

# Summit for Cancer Immunotherapy

#Summit4CI

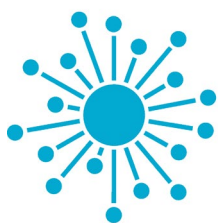
April 6–8 2025

Westin Harbour Castle

Toronto Ontario



## HQP EVENTS & ACTIVITIES PROGRAM



SUMMIT FOR  
**CANCER**  
IMMUNOTHERAPY

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## What is BioCanRx?

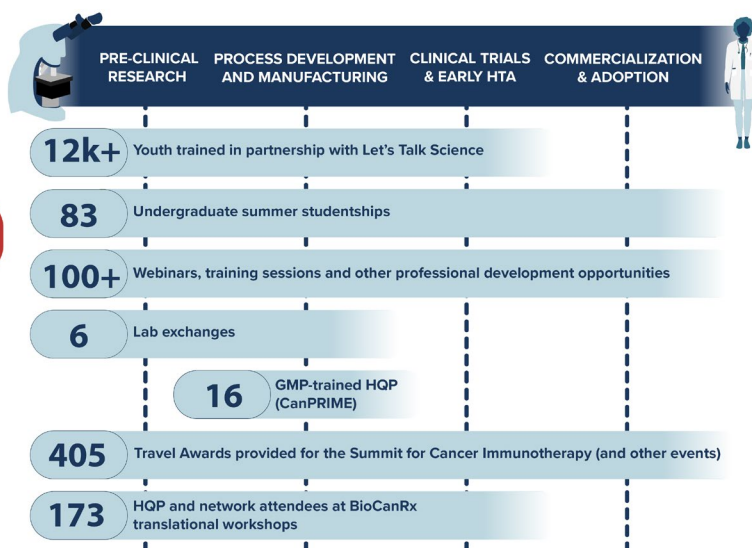
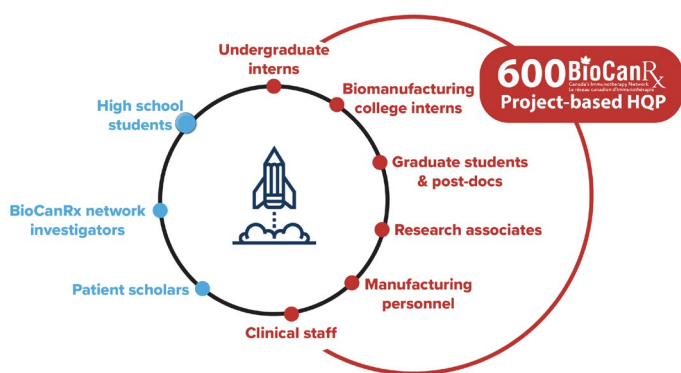
BioCanRx is Canada's Immunotherapy Network. Our vision is to turn all cancers into curable diseases. We are a network of scientists, clinicians, cancer stakeholders, academic institutions, NGOs and industry partners working together to accelerate the development of leading-edge immune oncology therapies for the benefit of patients. As a leader in the translation, manufacture and adoption of cancer immunotherapies, we invest in translating world-class technologies from the research lab into clinical trials. BioCanRx provides researchers with access to funding, expertise, training and biomanufacturing facilities. We train and develop the talent needed for a thriving Canadian health biotechnology sector.

### Our mission

The BioCanRx mission is to accelerate Canada's most promising biologically based cancer therapies into clinical trials.

### Highly Qualified Personnel (HQP) training program - our commitment to your professional success

Training the next generation of immunotherapy researchers and addressing knowledge gaps in clinical translational research are key pillars of our mission. BioCanRx is addressing these aims by developing highly qualified personnel (HQP) skilled in all aspects of clinical translation, from the lab bench to the clinic. BioCanRx's training program targets HQP working in all relevant disciplines (such as virology, immunology, health policy, and implementation and knowledge translation) and at all levels, from high school students and undergraduates to senior research and clinical staff.



# HQP Development Day

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12:00 pm – 4:15 pm

Various Rooms\*

This year, HQP Development Day will focus on building connections with peers, celebrating the partnership between trainees and patients, and cultivating the skills needed to be leaders in advancing cancer therapeutics and their real-world impact. Breakout sessions will explore how to effectively engage patients in research, establish and manage a new lab, commercialize discoveries, and navigate the healthcare adoption of new therapeutics.

