



CANADIAN
ARTHRITIS
NETWORK | LE RÉSEAU
CANADIEN
DE L'ARTHRITE

JOINT VENTURES

The Canadian Arthritis Network's Industry Newsletter

New leadership

Chris Nelson believes what a person does is more powerful than what a person says.

AND, IN HIS ROLE AS THE NEWLY appointed president and CEO of the Canadian Arthritis Network (CAN), his actions consistently communicate he lives by this philosophy.

"I've worked in the health care field for over 30 years, and when I learned of this role I saw it as an opportunity to give something back," explained Chris, when asked why he chose to lead the Network.

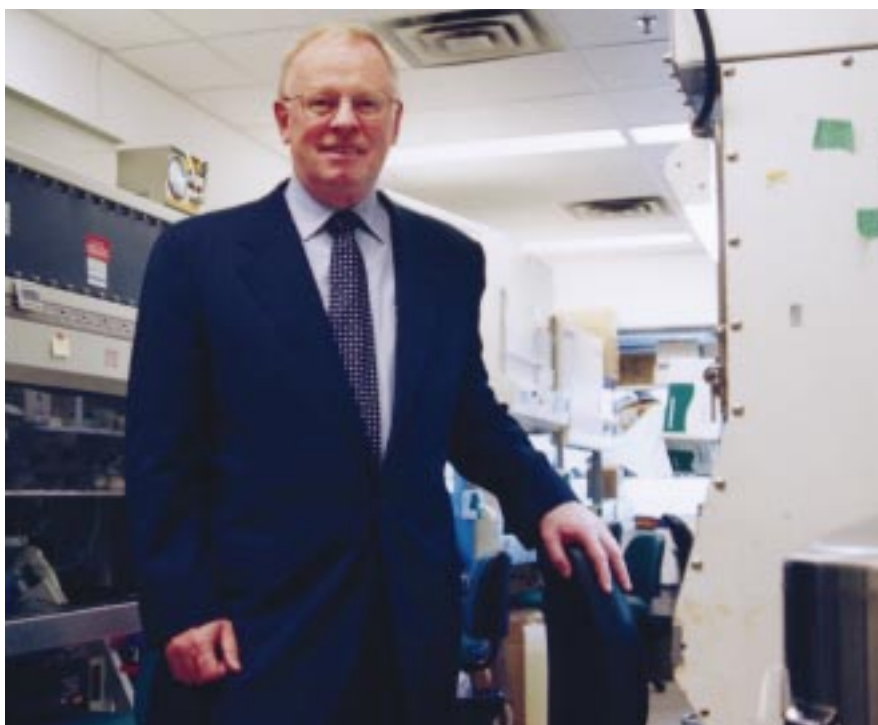
Chris' wealth of experience in the private sector has already had a positive impact for CAN.

One of his key initiatives is organizational renewal. This involves ensuring that the Network's strategy, structure, people, processes, systems and internal culture have the capacity and are prepared to deliver on CAN's vision, mission, and key objectives. Staff are embracing the rapid change.

Chris' innovative approach to this concept has included involving staff in the collaborative development of a code of conduct and their performance measurements. All sectors of the Network are participating in the renewal of the Network's operational strategy.

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Chris Nelson, CAN president and CEO

The match between Chris' leadership style and CAN's evolving organizational culture is ideal.

CAN links over 130 of Canada's leading arthritis researchers and clinicians to provide unique services and access to academic expertise, to industry, government and academics involved in arthritis.

The new role of president and CEO is much in part due to Dr. Tony Cruz, who had lead the organization on a voluntary basis since its initiation in 1998. Cruz recognized the need for a full-

time leader in order for CAN to achieve its full potential.

Not only was the ideal leader recruited, the timing has also been ideal.

The release of the results of the NCE's mid-term review this October is adding to the value of internal and external surveys Chris has initiated to gain a clear understanding of the organization's current state.

