

# PUBLIC HEALTH IN THE AGE OF ANXIETY

## Religious and Cultural Roots of Vaccine Hesitancy in Canada

*Edited by Paul Bramadat, Maryse Guay,  
Julie A. Bettinger, and Réal Roy*

Controversies and scepticism surrounding vaccinations, though not new, have increasingly come to the fore as more individuals decide not to inoculate themselves or their children for cultural, religious, or other reasons. Their personal decisions put the rights of the individual on a collision course with public and community safety.

*Public Health in the Age of Anxiety* enhances both the public and scholarly understanding of the motivations behind vaccine hesitancy in Canada. The volume brings into conversation people working within such fields as philosophy, medicine, epidemiology, history, nursing, anthropology, public policy, and religious studies. The contributors critically analyse issues surrounding vaccine safety, the arguments against vaccines, the scale of anti-vaccination sentiment, public dissemination of medical research, and the effect of private beliefs on individual decision-making and public health. These essays model and encourage the type of productive engagement that is necessary to clarify the value of vaccines and reduce the tension between pro- and anti-vaccination groups.

PAUL BRAMADAT is a professor and director of the Centre for Studies in Religion and Society at the University of Victoria. His previous works include *Religious Radicalization in Canada and Beyond* and *Christianity and Ethnicity in Canada*, both published by University of Toronto Press.

MARYSE GUAY is a professor in the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences at the Université de Sherbrooke.

JULIE A. BETTINGER is an associate professor in the Department of Pediatrics and a vaccine safety scientist at the Vaccine Evaluation Center at the University of British Columbia.

RÉAL ROY is an assistant professor in the Department of Biology at the University of Victoria.

*This page intentionally left blank*

# PUBLIC HEALTH IN THE AGE OF ANXIETY

*Religious and Cultural Roots  
of Vaccine Hesitancy in Canada*

EDITED BY PAUL BRAMADAT, MARYSE GUAY,  
JULIE A. BETTINGER, AND RÉAL ROY



UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO PRESS  
Toronto Buffalo London

© University of Toronto Press 2017  
Toronto Buffalo London  
[www.utppublishing.com](http://www.utppublishing.com)  
Printed in the U.S.A.

ISBN 978-1-4875-0020-7 (cloth) ISBN 978-1-4875-2012-0 (paper)



Printed on acid-free, 100% post-consumer recycled paper with  
vegetable-based inks.

---

**Library and Archives Canada Cataloguing in Publication**

Public health in the age of anxiety: religious and cultural roots of vaccine hesitancy in  
Canada / edited by Paul Bramadat, Maryse Guay, Julie A. Bettinger, and Réal Roy.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-1-4875-0020-7 (cloth). ISBN 978-1-4875-2012-0 (paper)

1. Vaccination – Canada. 2. Vaccination of children – Canada. 3. Vaccines – Canada.  
I. Bramadat, Paul, 1967–, editor II. Guay, Maryse, 1957–, editor III. Bettinger, Julie A.,  
editor IV. Roy, Réal, editor

RJ240.P83 2017

614.4'7083

C2017-901372-6

---

This book has been published with the help of a grant from the Federation  
for the Humanities and Social Sciences, through the Awards to Scholarly  
Publications Program, using funds provided by the Social Sciences and  
Humanities Research Council of Canada.

University of Toronto Press acknowledges the financial assistance to its publish-  
ing program of the Canada Council for the Arts and the Ontario Arts Council, an  
agency of the Government of Ontario.



Canada Council  
for the Arts

Conseil des Arts  
du Canada



ONTARIO ARTS COUNCIL  
CONSEIL DES ARTS DE L'ONTARIO  
an Ontario government agency  
un organisme du gouvernement de l'Ontario

Funded by the  
Government  
of Canada

Financé par le  
gouvernement  
du Canada

Canada