## Agenda

Time	Sessions
12:00 - 1:00 pm	<b>Lunch</b>
12:55 - 1:00 pm	<b>Introduction and Welcome</b> Julie Jonkhans, Training & Research Manager
1:00 - 2:00	<b>Facilitated Networking</b>
2:00 - 2:30 pm	<b>Moderated Q&amp;A: Patients as Partners: A Conversation on Lived Experience and Research</b> Nadine Frisk, Social worker, Member, BioCanRx - CSA Learning Institute Working Group member, patient partner Lauralie Short, PhD candidate, Interdisciplinary Oncology, BC Cancer
2:30 - 2:45 pm	<b>Break</b>
2:45 - 3:30 pm	<b>Concurrent Breakout Sessions</b> (see next page for descriptions) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Best Practices for Engagement with Patient Partners in Health Research</b>, Dr. Alicia Tone, Director of Research, Ovarian Cancer Canada</li> <li>• <b>Why consider cost-effectiveness for Cancer Immunotherapy</b>, Karen Lee, Director of Health Economics, Canada's Drug Agency</li> <li>• <b>Crafting a research program as a new investigator</b>, Dr. David Cook, Scientist, OHRI, Assistant Professor, University of Ottawa</li> <li>• <b>Understanding Intellectual Property in Innovative Translational Studies</b>, Jean-Louis Brochu, Director, Intellectual Property and Communication, IRICoR</li> </ul>
3:30 - 3:35 pm	<b>Travel Time</b>
3:35 - 4:15 pm	<b>Concurrent Breakout Sessions</b> (see next page for descriptions) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Best Practices for Engagement with Patient Partners in Health Research</b>, Dr. Alicia Tone, Director of Research, Ovarian Cancer Canada</li> <li>• <b>Why consider cost-effectiveness for Cancer Immunotherapy</b>, Karen Lee, Director of Health Economics, Canada's Drug Agency</li> <li>• <b>Crafting a research program as a new investigator</b>, Dr. David Cook, Scientist, OHRI, Assistant Professor, University of Ottawa</li> <li>• <b>Understanding Intellectual Property in Innovative Translational Studies</b>, Jean-Louis Brochu, Director, Intellectual Property and Communication, IRICoR</li> </ul>

You can find a floor plan at the end of the Summit4CI workbook. Space is limited in the Breakout Session rooms.

## Breakout Session Topics

### Concurrent Session 1:

**Room:** Dockside 9

#### **Best Practices for Engagement with Patient Partners in Health Research**

**Speaker:** Dr. Alicia Tone, Director of Research, Ovarian Cancer Canada

Patient engagement in health research ensures that studies are relevant, impactful, and reflective of real-world needs. The objective of this session is to introduce the HQP to the fundamentals of patient partnership, including best practices for meaningful engagement, common challenges, and strategies for fostering trust and collaboration. The discussion will highlight the importance of integrating patient perspectives in study design, data interpretation, and science communication to improve research outcomes and public trust.

#### Learning Objectives

1. Identify key principles and best practices for engaging patient partners throughout the research process.
2. Develop strategies to communicate scientific concepts effectively to patient communities, ensuring inclusivity and accessibility.
3. Develop meaningful and long-term partnerships by recognizing challenges in patient engagement and implementing solutions to overcome them.

### Concurrent Session 2:

**Room:** Dockside 4

#### **Why consider cost-effectiveness for cancer immunotherapy**

**Speaker:** Karen Lee, Director of Health Economics, Canada's Drug Agency

Cancer immunotherapy health economics includes the study of the costs and benefits of cancer immunotherapy treatments. Immunotherapy treatments are expensive, and health economics research can help inform policy and patient care decisions. This session will introduce HQPs to the economical considerations of immunotherapy (such as cost, access, and sustainability) and highlight the importance of these factors in guiding decisions that better patient outcomes.