"Together, this information is enabling us to make critical strategic decisions,"

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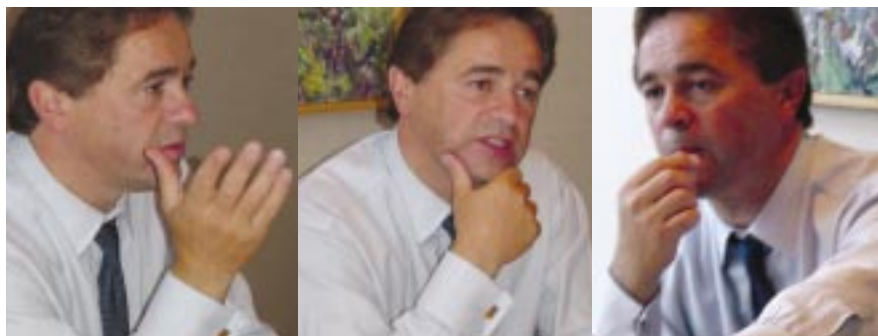
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Networks of Centres of Excellence

CAN funding renewed

The Canadian Arthritis Network (CAN) will receive \$10,928,000 for the next three years, announced Federal industry minister Brian Tobin.



Federal industry minister Brian Tobin

CAN IS ONE OF NINE NCEs TO have recently undergone a rigorous mid-term review by panels of international experts. Following the recommendations from these panels, the government of Canada will be investing \$99.5 million dollars over the next three years in the activities of these nine networks.

Tobin noted the Networks of Centres of Excellence Program is an intrinsic component of the federal government's innovation agenda and represents a significant portion of its investment in Canadian research and entrepreneurial talent. He acknowledged the private, public and not-for-profit sector partners who are playing a vital role in ensuring the success of networks.

The federal government annually funds the NCE Program with over \$70 million. In 2000-01, the networks stimulated outside investment of almost \$85 million, including almost \$49 million from participating private sector companies.

CAN president and CEO Chris Nelson was at the announcement, made in Ottawa at a recent meeting of the program directors and chairs of the 22 networks.

"This is a win-win situation all around," Chris said in response to CAN's funding renewal. "Over four million Canadians have arthritis and clearly they benefit from this news. It also means the creation of jobs in research and development, and

strengthens Canada's level of participation in the international R&D arena," Chris explained.

CAN enables over 130 of Canada's leading arthritis researchers and clinicians to collaborate in multi-disciplinary teams to develop new diagnostic and therapeutic technologies.

"Traditionally researchers have worked in isolation to solve individual pieces of the puzzle of this complicated disease," explains Nelson. "Through partnerships we are accelerating the process of research and development tremendously. It's a powerful formula."

CAN was initiated in October 1998, after receiving a four-year, \$14.5 million grant from the Networks of Centres of Excellence (NCE), Canada's flagship science and technology program.

Each of the networks in the NCE Program undergo a rigorous mid-term review by an international panel of experts to determine if another three years of funding will be provided.

For the Canadian Arthritis Network, the results of this review coincide with internal and external surveys the Network is conducting as part of the first stage of strategic organizational renewal.

"The review has validated areas in which we are excelling and revealed areas in which we can strengthen our operations," says Chris Nelson, president and CEO. "The timing couldn't be more ideal. ■

CAN's annual conference – responding to unprecedented events

As was the experience of so many organizations and people around the world, the tragic events of September 11 immediately touched us.



Calgary, Alberta

STAFF WERE SCHEDULED TO start flying to Calgary that afternoon to finalize preparations for CAN's annual conference, which was to begin in two days. Several conference speakers were from the United States. Most of the registrants had booked flights to attend the conference.

Safety quickly became a concern. As flights throughout North America were cancelled, the feasibility of holding the conference came into question too.

By 1 o'clock that afternoon, Chris Nelson, president and CEO, had discussed the situation with management and cancelled the conference. Before the day's end, each speaker and registrant had been notified by phone and an announcement was posted on CAN's Web site.

"All of the registrants and speakers were very understanding when we contacted them about the cancellation," explains CAN administrative assistant Leigh Gibson, who oversees the organization of CAN's conference. "The Calgary Marriott responded to the cancellation by being very supportive, both to our administrative office and several CAN members who had already arrived in Calgary for the conference."

