

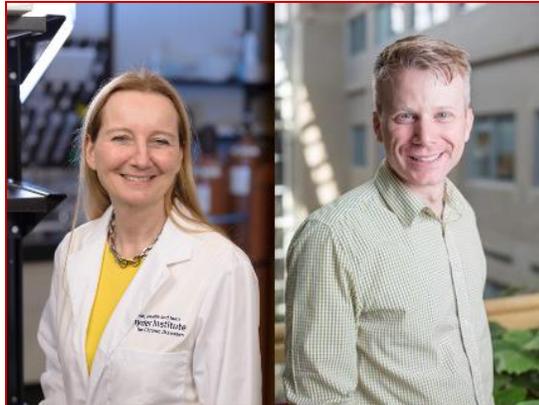


A NEWSLETTER FROM
**The Snyder Institute
for Chronic Diseases**



January 2026

Snyder Researchers Advance Innovative Therapies Through Living Medicines



The Living Medicines Initiative at UCalgary's Cumming School of Medicine, led by Snyder members Dr. Kathy McCoy and Dr. Douglas Mahoney, is driving the rapid development of groundbreaking therapies that combine human cells and microbes to target cancer and other diseases. Dr. McCoy and Dr. Mahoney are spearheading research to identify gut microbial consortia that amplify cell-based immunotherapies like CAR T-cells, creating powerful adjuvant "cocktails" to reignite anti-tumor immunity and improve patient outcomes. Dr. McCoy is also partnering with Snyder member and clinician-scientist Dr. Braedon McDonald, who is developing rapid clinical testing methods to profile patients and deliver personalized microbiome interventions—potentially starting during pregnancy to establish healthier early-life trajectories and influence neurodevelopment, metabolic health and beyond. [Learn more.](#)

Snyder Researchers Illuminates Female Brain-Heart Health Vulnerabilities



Cardiovascular and cerebrovascular health are closely connected, sharing common risk factors such as high blood pressure and overlapping biological pathways, so problems in the brain can affect the heart and blood vessels, and vice versa. Researchers have long known that older females face a higher risk of dementia, cardiovascular disease and stroke than males, but the biological reasons for this increased risk have remained unclear. Research led by Snyder member Dr. Marc Poulin in the departments of Physiology & Pharmacology and Clinical Neurosciences has begun to shed light on the mechanisms underlying this elevated risk for women. [Learn more.](#)

Spotlight on Peer Review: Dr. Justin Chun and His Impact



Snyder member Dr. Justin Chun is being recognized for his exceptional service as a CIHR peer reviewer and his commitment to strengthening Canada's health research ecosystem. Over the past three years, he has contributed his expertise to several CIHR Project Grant competitions, helping ensure funding decisions are fair, rigorous and focused on the best science. He emphasizes peer review as a shared responsibility in a country with a limited pool of specialists, and as a powerful learning opportunity for researchers at all

career stages to understand what makes applications competitive and to continually improve the quality of health research. [Read more here.](#)

Snyder Mini-Medical School | February 9



Mini-Medical School
For the general public

**DECODING LIVER CANCER:
WHAT RESEARCH IS
TEACHING US**

Theatre 4, Health Sciences Centre, UCalgary
Foothills Campus and via Zoom
Monday, February 9, 2026
6:30 to 8:00 PM MST (doors open at 6:15 PM)
Presented by Dr. Mayur Brahmania

The poster features a QR code and an illustration of medical professionals gathered around a large liver model.

Join us for the upcoming Mini-Medical School session on February 9, 2026, featuring presenter Dr. Mayur Brahmania, MD, FRCPC, MPH, who will deliver a talk titled "Decoding Liver Cancer: What Research is Teaching Us." Dr. Brahmania is a Clinical Associate Professor of Medicine at the University of Calgary, specializing in Hepatology and Transplant Hepatology with a strong focus on improving quality of care for patients with cirrhosis and liver cancer. [Register here.](#)

Publications

- Connor Snow, Donald, A. M. H., Pelechaty, K. M., Gibson, J., Hill, M. D., Rawling, J. M., Holroyd-Leduc, J., Nerenberg, K., Holodinsky, J. K., Longman, R. S., & Marc Poulin. [Longitudinal sex differences in cerebrovascular ageing in older adults: Results from the brain in motion study.](#) The Journal of Physiology, 2026