#### Learning Objectives

1. Understand how economic factors impact cancer care in an immunotherapy context
2. Application of economic methods to improve immunotherapy access and resource allocation
3. Identify strategies to mitigate the cost of moving immunotherapy drugs from bench to bedside

### Concurrent Session 3:

**Room:** Dockside 2

#### **Crafting a research program as a new investigator**

**Speaker:** Dr. David Cook, Scientist, OHRI, Assistant Professor, University of Ottawa

During our training, securing an independent position often looms as the ultimate goal. This transition, however, marks the beginning of a new chapter of your career - one where we face new challenges and responsibilities for which we receive little formal training. This workshop equips early-career researchers with practical strategies to overcome these challenges by focusing on three critical areas: crafting a cohesive research program, building a strong team, and navigating the landscape of academic funding.

#### Learning objectives:

1. Overcome challenges as a new investigator, identify common obstacles faced by early-career researchers, and explore practical approaches to navigate these challenges successfully.
2. Learn to develop a cohesive vision for your research program
3. Develop strategies for building and managing an effective research team, including recruiting, mentoring, and creating a productive lab culture
4. Develop a strong grant writing strategy, and learn how to structure a clear, compelling proposal that aligns with funding priorities and effectively communicates the impact of your research.



## Concurrent Session 4

**Room:** Dockside 3

### Understanding Intellectual Property in Innovative Translational Studies

**Speaker:** Jean-Louis Brochu, Director, Intellectual Property and Communication, IRICoR

This session will cover the fundamentals of pharmaceutical intellectual property and help participants understand how IP can play a role in translating therapeutics to enable turning scientific discoveries into new treatments for patients. Join this session with IRICoR to learn how to protect your creative ideas and turn them into valuable assets. IRICoR supports entities to accelerate the discovery, development and commercialization of novel, highly innovative therapies in cancer and rare diseases by establishing strategic partnerships with industry and spin-off companies.

#### Learning Objectives

1. Gain a foundational understanding of pharmaceutical intellectual property (IP) and its critical role in clinical translation.
2. Explore various forms of pharmaceutical IP in drug discovery, including data protection, patent linkage, and other exclusivities.
3. Identify key best practices and common pitfalls related to intellectual property in academia.

## Meet the Experts

**Monday, April 7th, 2025 12:25 - 1:55**

**Metropolitan East**

Meet the Experts is a networking event to connect trainees with professionals from a diverse range of careers and sectors.

The event will follow a "speed networking" format, where trainees will have the chance to engage in small group conversations with several experts. This is a valuable opportunity for participants to ask questions, gain career advice, and explore potential career paths in an informal and welcoming environment.

- **Michelle Ardolino**, Senior Scientist, Cancer Research, OHRI
- **Rebecca Auer**, CEO & Scientific Director, OHRI
- **Tamara Berthoud**, Scientist, Esphera Synbio
- **Jeanette Boudreau**, Associate Professor at Dalhousie University, Scientific Director of the Beatrice Hunter Cancer Research Institute
- **Mario Callejo**, VP, Scientific Operations, IRICoR
- **Carolina Ilkow**, Senior Scientist, Cancer Research, OHRI
- **Wendy Fantl**, Assistant Professor, Stanford University School of Medicine
- **Alan Melcher**, Professor, Institute of Cancer Research
- **Julie Nielsen**, Leader, Cell Manufacturing, BC Cancer's Conconi Family Immunotherapy Lab
- **Jennifer Quizi**, Director, Biotherapeutics Manufacturing Centre - Virus Manufacturing Facility, Investigator, Cancer Therapeutics Program
- **Gregory Reid**, Senior Consultant, Oncospire Consultants
- **Risini Weeratna**, Director, Cell & Gene Therapy Program, National Research Council Canada

## HQP Speaker Bios

### Jean-Louis Brochu



Jean-Louis Brochu is a Pharmaceutical Intellectual Property expert with 10 years experience in providing International IP landscapes, freedom-to-operate, infringement and validity opinions on several pharmaceutical products. He was the Lead Intellectual Property Scientist at Pharmascience, a leading Canadian generic pharmaceutical company. Jean-Louis supported IP generation for the Innovative branch Pendopharm and provided IP support in all aspect of drug development; from idea generation, product development, submission, product launch to post-launch IP/litigation activities. Prior to Pharmascience, Jean-Louis worked as a synthetic organic chemist for 5 years at the National Research Council Canada (NRCC), Painceptor Pharma and Sussex Research Laboratories in Ottawa.