The date for next year's conference has already been set for September 26 to 28, in Calgary. Look for more details about the program in future issues of *Joint Ventures* and on CAN's Web site at www.arthritisnetwork.ca ■

Upcoming conferences

* Orthopaedic Research Society

48th Annual Meeting
February 10-13, 2002
Dallas, USA
www.ors.org

* Canadian Rheumatology Association

Annual Meeting
February 20-23, 2002
Lake Louise, Canada
www.cra-scr.ca

* Canadian Connective Tissue Conference

8th Annual Conference
May 30-June 1, 2002
Sherbrooke, Canada

* Biotechnology Industry Organization

International Convention & Exhibition
June 9-12, 2002
Toronto, Canada
www.bio.org

* International Cartilage Repair Society

4th ICRS Symposium
June 15-18, 2002
Toronto, Canada
www.cartilage.org

* Drug Information Association

Annual Meeting
June 16-20, 2002
Chicago, USA
www.diahome.org

American Society for Bone and Mineral Research

Annual Meeting
September 20-24, 2002
San Antonio, USA
www.asbmr.org

Osteoarthritis Research Society International

World Congress on Osteoarthritis
September 22-25, 2002
Sydney, Australia
www.oarsi.org

Canadian Arthritis Network

Annual Conference 2002
September 26-28, 2002
Calgary, Canada
www.arthritisnetwork.ca

* Inflammation Research Association

11th National Conference
October 5-10, 2002
Lake George, USA
www.inflammationresearch.org

* CAN is attending these conferences.

To organize a meeting in person, contact us at 416-586-4770 or can@mtsina.on.ca

For more information on upcoming arthritis events, visit www.arthritisnetwork.ca/events.asp

Network launches new Web site

This September marked the launch of a new Web site for CAN – one of several initiatives to ensure information about the Network is available globally, 24 hours a day.

A VISIT TO www.arthritisnetwork.ca provides:

- Profiles of more than 130 of Canada's leading arthritis researchers and clinicians.
- Details about CAN services – pre-clinical services, clinical trials and health research services.
- Summaries of collaborative, multi-disciplinary research projects funded by CAN.
- Information about our training program, including salary awards for students and fellows.
- Employment opportunities in arthritis R&D.
- Access to a CAN staff directory.
- Details about the CAN annual conference.
- An electronic version of CAN's annual report.
- And much more.

The site was designed by Devlin Applied Design, a Canadian company with a satellite office in New York.

“Devlin uses innovative techniques, such as an electronic decision room and a usability lab, to develop a site that meets the needs of the user,” explained Christina Marshall, CAN's director of communications and marketing. “Much of our site was developed online as a team, where we were able to discuss issues and make decisions together.” ■



New leadership

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explains Chris, whose areas of expertise involves sales management, business development, customer support, quality control, health policy and reimbursement and corporate communications. “We need to understand where we are now, in order to renew our strategy to achieve the Network's goals.”

“My top three priorities for the next six months are to obtain a concise picture of our current state, to collaboratively renew our strategy to support our objectives and to ensure our organizational structure supports these priorities,” says

Chris, who has been skillfully adjusting CAN's course in response to daily changes, while setting his site on CAN's challenging horizon.

Chris admits his goals for CAN are ambitious. But he has the experience and the vision to enable the organization to achieve them. He focuses his efforts on accomplishing the realization of the shared vision, rather than simply discussing what he hopes to accomplish.

Clearly he has enough stamina – despite adapting to a long daily train commute from Burlington, Chris still manages to fit in his morning jog and is typically the first person in the office. ■



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Chris Nelson
President and CEO

Scientific Management Committee

Linda Bennett
Manager, Clinical Trials Group

Tony Cruz, Ph.D.
Program Director

Jeffrey Dixon, Ph.D.
CAN Member

John Esdaile, M.D.
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David Hart, Ph.D.
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Edward Keystone, M.D.
Associate Clinical Director

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Chair, Consumer Advisory Council

Christina Marshall, APR
Director of Communications & Marketing

Tineke Meijers, Ph.D.
Executive Director of Research & Development

Robin Poole, Ph.D., D.Sc.
Associate Program Director

Johnathan Riley
Manager, Health Research Services

Canadian Arthritis Network

250 Dundas Street West
Suite 402

Toronto, ON M5T 2Z5

Tel: 416-586-4770

Fax: 416-586-8395

e-mail: can@mtsina1.on.ca

www.arthritisnetwork.ca

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Editor: Christina Marshall

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Associate Editor: Matt Taylor

416-586-4461



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