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## Media Release

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 11, 2021

### **CASDA PARTNERS WITH MCMASTER UNIVERSITY AND HAMILTON HEALTH SCIENCES TO LAUNCH CHAIR IN AUTISM AND NEURODEVELOPMENT**

(Toronto, Ontario) – The Canadian Autism Spectrum Disorders Alliance (CASDA) announced today a new partnership with McMaster University, launching the McMaster Children’s Hospital Chair in Autism and Neurodevelopment.

[Dr. Stelios Georgiades](#), Associate Professor in McMaster’s Department of Psychiatry and Behavioural Neurosciences, and Founder and Co-Director of the McMaster Autism Research Team (MacART), will take on the role as inaugural Chairholder.

“As a McMaster alumnus myself, I saw first-hand how Dr. Georgiades’ leadership brought together faculty, clinicians and learners from various faculties and departments to form MacART,” said Jonathan Lai, Director of Strategy and Operations at CASDA. “Since those early days, Stelios has demonstrated his ability to navigate and bridge the complex push and pull of research into communities through policy and practice.”

This initiative will allow McMaster and CASDA to expand their collaborative activities in the areas of research, advocacy and policy development.

“I have had the great fortune of being involved with CASDA over the last number of years – working on a number of diverse projects and campaigns all aimed at creating a more unified and strategic approach to delivering Autism resources and supports across Canada,” said Dr. Georgiades. “Merging the depth of talent and expertise we have at MacART with the momentum CASDA has created in terms of being at the nexus of research, service delivery and policy; I am confident that together we will be able to translate groundbreaking research into meaningful support that provides a greater quality of life for Canadians on the Autism Spectrum.”



CASDA has been at the forefront of guiding the development of a National Autism Strategy (NAS), launching the [Blueprint for a National Autism Strategy in 2019](#), and following up with a [Roadmap towards a National Autism Strategy in 2020](#). The organization also oversees the national [Ready, Willing & Able](#) inclusive employment program with Inclusion Canada.

Along with a cross-institutional team of autism researchers, clinicians, and community service providers, CASDA is partnering in one of the key projects supported by Dr. Georgiades' Chair position, the Pediatric Autism Research Cohort (PARC) Study. The PARC study is a multi-site collaboration examining the diverse and changing trajectories of Autistic children and their families. The projected recruitment numbers of 1000 children across all 6 partner sites means the PARC study can become one of the largest autism cohort studies in the world.

This collaboration will not only support the work of the new Chairholder and enrich their research programs, but provide a stronger voice and platform to amplify calls for policy changes that will better address the complex and unique needs of Autistic Canadians, their families and caregivers.

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