### David Cook



Dr. Cook is a Scientist in the Cancer Research Program at the Ottawa Hospital Research Institute and Assistant Professor in the Department of Cellular and Molecular Medicine at the University of Ottawa. He completed his PhD with Dr. Barbara Vanderhyden (OHRI, Ottawa) using single-cell genomics to study epithelial-mesenchymal plasticity in cancer. For his postdoc, he received the CIHR Banting Postdoctoral Fellowship to work with Dr. Jeff Wrana (LTRI, Toronto) using spatial genomics to study how tissue structure influences cell phenotypes. Opening a lab at the OHRI in January 2024, Dr. Cook has secured over \$2M in external funding to launch a research program focused on understanding how cellular plasticity contributes to ovarian cancer progression.

### Karen Lee



Karen Lee is the Director of Health Economics at Canada's Drug Agency and an adjunct professor at the University of Ottawa's School of Epidemiology and Public Health. In her current capacity, she leads a team of health economists who conduct and critically appraise economic evaluations to inform reimbursement and health care decision making in Canada. Her team is also involved in the promotion of best practices for conducting economic evaluations through the development of documents such as CADTH's Guidelines for Economic Evaluation of Health Technologies: Canada. Most recently her team has produced guidance on model validation, budget impact analyses, and reviewed approaches to measuring and valuing quality of life in children.

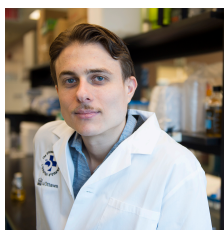
## Alicia Tone



Alicia Tone is the Director of Research at Ovarian Cancer Canada (OCC) and co-lead of OCC's national Patient Partners in Research program. She has a PhD in ovarian cancer biology from the University of Toronto, a post-doctoral fellowship in ovarian cancer genomics from the BC Cancer Agency and was a Scientific Associate at the Princess Margaret Cancer Centre in Toronto for 7 years prior to joining Ovarian Cancer Canada in 2019. Through her role at OCC, she works closely with scientists, clinicians and patient advocates across Canada to drive research progress and change ovarian cancer outcomes.

## Meet the Experts Bios

### Michele Ardolino



Michele graduated from the University of Rome in 2010 and then moved to Berkeley, CA, to train with Dr. Raulet. In 2016, he was recruited by the OHRI and the University of Ottawa. His lab is interested in understanding how cancer evade from the immune response, with a particular interest in innate lymphocytes. He is an amazing cook and a modest runner.

### Rebecca Auer



Dr. Rebecca Auer is the Executive Vice-President of Research and Innovation at The Ottawa Hospital and the CEO and Scientific Director of the Ottawa Hospital Research Institute. She also holds the position of Surgical Oncologist at The Ottawa Hospital, Seni Scientist in the Cancer Research Program at the Ottawa Hospital Research Institute (OHRI) and Professor in the Department of Surgery and the Department of Biochemistry, Microbiology and Immunology at the University of Ottawa. Dr. Auer is an international leader in perioperative cancer therapeutics. She has led six clinical trials of cancer immunotherapies based on preclinical discoveries made in her research lab. She has authored over 100 peer-reviewed publications and received over \$30 million dollars in peer-reviewed funding as PI to support her work. Dr. Auer is an international leader in the field of Surgical Oncology. She has served on the executive of the Canadian Cancer Trials Group, the Society of Surgical Oncology, and the Canadian Association of General Surgeons, where she is the Chair of the Research Committee. She is also a member of the NCI GI Steering Committee and the Canadian Cancer Society, where she sits of the Advisory Council. Dr. Auer believes that research IS care and is dedicated to ensuring all patients are provided an opportunity to participate in research. In 2024 Dr. Auer was named one of Canada's Most Powerful Women by the Women's Executive Network for her research and advocacy work in cancer.

### Tamara Berthoud



Tamara is a Senior Scientist at Esphera Synbio where she leads the Infectious Disease Vaccine Program. With over 15 years of experience in the field of vaccinology, Tamara has researched immunity against a wide range of diseases including Malaria, TB, HIV, Influenza, SARS-CoV-2, and Hepatitis B. She has worked in both commercial and academic environments and has experience leading pre-clinical and clinical vaccine studies. Tamara holds a DPhil from the University of Oxford from the department of Clinical Medicine and has worked in a variety of international settings, including the UK, Spain, Canada, and The Gambia.