- Basant Abdulrahman, Heiseke, A., Aguib, Y., Lu, L., Dalia Abdelaziz, Ansari, M., Thapa, S., Taguchi, Y., Sabine Gilch, & Hermann Schätzl. [Contrasting roles of autophagy in cellular prion infection](#). Autophagy,, 2025

Welcome to our new Strategic Advisory Board Member



Welcome to our new SAB member Bruce Winston. Bruce is an entrepreneur who completed his pharmacy degree at the University of Alberta in 1985. One year later, with the assistance of his mentors, he purchased his first pharmacy in Calgary. In 2004, he co-founded Apex Pharmacies, which he grew to 20 pharmacies in Alberta under the Sandstone Pharmacies brand. Bruce sold the group of pharmacies to Neighbourly Pharmacy and now works for Neighbourly as Senior Director of Pharmacy Advocacy and Professional Affairs.

Bruce has spoken across the country at pharmacy sector events and is well known to advocate for a patient's right to choose where, and from whom they receive their care. His passion in this area is spurred on by his personal journey, having lived with inflammatory bowel disease since childhood. Shortly after Bruce was diagnosed with Crohn's Disease, his mother co-founded the Calgary chapter of Crohn's and Colitis Foundation of Canada and set about raising the necessary funds to bring the first GI Research Chair, Dr. Grant Gall, to Calgary. We look forward to his knowledge and experience advancing the Snyder community's goals.

Education News

Grad Seminar Series Schedule (February)



All lectures begin at noon. Pizza (2 pcs. per person please) provided first come first served; best to arrive by 11:50 am.

February 2 | Theater Four

- Hobin Seo, MDIM PhD Graduate Student, Dr. Jacquelot's Laboratory, Departments of Biochemistry & Molecular Biology and Microbiology, Immunology & Infectious Diseases

February 9 | Theater Four

- Malcolm Walling, MDIM MSc Graduate Student, Dr. Jenne's Laboratory, Department of Microbiology, Immunology & Infectious Diseases

February 16

- Family Day Holiday –no seminar scheduled.

February 23 | Theater Four

- Shane Ram, MDMI PhD Graduate Student, Dr. Savchenko's Laboratory Department of Microbiology, Immunology & Infectious Diseases
- Simran Deo, MDMI MSc Graduate Student, Dr. Gillrie & Dr. Surewaard's Laboratories, Department of Microbiology, Immunology & Infectious Diseases

Congratulations

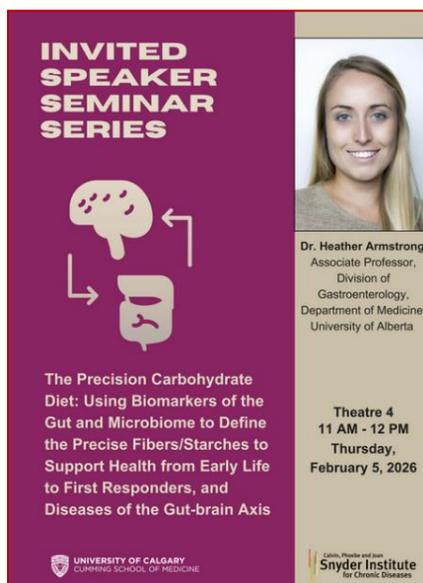
- Congratulations to Snyder member Dr. John Gilleard on receiving an NSERC Alliance Advantage grant of \$1.087 million for project titled "Precision Diagnostics in Veterinary Parasitology: Developing Novel Molecular Diagnostic Tests to Detect

Antiparasitic Drug Resistance and Support Drug Stewardship," in partnership with Antech Diagnostics.

- Congratulations to Snyder Institute members Dr. Ann Gregory, Dr. Ejaje Agbani and Dr. Hedwich Kuipers on receiving CFI JELF funding. We wish you continued success as this support helps advance your research and strengthen the tools and infrastructure that make new discoveries possible.
- Congratulations to Snyder trainee Armaan Mohan from the Tim Shutt Lab on receiving the Cartier Scholarship. We also extend our heartfelt gratitude to the Cartier family for their generous donation, which enables groundbreaking research and fosters innovations that significantly enhance patient care and outcomes.
- Congratulations to Snyder trainee Stephanie Hindle from the Jenne Lab for winning Top Presentation Award in the Scientists in Training session at the British Society for Haemostasis and Thrombosis (BSHT) Annual Conference held in Cardiff.

