



Asthma.ca™

Asthma Canada

ANNUAL REPORT

2022

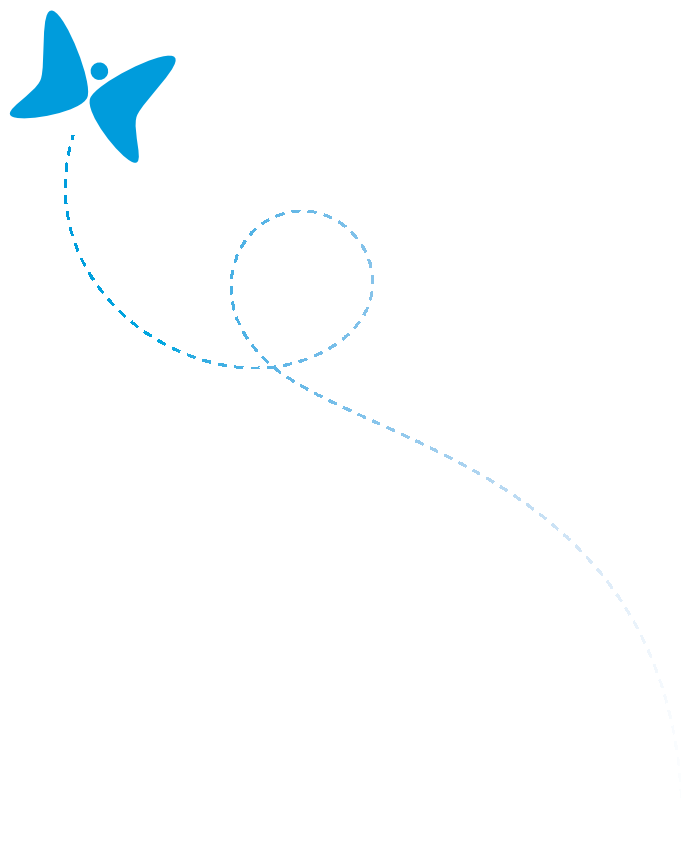


Who we are

Asthma Canada is the only national, patient-driven charity solely devoted to enhancing the quality of life for people living with asthma and respiratory allergies. For nearly 50 years, Asthma Canada has proudly served as the national voice for Canadians living with asthma.

Our mission is to help Canadians with asthma lead healthy lives through education, advocacy and research.

Our vision is a future without asthma.



Asthma in Canada



3.8 million

Asthma impacts more than 3.8 million Canadians



third

Asthma is the third most common disease in Canada



317

317 Canadians are diagnosed with asthma every day



250,000

Severe asthma impacts nearly 250,000 Canadians



250

Over 250 Canadians with asthma lose their lives each year



4.2 billion

The cost of asthma to the Canadian economy is expected to climb to \$4.2 billion by 2030



80,000

Asthma attacks result in over 80,000 visits to the emergency room each year

Joint Statement From CEO & Chair

We are thrilled to share with you the highlights of our transformative journey throughout 2022, a year filled with excitement and anticipation for the future of our organization.

In 2022, we unveiled our [2022-2024 Strategic Plan](#), outlining our vision for a brighter and healthier future for Canadians living with asthma. This plan sets forth a roadmap to increase asthma awareness and health promotion across the country, give a strong voice to chronic care issues, and expand asthma-related research opportunities.

As we reflect on the significant milestones achieved and the opportunities ahead, this annual report marks a pivotal moment for Asthma Canada. With mixed emotions, we announced the departure of Vanessa Foran, our dedicated CEO, after six incredible years of service. During her tenure, Vanessa's unwavering dedication laid the foundation for a thriving National Research Program, a revamped brand identity, and collaborative partnerships with leading healthcare organizations. Her exceptional leadership and advocacy efforts, especially during the pandemic, led to vital support for the asthma community, nationwide coverage for prescription drugs, and significant work on environmental sustainability to emphasize the importance of clean air quality. Vanessa's legacy is one we are immensely proud of.

As Interim CEO and Board Chair, we express our deep gratitude for the steadfast support and trust you have placed in us during this period of change. Your contributions and commitment have played an essential role in our achievements and progress toward advancing health outcomes for people living with asthma.