### Jeanette Boudreau



Dr. Jeanette Boudreau is an associate professor at Dalhousie University in the Departments of Pathology, and Microbiology and Immunology and the Scientific Director of the Beatrice Hunter Cancer Research Institute, an Atlantic Canada-wide consortium of cancer researchers. Dr. Boudreau obtained her PhD from McMaster University, and conducted post-doctoral research at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center. Her training and research programs are interdisciplinary, weaving fundamental cellular and molecular biology and genetics, with model systems and clinical samples analysis, patient partners and considerations to improved quality of life during and after treatment. Dr. Boudreau works closely with clinical collaborators to conduct research that reflects the diversity of cancer conditions, including (and especially) the diversity of their immune genes. In particular, the Boudreau laboratory is keen to understand how natural killer (NK) immune cells influence disease processes, response to therapies, and can be leveraged for precise anticancer therapies.

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### Mario Callejo



A passionate scientist, over the course of his career Mario Callejo has participated, as team leader and biology coordinator, in major life science collaborations and contributed to the discovery of innovative new treatments. His expertise in drug development and translational science, in both academic and biopharmaceutical environments, makes him a key player in the evolution of research projects at IRICoR.

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### Wendy Fantl



Wendy Fantl is an assistant professor at the Division of Gynecologic Oncology at Stanford University (CA, USA). Wendy received her BA in Biochemistry from the University of York (UK) and PhD in Protein Biochemistry from Rockefeller University (NY, USA) before becoming a post-doc and adjunct assistant professor at the University of California, San Francisco (CA, USA). Wendy has 16 years of experience working in Biotechnology and Pharmaceutical industries. Wendy's passion is in the mechanistic understanding of intracellular signaling

pathways, DNA damage and the host immune system and their role in malignancies with an “eye on the prize” of a clinically translational endpoint. Her current interests are to apply multi-parametric single-cell technology platforms to identify disease-causing cell subpopulations in ovarian cancer and other malignancies.



### Carolina Ilkow



Originally from Buenos Aires, Argentina, Carolina earned a combined Bachelor's and Master's degree in Science before moving to Edmonton, Canada, to pursue graduate studies at the University of Alberta under the supervision of Dr. Tom Hobman. Her research focused on virology and virus engineering, where she identified novel interactions between pathogenic RNA viruses and host cells. After earning her Ph.D. in Cell Biology, Carolina joined Dr. John Bell's lab at the Ottawa Hospital Research Institute (OHRI) as a postdoctoral fellow, working on the development of tailored virotherapies for cancer treatment. Scientist at OHRI's Centre for Cancer Therapeutics and an Associate Professor in the Department of Biochemistry, Microbiology, and Immunology at the University of Ottawa. Her research is dedicated to developing innovative virus-based immunotherapeutics to advance cancer treatment. Beyond research, Carolina is committed to mentorship and education, coordinating the Microprogram in Biomanufacturing at the University of Ottawa, where she helps train the next generation of scientists in this fast-evolving field. Carolina is also a co-founder and the Chief Scientific Officer (CSO) of Esphera Synbio, a biotechnology startup that leverages synthetic biology and exosome-based platforms for therapeutic innovation.

### Alan Melcher



Professor Melcher is a clinician scientist, and currently Professor of Translational Immunotherapy at The Institute of Cancer Research, London, and Honorary Consultant Oncologist at The Royal Marsden NHS Foundation Trust. He graduated in medicine from the University of Oxford and trained in Clinical Oncology (Radiotherapy and Chemotherapy) in Cardiff, London and Leeds. Following completion of his PhD at the Imperial Cancer Research Fund (now Cancer Research UK) in London, he was a post-doctoral research fellow at the Mayo Clinic, Minnesota, before returning to the UK, where in 2007 he became Professor of Clinical Oncology and Biotherapy at Leeds, before moving to London in 2016. Professor Melcher's laboratory and translational research is focused on oncolytic viruses, radiotherapy and immunotherapy for the treatment of cancer. He and his team are investigating how to improve the ability of oncolytic viruses to trigger immunogenic cell death in tumours. They are also working on how radiotherapy treatment of tumours impacts on the immune system and anti-tumour immunity, in patients as well as pre-clinical model systems. These studies are designed to help us develop a more scientifically-informed, rational approach to combination immunotherapy strategies for testing in patients.

