



AMS Healthcare and the J & W Murphy Foundation give \$3.5 million to establish the Roper-Hannah Chair in the History of Healthcare and Health Equity at King's and Dalhousie

For immediate release

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At an event at the President's Lodge on King's campus on March 11, Dalhousie President Kim Brooks and King's President William Lahey announced the creation of the Roper-Hannah Chair in the History of Healthcare and Health Equity.

This new Chair will be at the forefront of advancing medical humanities at King's and Dalhousie, exploring questions of health equity from a critical historical perspective. The announcement was made at the capstone event for the 100th anniversary of the association between King's and Dalhousie. This celebration was also an opportunity to acknowledge the generous donors, AMS Healthcare and J & W Murphy Foundation, who each endowed \$1,750,000 to create the Chair.

"This Chair is a powerful testament to the enduring partnership between Dalhousie and King's, and to the importance of understanding healthcare through a historical lens," said Dalhousie President Kim Brooks. "The history of healthcare is not just about medical advances—it's about the choices we've made, the voices we've elevated or ignored, and the systems we've built. This initiative will ensure that future generations of scholars and practitioners learn from that history to shape a more equitable and compassionate healthcare system."

This tenured or tenure-track appointment will be held by a historian who contributes significantly through teaching and research to the body of scholarship on the history of healthcare and health equity. The holder of this Chair will be appointed to the [Department of History, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences at Dalhousie](#), and will teach in King's [History of Science and Technology Honours Program](#). They will also be cross appointed to the [Faculty of Medicine](#) at Dalhousie.

Since the 1970s, AMS Healthcare has helped to turn the history of healthcare into a thriving discipline, supporting a community of scholars to advance a robust understanding of how medical and bioethics change over time. The community includes [eight other Hannah Chairs](#) at universities across the country—this is the first in Atlantic Canada. "We are delighted to join the J & W Murphy Foundation to add the Roper-Hannah Chair to the community of Hannah Scholars across Canada," said Helen Angus, CEO of AMS Healthcare. "With the addition of this

new Chair, we continue this legacy—strengthening our national network of healthcare historians and further embedding history into medical and healthcare education. This Chair will support research, mentorship, teaching and community development, helping future generations of healthcare professionals appreciate the historical forces that have shaped modern medicine and the ethical challenges that lie ahead.”

With their gift, the J & W Murphy Foundation continues its investment in compassionate care through its charitable endeavours. This is the second Chair at Dalhousie made possible by their generosity—the first being the J & W Murphy Foundation Endowed Chair in Palliative Care. “We value this new Chair for the way it brings humanities and healthcare together,” said Lisa Murphy, who, with her sister Karen Spaulding, carries on the Foundation created by their parents, the late Janet and Bill Murphy. “It reflects our commitment to understanding medicine not just through the narrative lens of those in power, but also the lived experiences of those affected by historical decision-making as we strive to improve health equity. Helping name this Chair was also deeply personal—we do it to honour our mother, Janet Roper Murphy, our Roper family’s deep Halifax roots, and our cousin Henry Roper’s lifelong dedication to history and the University of King’s College.”

Using the indispensable tools of critical historical analysis, the appointed Chair will conduct, promote and disseminate research at the intersection of the history of medicine/healthcare, medical and bioethics, and health equity. Scholarly touchpoints of the Chair may include complicity of medical systems in colonial structures; health equity framing in the healthcare system; critical global history of science, before, during and after the colonial period; medicine and healthcare beyond Eurocentric understandings and borders; critical interrogation of a still-largely Eurocentric understanding of bioethics and their value propositions around health and well-being.

“The history of healthcare documents our past to see where we have stumbled before, especially in the areas of health equity,” said King’s President William Lahey. “Equity is an essential part of health and wellbeing. The Canada Health Act commits Canada to equity in the financing and delivery of core healthcare services, but we know we have much to do to make equity a wider reality for everyone, in and beyond those core services. Historical analysis helps us understand our past and present to imagine the better and more equitable systems of the future.”

The anticipated first appointment for the Chair will be in the 2026–27 academic year.

About AMS Healthcare

AMS Healthcare is a Canadian charitable organization that was created 85 years ago to catalyze change in healthcare. We have impacted healthcare through the introduction of new ideas into the system, particularly focused on the responsibility of providers and healthcare organizations to meet emerging societal needs. Since 2012, AMS Healthcare has focused its vision on the concept of compassionate care: supporting healthcare providers, educators, policy makers and

system leaders in anticipating, teaching, and instilling a foundation of compassion at the heart of our health system. Our sweet spot is building leaders committed to compassion in care. Our strength is developing health system leadership—leadership grounded in compassionate care. We should also not lose sight of the learnings afforded by lessons of the past—this was affirmed for all in the collective response to Covid-19.

ams-inc.on.ca/

About the J & W Murphy Foundation

Started in 2008 by Bill & Janet Murphy of Liverpool, Nova Scotia, the J & W Murphy Foundation takes a broad and inclusive view of what a healthy community is, providing grants to a wide range of charitable organizations, mainly in Nova Scotia, including the following areas of particular interest: access to education for youth and adults; arts and culture; crisis services; food & housing insecurity; marginalized and under-addressed communities; compassionate healthcare and better outcomes; mental health and palliative and end-of-life care.

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Attached Photo Credit: Kelly Clark

(L to R: Dr. Gaynor Watson-Creed, Associate Dean, Serving and Engaging Society, Dalhousie University Faculty of Medicine, Lisa Murphy and Karen Spaulding of the J & W Murphy Foundation, Helen Angus, CEO of AMS Healthcare, William Lahey, President of The University of King's College, Kim Brooks, President of Dalhousie University in the King's President's Lodge)