Our community outreach and engagement efforts have provided valuable insights into the wide-ranging impact of asthma on the health and everyday lives of Canadians. This knowledge has guided our education and policy initiatives

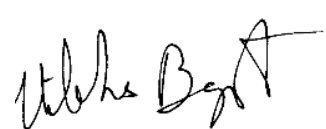
to address critical gaps. Many people living with asthma tend to adapt to their symptoms and accept uncontrolled asthma as the norm. Studies have shown that patients often underestimate the severity of their condition, leading to a lack of self-advocacy for additional care.

The incredible generosity of our partners, community members and funders directly improve lives through education and advocacy, while also supporting research that deepens our understanding of asthma. Together, we are empowering Canadians to take control of their disease and lead symptom-free lives. Furthermore, your support helps us raise the collective voice of the Canadian asthma community on vital issues, such as access to medication, clean air and energy, and vaccinations.

As we move forward, we are excited about the future that lies ahead. Once again, thank you for your dedication to Asthma Canada's mission.



Jenna Reynolds
Interim CEO



Vibhas Bapat
Chair



Voices from our Community

This is Amanda's story. Gary Staples shares it with us in hopes of saving someone's life. He urges all Canadians with asthma to never leave home without their reliever inhaler.

"Despite being a paramedic for 22 years, I was unprepared for what happened on March 17, 2022.

As the snow was melting and two years of pandemic restrictions were starting to ease, I was looking forward to celebrating St. Patrick's Day with my partner, Amanda. It was about 3 p.m. when she sent me a message, telling me she was taking Scout, her dog, out for a walk. Fifteen minutes later, I got another message from her that I will never forget. It contained three simple words: "I can't breathe."

I rushed over in my work vehicle, feeling a little embarrassed and overprotective. But soon those feelings were replaced with fear. I called for backup and tried to vigorously resuscitate her. Paramedics arrived and took her to our local hospital in Orangeville. By 4:30 p.m. that day, Amanda was pronounced deceased.

Amanda was 36 years old and in the prime of her life. She was healthy, outgoing and worked out almost every day. Her asthma was for the most part under control, until she had an allergic reaction in February. That day, she came out of the hospital with a prescription for an epi-pen and referrals to an allergist and a respirologist for virtual appointments.

Her first appointment with the respirologist was virtual and they prescribed another inhaler and advised her that a follow up in-person appointment would be scheduled as soon as possible, taking into account the backlog of specialty appointments. Unfortunately, she never made it to that appointment. It arrived in her mailbox the day after she died and was scheduled three months out.

The system failed Amanda. Waiting three months for a specialist's appointment for a common

condition such as asthma is not acceptable. Amanda did not complain. She would not want you to worry, and she never wanted to feel like she was being burden. If she only knew that her situation was more dire than she thought, she might be still with us today.

Her biggest joy came when she was with her little love bug, her son Ethan. He was everything to her, and she was everything to him. Ethan no longer has his adoring mom to help him grow up and navigate the world. Her family and friends have lost an amazing person in their lives too. I live with her loss each day.

In the medical field, asthma is referred to as the silent killer. But we can't remain silent anymore. 3.8 million Canadians are living with asthma and 250 of them will lose their life this year. Take action now so we can avoid tragic and unnecessary deaths, like Amanda's."

Amanda's story illustrates the need to address the factors that lead to many Canadians living with uncontrolled asthma, including long wait times to access specialist care and over-reliance on short-acting beta-agonist (SABA) inhalers. Asthma Canada is honouring Amanda's legacy by working tirelessly to address these issues for patients now and in the future.

Education

Asthma Canada encourages self-management and prevention by helping our community take control of their symptoms.

Asthma & Allergy HelpLine

Dealing with asthma and allergies can be difficult, but you don't have to face it alone.

Our bilingual Asthma & Allergy HelpLine connects Certified Respiratory Educators (CREs) with Canadians when they need help.

Our HelpLine provides up-to-date information, education and advice for Canadians on a wide range of topics including newly diagnosed asthma, managing symptoms, managing severe asthma, avoiding specific triggers, and treatment options.

“Thank you very much for your help. After our conversation I spoke to my pharmacist who retrained me in the correct way to use my puffer. I had no idea that I wasn't using it correctly. I am already seeing results! For example, this week I went grocery shopping and felt much better afterwards than I had after my previous trips.”

“Thanks to the amazing educators and team of the Asthma and Allergy HelpLine for your thorough response and immediate reply. I feel comforted to receive your advice and recommendations regarding my child's asthma condition. Thank you! “



Education and Digital Resources

Asthma Canada developed a new resource – the [Asthma Attack Toolkit](#). It's a comprehensive, step-by-step guide that can be posted in homes and workplaces to coach people through what to do in the event of an asthma attack.