### Julie Nielsen



Dr. Julie Nielsen earned a PhD in Medical Genetics from the University of British Columbia, where she focused on hematopoiesis and cancer. She then studied the immune response to ovarian and lymphoid cancers as a Postdoctoral Fellow and later a Research Associate in Dr. Brad Nelson's lab at BC Cancer. As a Staff Scientist, Dr. Nielsen worked toward translating genomic discoveries into personalized immune-based therapies for patients. She is now the Leader, Cell Manufacturing at BC Cancer's Conconi Family Immunotherapy Lab in Victoria, where her team is currently manufacturing CAR-T cells for patients across Canada as part of the CLIC network.

### Jennifer Quizi



Dr. Jennifer Quizi has a Doctorate in Cellular and Molecular Medicine from the University of Ottawa and has been working as part of a translational team in cancer therapy, providing strategic and scientific insight for more than 10 years. As Director of Manufacturing Operations at BioCanRx, Dr. Quizi is responsible for enabling the roll-out of point-of-care (POC) manufacturing at strategic sites across Canada as well as to facilitate building additional capacity in therapeutic virus manufacturing in Canada. To ensure the sustainability of these investments in biomanufacturing, Dr. Quizi has championed the establishment of a first-of-its kind training program that provides trainees with hands-on, real-world experience working in a GMP environment, called CanPRIME. Dr. Quizi is also an Investigator and the Director of BioCanRx Core Facility, the Biotherapeutics

Manufacturing Centre- Virus Manufacturing Facility (BMC-VMF) at the Ottawa Hospital Research Institute. In her capacity as Director of the BMC-VMF, Dr. Quizi oversees the development and GMP production of therapeutic viruses that are used in early phase clinical trials in cancer and other disease indications

### Gregory Reid



Gregory Reid has amassed 35+ years' experience in the pharmaceutical industry, chiefly in drug development. He has graduate level training in immunology and business. Initially, he obtained substantial operational experience across multiple therapeutic areas in large pharma (BMS and GlaxoWellcome, now GSK) and large CROs (PAREXEL and IQVIA). Thereafter, Greg acquired substantial experience in the small biotech environment (MethylGene Inc./Mirati Therapeutics), where he has guided teams to successfully bring several novel molecules targeting oncology and antifungal therapies from preclinical research and CMC activities

through Phase II clinical development. As an integral part of those leadership responsibilities, Greg was directly involved in development activities in North America, Europe and Asia. Most recently, Greg provided program development leadership for pipeline immuno-oncology assets at PDS Biotechnology.

### Risini Weeratna



Risini Weeratna is a Senior Research Officer and the Team Lead for Cancer Immunology at the National Research Council of Canada (NRC). In this role, Risini is responsible for providing scientific and strategic direction for internal technology platforms and pipelines in the area of cancer immunotherapy as well as leading multiple industry collaborations where NRC is providing research and technical assistance to small and medium Canadian biotechnology institutes in advancing their clinical candidates in cancer immunotherapy.

Prior to joining NRC, Risini was a Senior Principal Scientist/ Senior Manager-

Leadership at Pfizer Vaccine Research where she headed a team investigating adjuvant and delivery systems and novel adjuvant combinations to support various vaccine projects, coordinated the non-human primate pharmacology studies to support the development of vaccine based immunotherapy for oncology and coordinating and oversaw the development and conduction of cell-based clinical assays.

## Other HQP-specific opportunities and activities

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### HQP LinkedIn Group

If you are interested in staying up to date on BioCanRx HQP opportunities as well as job postings and career development opportunities, please join us on LinkedIn at “BioCanRx HQP Association”.



### Help us improve!

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We ask you, participants of the HQP Development Day and Meet the Experts, to complete this **~8-minute survey**. Your feedback is very important to us; we have continuously used it to develop BioCanRx activities. So, THANK YOU!

To complete the online survey, please scan the QR code:



*For more information on BioCanRx’s Training Program please visit:*  
<https://biocanrx.com/training/cultivating-biotherapeutics-expertise>