identify areas of need to inform future clinical work. This project also has the potential to clarify whether certain Deaf and hard of hearing groups are at greater risk for sleep disturbance and anticipate that study findings will inform intervention approaches to mitigate sleep and mental health disparities in Deaf and hard of hearing populations. [Learn more.](#)

**Navid Shahnaz, PhD, University of British Columbia (Grant Award: \$99,924)**  
**Assessment of the long-term auditory and vestibular function in hospitalized and non-hospitalized COVID-19 patients,** submitted by Navid Shahnaz, PhD, will investigate COVID-19’s long-term effects on hearing and balance systems. This project will help estimate the true impact of the virus on hearing and balance, leading to the recommendation of early intervention and management of hearing and balance impairments in individuals with a history of COVID-19, and preventing further complications associated with delayed treatment. [Learn more.](#)

The winning projects were rigorously evaluated by our Grant Review Panel, comprised of 48 established national and global researchers from different areas of the globe including Canada, the United States, the UK, and Australia.

“Funding from the CHS Global Partnerships for Research & Innovation Grant will greatly support our efforts in Archie’s Cochlear Implant Laboratory at SickKids to help children with hearing loss

gain awareness and understanding of the auditory world around them,” explains Karen A. Gordon, PhD, Professor in the Department of Otolaryngology, and a Graduate Faculty Member in the Institute of Medical Science at the University of Toronto.



## **ABOUT CHS GLOBAL PARTNERSHIPS FOR RESEARCH & INNOVATION RESEARCH GRANTS**

In January 2023, CHS Global Partnerships for Research & Innovation launched its call for proposals for the two-year funding period (2023-25). We received an overwhelming response from the scientific community, all of which aligned and supported our Research Areas of Focus, which are as follows:

**HEARING HEALTH:** Prevention, identification, assessment, treatment and (re)habilitation of auditory and balance difficulties.

**HEARING SCIENCE:** Research activities in the fields of acoustics, neuroscience, and psychology concerning perception of sound.

**DEAF STUDIES:** Research activities in the fields of sociology, language, and inclusivity of Deaf individuals.

**QUALITY OF LIFE:** Research related to the impacts of being Deaf or hard of hearing as it relates to an individual’s ability to participate and enjoy life activities.

For several months, our Grant Review Panel, comprised of 48 established national and global researchers from different areas of the globe including Canada, the United States, the UK, and Australia diligently reviewed research funding applications, ensuring that any grant awarded by CHS Global Partnerships for Research & Innovation supports research of the highest quality and improves the quality of life for Deaf and hard of hearing individuals. Our Advisory Council, comprised of senior researchers, acted as observers and strategic advisors to ensure a fair and transparent awards process, making recommendations to the Board of Directors on Full Applications approved for funding.

We are very grateful to our Research & Innovation Advisory Council and Grant Review Panel members for voluntarily contributing their time and expertise.

View the Research and Innovation Advisory Council [here](#).

View the full list of Grant Review Panel members [here](#).

## **ABOUT CHS GLOBAL PARTNERSHIPS FOR RESEARCH & INNOVATION**

CHS Global Partnerships for Research & Innovation is a non-profit organization and strategic leader in the advancement of research and innovation that improves the quality of life for Deaf and hard of hearing individuals. As the research and innovation arm of Canadian Hearing Services, it supports intellectual inquiry by providing research grants that address multifaceted issues related to hearing loss and facilitates innovative solutions for the sector.

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*ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND* — Tena L. McNamara, AuD, CCC-A/SLP, took office this month as the 2024 President of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA).



McNamara is an audiologist and speech-language pathologist who specializes in aural habilitation/rehabilitation therapy, audiological assessment, literacy, and (central) auditory processing diagnostics and intervention. Previously, she served ASHA as a member of various councils and ad hoc committees, reviewer for scholarships and awards, and co-chair for the 2021 ASHA Convention in Washington, D.C. She is also a Fellow of both ASHA and the Illinois Speech-Language-Hearing Association.

As ASHA's president, McNamara will lead the Association's efforts to advance the professions of audiology and speech-language pathology, advocate for the rights and interests of people with communication disorders, and promote the highest standards of ethical and professional practice.

*"I am honored and humbled to serve as the president of ASHA. I look forward to working with the ASHA board, staff, and members to expand the legacy of excellence and innovation that ASHA has*

*established over the years. I am also excited to embrace the opportunities and challenges that lie ahead as we navigate the changing landscape of health care, education, and technology in the 21st century.”*

McNamara’s work experience includes employment in an academic setting for 25 years and practicing as an educational audiologist for 27 years. Currently, she works as an audiologist for a private practice pediatric center and oversees the development of a cultural and educational resource center for children and adults who are deaf or hard of hearing and their families.



WS Audiology (WSA) announced the appointment of Joerg Brandscheid as its next chief technology officer and member of the executive committee.

Brandscheid brings a wealth of experience in research and development (R&D) to his new role at WSA. Throughout his career, he has held senior R&D positions at prominent organizations such as General Motors, Continental, Hella, and most recently, at Polestar. His impressive track record and technical expertise are expected to strengthen WSA’s technological capabilities and drive innovation within the company.

“I am delighted to welcome Joerg Brandscheid to WSA as CTO and really look forward to working with him,” says Eric Bernard, WSA president & CEO. “His solid experience and proven track record across multiple companies and brands will enhance our technology strength.