Upcoming Events

Snyder Invited Speaker Seminar | Feb 5



The poster is a vertical rectangular graphic with a purple background. At the top, it reads 'INVITED SPEAKER SEMINAR SERIES' in white, bold, uppercase letters. Below this is a stylized white icon of a brain and a stomach connected by arrows. The main title of the seminar is written in white text: 'The Precision Carbohydrate Diet: Using Biomarkers of the Gut and Microbiome to Define the Precise Fibers/Starches to Support Health from Early Life to First Responders, and Diseases of the Gut-brain Axis'. At the bottom left is the University of Calgary logo and name. At the bottom right is the Snyder Institute logo. A central white box contains a portrait of Dr. Heather Armstrong and her title: 'Dr. Heather Armstrong, Associate Professor, Division of Gastroenterology, Department of Medicine, University of Alberta'. Below the portrait, it lists the event details: 'Theatre 4, 11 AM - 12 PM, Thursday, February 5, 2026'.

Join us for Snyder Invited Speaker Seminar Series on February 5, 2026, 11:00 am–12:00 pm in Theatre 4. Dr. Heather Armstrong presents *"The Precision Carbohydrate Diet: Using Biomarkers of the Gut and Microbiome to Define Precise Fibers/Starches for Health from Early Life to First Responders, and Diseases of the Gut-Brain Axis."* Dr. Heather Armstrong, PhD, Associate Professor in Gastroenterology at University of Alberta, has secured >\$25M in funding and published >25 papers in her first 4 years as professor. Her research explores gut microbiota impacts on health and diseases like IBD, MS, liver disease, and cancer.

Snyder trainees/postdocs: Attend the roundtable lunch with Dr. Armstrong, 12:15–1:15 pm, HRIC 4AC56. [Register here](#).

Cancer Immunotherapy Seminar | Feb 10

Please join the Riddell Centre for Cancer Immunotherapy for a special seminar by Dr. Jean-Sébastien Delisle, Medical Director of the Centre of Excellence in Cell Therapy (CETC) at the University of Montreal. The event is scheduled for Tuesday, February 10, 2026, from 8 to 9 am in the Arthur Child Auditorium - Room 217 (YC021161). Dr. Delisle will present on "Virus-specific T cells: (a bit of) the past, present and future".

McCaig International Research Conference: Advancements in Osteoarthritis – From Discovery to Treatment | March 11-13



Don't miss the McCaig International Research Conference: Advancements in Osteoarthritis – From Discovery to Treatment, taking place March 11-13, 2026, at the Pomeroy Kananaskis Mountain Lodge in Alberta's Canadian Rockies. This international meeting will bring together leading researchers, clinicians, trainees, and industry partners to explore the latest advances in osteoarthritis research and care.

The conference will highlight emerging therapies, innovative imaging techniques, chemical and biochemical approaches and evolving clinical practices. Attendees will have the opportunity to engage in discussions, share insights and network with experts

from around the world, bridging the gap between discovery and patient care. [Learn more and Register.](#)

International Conference on Innate Lymphoid Cells | June 2-4



Registration and abstract submission are now open for the 6th International Conference on Innate Lymphoid Cells (ILC6), taking place June 2-4, 2026, in Vancouver, Canada. Join leading scientists and emerging researchers to share advances in ILC biology and immunology, foster collaborations and drive innovation. Visit ilc6vancouver.com for details.

Welcome to New Members

- Dr. Cora Constantinescu, Clinical Associate Professor in Paediatrics, Faculty of Medicine, researches vaccines, immunization, vaccine hesitancy, confidence and education.
- Dr. Eugene Krustev, rheumatologist and clinician-scientist, specializes in idiopathic inflammatory myopathies (IIM), focusing on biomarker discovery, disease mechanisms and novel therapeutics.
- Dr. Milli Gupta studies benign, malignant and functional esophageal disorders (GERD, eosinophilic esophagitis, Barrett's esophagus, adenocarcinoma, achalasia, motility disorders), plus GI functional issues like IBS, gastroparesis and dyspepsia.

We look forward to working with you and supporting the impactful contributions you will bring to our institute.