As part of Asthma Canada's severe asthma education, we developed a new webpage dedicated to [Oral Corticosteroids and Asthma \(OCS\)](#). OCS can be an important and necessary tool for some people with asthma to manage their asthma. However, it is crucial that this treatment be carefully managed, monitored, and supported by an asthma specialist or health care provider who specializes in asthma.

We turned our Red Flags campaign into an [online, interactive quiz](#) to check in on our community members and their asthma symptoms.

[Access our library of resources here!](#)



Speaker Series Webinars

Asthma Canada's Speaker Series Webinars connects asthma community members to new research, best practices, and the general education that is necessary to make informed choices about their respiratory health. In 2022, we hosted webinars on Understanding the Basics of Asthma; Asthma and Comorbidities; Asthma and Long-COVID; and Vaccinations and Lung Conditions.

[Browse Asthma Canada's Webinar Library](#) and register for upcoming sessions!



Asthma Canada Member Alliance

The Asthma Canada Member Alliance (ACMA) is our community arm and voice of Asthma Canada. It's made up of people living with asthma, parents/caregivers, healthcare professionals, and anyone who has been affected by asthma.

We connected with our community through an online survey to ask what they are most interested in, which of our programs and services they find most helpful, and what they would like to see more of from Asthma Canada. Read the responses in our [short report](#).

We highlighted our community for World Asthma Day, an opportunity to stand together and work towards increased awareness and improved care for the millions of people impacted by this chronic disease across the globe through the message of Closing the Gaps in Asthma Care.

Thanks to all our volunteers including ACMA members who make a difference every day in the lives of people living with asthma and their families.

[Join ACMA Today!](#)



Lung Vaccination Working Group

Established in 2018, the Lung Vaccination Working Group (LVWG), led by Asthma Canada, is a group of national healthcare organizations working collaboratively to raise awareness about the importance of vaccination and to increase rates of immunization among adults affected by respiratory conditions.

Within Canada, vaccine uptake continues to be a significant area of concern, especially when it comes to high-risk populations. For those living

with asthma and others in the respiratory disease community, vaccination plays a vital role in disease management.

In 2022, the LVWG released a Position Statement, [Vaccine Uptake in Canadians with Lung Conditions: A Public Health Priority](#), highlighting the importance of increasing vaccination rates with policy recommendations for healthcare professionals, policy makers, patient groups and individuals.

Navigating COVID as pandemic restrictions lifted

We connected with our community through an online survey to understand ongoing asthma management and experience as COVID-related restrictions and policies lifted and changed throughout most parts of Canada in 2022. This outreach was an opportunity to see how Canadians with asthma are dealing with the stresses on the healthcare system and supporting management of their disease in the “new normal”. The responses captured in the report underscore how important it is to maintain reasonable precautions and seek support for those most at risk from complications from COVID. [Read the report here.](#)

Asthma Canada is a member of the COVID-19 Respiratory Roundtable, a group of professional societies and patient organizations working closely with individuals living with lung disease and supporting the lung health of all Canadians. In April 2022, we released a letter “[Mask Up for Someone You Love!](#)” to encourage the continuation of wearing masks even while restrictions were being lifted, to support people with lung disease and other immunocompromised Canadians.



Advocacy

Asthma Canada works to support advocacy and public policy change, which help protect the health, safety and well-being of those with asthma and respiratory allergies.

We advocate to federal, provincial and municipal governments on a range of health and environmental issues important for people with asthma and respiratory allergies. Asthma Canada helps Canadians living with asthma advocate for equitable and timely access to prescription medications through patient input submissions

for CADTH (Canadian Agency for Drugs and Technologies in Health) reimbursement reviews. 2022 included four new indications relating to respiratory with six submissions to CADTH and INESSS (Institut national d'excellence en santé et services sociaux).

Advocacy Day at Queen's Park

Asthma Canada hosted an advocacy day for the Ontario Legislature at Queen's Park in November 2022, the first such event since the beginning of the pandemic. The objective was to reconnect with Ontario's Members of Provincial Parliament and put Asthma Canada's priorities back on their radar.

The virtual information session focused on high-level messaging, myth busting and increasing general awareness around asthma management and the needs of Canadians who live with asthma.