In The News

- **City News**

Dr. Craig Jenne: [Alberta on pace to dwarf previous season's flu death record](#)

- **CBC**

Dr. Craig Jenne: [New measles uptick 'alarming,' Alberta doctor warns](#)

- **CBC**

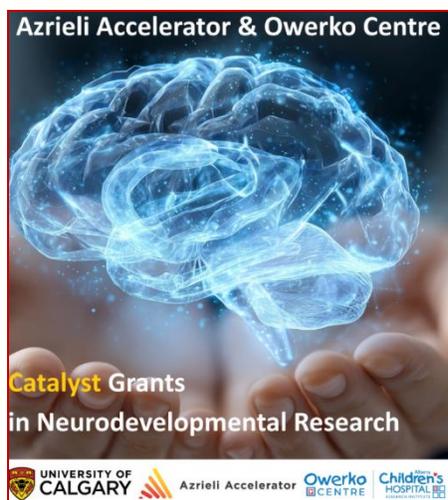
Dr. Craig Jenne: [Alberta may be on track for deadliest flu season on record, health experts warn](#)

Opportunities

CAPTURE Funding Opportunity

UCalgary and Providence Therapeutics United for Translational Research Excellence (CAPTURE) is inviting UCalgary faculty members to propose disease targets for vaccine development through a streamlined process; if selected, researchers will co-develop vaccines with Providence for preclinical testing. Eligible target areas include oncology (personalized and off-the-shelf approaches for cancer therapies and prevention), infectious diseases (viral, bacterial, fungal, and parasitic agents) and veterinary medicine. The next expression of interest (EOI) deadline is 17 March 2026; for details, contact [Carmen Rieder](#).

Call for Applications: Catalyst Grants in Neurodevelopmental Research



Applications are now open for Catalyst Grants in Neurodevelopmental Research, presented through a partnership between the Azrieli Accelerator and the Owerko Centre. Grants of up to \$50,000 each will support innovative research across neurodevelopment and neurodevelopmental conditions, spanning developmental stages from prenatal through older adulthood, with streams aligned to each program's focus areas and eligibility requirements. The application deadline is Tuesday, March 10, 2026 at 11:59 pm (MT); full details and instructions are available on the [Azrieli Accelerator and Owerko Centre websites](#), and questions can be directed to azrieli.accelerator@ucalgary.ca.

CIHR REDI 2025: Applications Now Open

CIHR has launched the 2025 Research Excellence, Diversity and Independence (REDI) Early Career Transition Award (\$600,000 in 2 phases), with two streams: Stream A for Black (any gender), racialized women, or racialized gender-diverse trainees, and Stream B for First Nations, Inuit, and Métis trainees (any gender). Key dates: UCalgary Expression of Interest – February 2, 2026; Internal deadline – June 8, 2026; CIHR deadline – June 16, 2026. [Learn more](#).

Other News

Snyder Institute Funding Reminder

- Snyder internal funding opportunities can be found on our website under [Membership & Funding](#)
- Snyder internal scholarship opportunities can be found on our website under [Education & Scholarships](#)

Awareness Information

Freezer Efficiency Matters: What You Need to Know



A new ultra-low temperature (ULT) freezer uses as much energy as an average household.

- Too many ULT freezers increase building heat load and strain HVAC systems.
- Freezer management helps cut costs, prevent failures, and improve performance.
- Try “Freezer Fridays” to clear out expired or unusable samples.
- Label all samples and keep an inventory—less time searching means less time with the door open.
- ULTs take ~10 minutes to recover for every 1 minute the door is open.
- Test older freezers (10–15+ years); some use 2–4x more energy and pose a risk to stored samples.

Would you like to contact someone at the Snyder Institute?

On our website, our [Contact Us page](#) has some useful contacts.

We want to hear from you! Send us your news

We invite all Snyder members, trainees and staff to send us your news about successes, lectures, workshops... anything that you would like to share with the membership. We will make every effort to post it, and the best ways for us to share your news are through our:

- [Snyder Newsletter](#)
- [Snyder Website](#) (as long as your news fits the site's guidelines)
- [X](#), [LinkedIn](#), [Instagram](#) and [Facebook](#) channels

Do you want help publicizing your event/lecture/workshop? Send us the details **at least one month before the event date**. Please contact Anurag if you have any questions (anurag1@ucalgary.ca). Thank you.

For the latest news and information, visit us at snyder.ucalgary.ca, and at



If you have news to share, please send it to Anurag: anurag1@ucalgary.ca

Calvin, Phoebe and Joan
Snyder Institute
for Chronic Diseases

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