We also coordinated a series of targeted meetings to disseminate priorities in more detail and raise awareness among key decision makers, including the Hon. Sylvia Jones, Deputy Premier and Minister of Health. A key measure of success was the interest she demonstrated in establishing a rescue inhaler overreliance check program in pharmacy. The Minister committed to investigating the priorities raised by Asthma Canada including implementation of Ontario's Asthma Quality Standards with accountability and optimal care pathways, including timely access to specialist care, expanding the role of Certified Respiratory Educators, and access to biologics.



Environment and Clean Energy Priorities

The health of our planet is important to us all. Climate change affects everyone in Canada, but those already experiencing health inequities are disproportionately impacted. Asthma Canada is committed to providing leadership, advocacy, public awareness information and innovation in the areas of condition, allergies, respiratory health, and the environment. Through this, Asthma Canada has been refocusing our efforts, where appropriate, on coalitions and stakeholder partnerships including:



The **Green Ribbon Panel** represents environmental and economic leaders from across Canada and focuses on the role that nuclear and other representatives from the energy sector can play in fighting climate change and growing the economy. We launched the final report, [More Clean Power – How Ontario can build a clean economy that works](#), listing recommendations on the importance of developing longer-term clean energy options by advancing permitting and public engagement.

Fossil Fuel Ads Make Us Sick is a public health campaign led by the [Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment \(CAPE\)](#). Air pollution caused by the burning of fossil fuels causes between 15,000 and 34,000 premature deaths in Canada each year. The Campaign is calling on the federal government to restrict fossil fuel advertising, regulate greenwashing, and ensure disclosure of health and environmental risks related to fossil fuel use.

Asthma Canada is part of the [Canadian Electric School Bus Alliance](#), a public voice working to develop strategies to accelerate the electrification of Canada's 51,000 diesel school buses. Children exposed to traffic-related diesel exhaust are at greater risk of developing asthma. CESBA is seeking policy commitments at the federal and provincial levels of government that will enable all Canadian school bus fleets to transition from diesel to electric power by 2040.

Research

Asthma Canada supports and funds asthma research to help unlock new treatments and someday, a cure for asthma.

Graduate Student Research Awards

Thanks to the generous support of our donors, Asthma Canada awards research grants to scientists who are developing innovative treatments for controlling asthma, as well as an eventual cure.

In 2022, we were proud to begin a partnership with the Canadian Institutes of Health Research

Institute of Circulatory and Respiratory Health (CIHR-ICRH), alongside the Canadian Allergy, Asthma and Immunology Foundation (CAAIF), to expand our student grants. Through this partnership, we awarded five \$30,000 grants to PhD level students and three \$15,000 grants to MSc researchers.

Asthma Canada co-authors a new research paper on severe asthma

Asthma Canada, as part of an expert steering committee, developed the first Canadian stakeholder consensus for diagnosis, appropriate referral, and treatment of severe asthma in Canada.

Implementation of these recommendations across the severe asthma care pathway in Canada has the potential to improve outcomes for patients through earlier detection of undiagnosed severe asthma, reduction of time to diagnose severe asthma, and initiation of advanced phenotype specific therapies.

The study was published in the journal, *Allergy, Asthma & Clinical Immunology*. Titled, [“Recommendations from a Canadian Delphi consensus study on best practice for optimal referral and appropriate management of severe asthma”](#), these recommendations focus on referrals from primary and secondary care, accessing specialist asthma services, homecare provision for severe asthma patients and outcome measures.

Early Career Researcher Award in Asthma

The Early Career Researcher Award in Asthma supports and enables Canadian researchers in the early stages of their independent research career to pursue basic, clinical, health services and/or population health research in the field of asthma. These awards are jointly funded by Asthma Canada, AstraZeneca Canada, CAAIF,

CIHR-ICRH and the Canadian Lung Association (CLA).

Congratulations to our two 2022 Early Career Researcher Award in Asthma Recipients: Dr. Cristina Longo, Université de Montréal and Dr. Zihang Lu, Queen's University.

Meet a researcher! Dr. Zihang Lu, recipient of the 2022 Early Career Research Award

Dr. Lu's research, *Asthma phenotypes, risk factors and the implications for future management in Canadian children*, aims to address several knowledge gaps in our understanding of early life asthma phenotypes as well as the influences of genetic and environmental exposures on these patient phenotypes.

What kind of impact do you hope your research will have?

"I hope, and I really do believe, that I can use my expertise to make a contribution that will improve patients' lives. I'm also hoping to make a positive impact on improving patient care, advancing public health, and transforming the lives of those who are affected by diseases."





Helping Canadians with Asthma Breathe Easy, Together

With your help, Asthma Canada provides education, advocacy and research to benefit the lives of the over 3.8 million Canadians living with asthma.

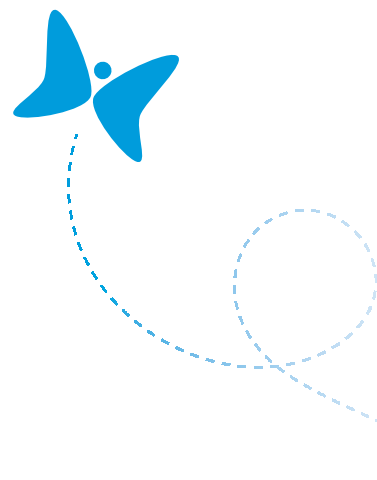
Thank you.

As a charity, we depend on the generosity of incredible people, like you, to support our mission so that we can continue serving the Canadian asthma community and changing lives. When you donate to Asthma Canada, you are funding profound education, advocacy and research initiatives.

There are many ways you can make a difference. Consider a one-time gift, monthly gift, gift of securities or a legacy gift. Your contribution matters. [Find your preferred way to give today.](#)

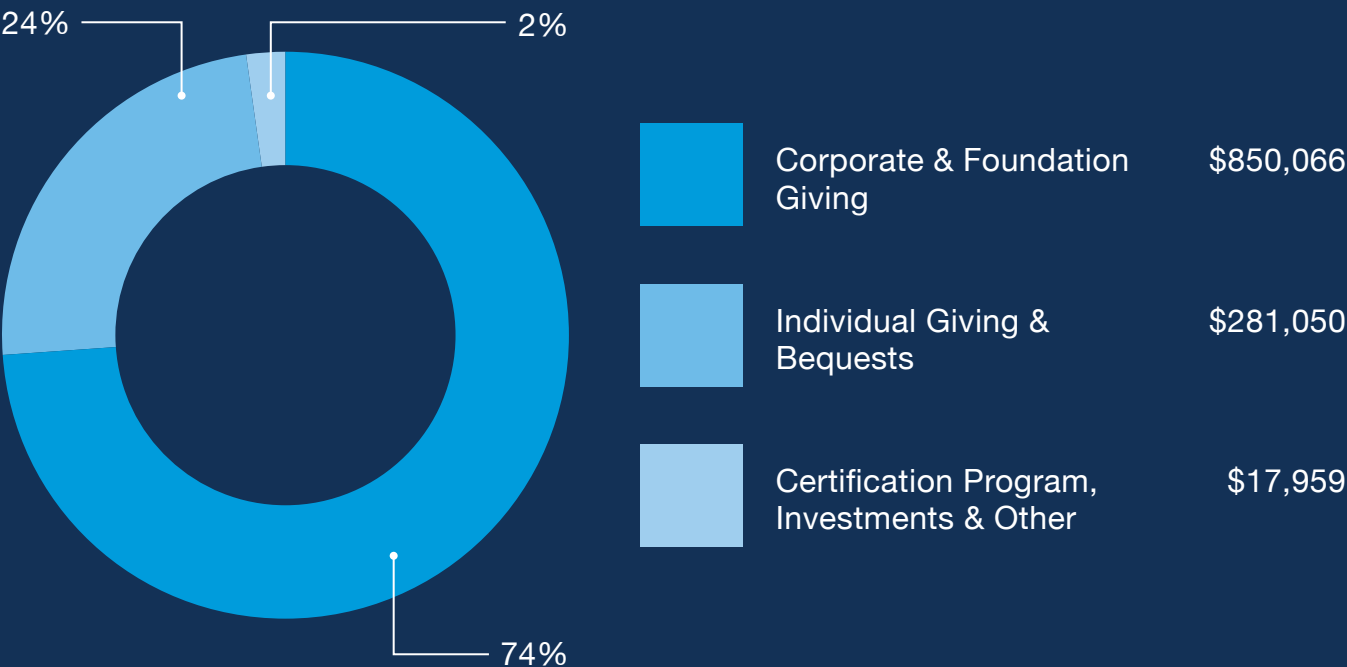
Asthma Canada gratefully acknowledges the reliable support of its corporate and foundation sponsors.

Together, we are building a future without asthma.

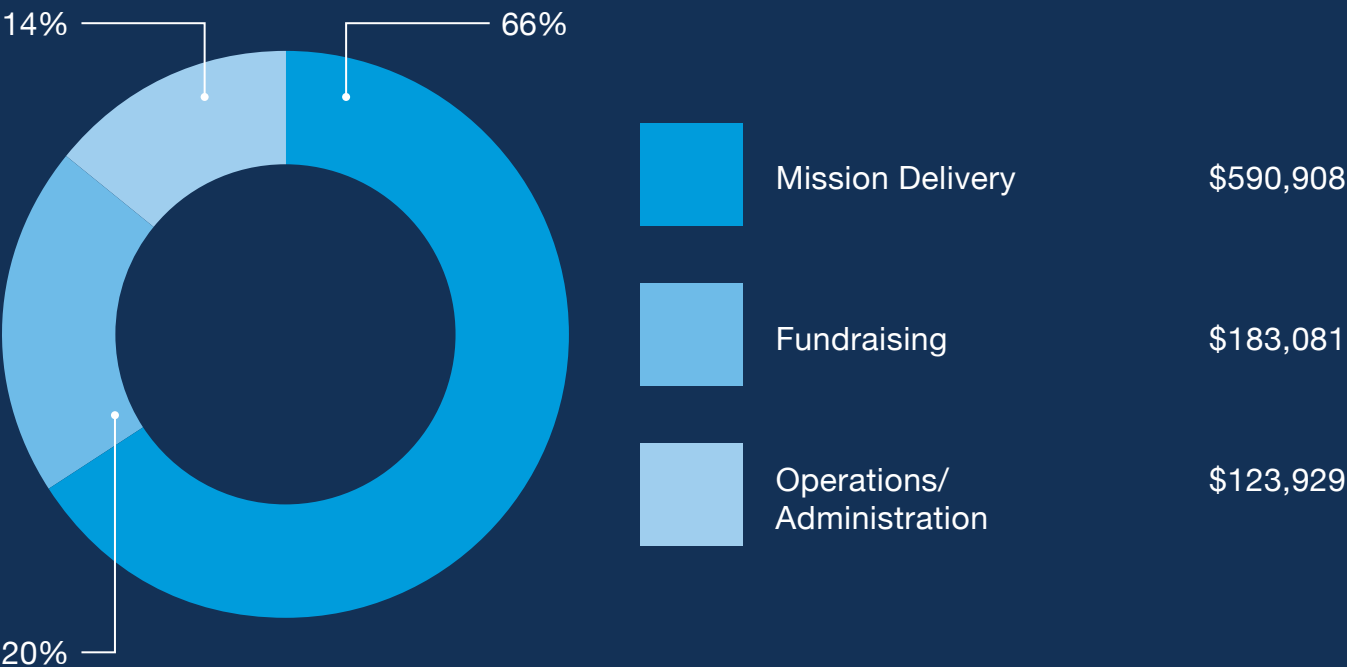


2022 Financial Highlights

Sources of Revenue



Expenses



Our People

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Kristi MacKenzie
Vice Chair

Karen Slezak
Treasurer

Dr. Susan Waserman
Chair, Medical & Advisory Committee

Firdos Somji
Secretary, Chair of Governance and Nominating Committee

Dag Enhorning
Director

John Healy
Director

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Susan Balkovec, RRT, CAE
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Chris Carlsten, MD, MPH
Member

Matthew Feldman, MD
Member

Stacey McNeilly, RRT, CRE, CTE
Member

Andrew O'Keefe, MD, FRCPC
Member

Ron Olivenstein, MD, Pulmonologist
Member

Cheryl Sadowski, B.Sc, Pharm.D., FCSHP
Member

STAFF

Vanessa Foran
President and CEO (until September 2022)

Jenna Reynolds
Interim CEO, Director of Programs and Services

Jeffrey Beach
President & CEO (effective February 2023)

Zhen Liu
Director of Administration and Operations

Kristin Valois
Manager, Communications

Kyle DeDecker
Fundraising and Communications Specialist

Sylvia Grutzmacher, RRT, CRE
British Columbia

Susan Haskell, RRT, CRE, CTE, FCSRT
Newfoundland

Tracy Cushing, RRT, CRE
Nova Scotia



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