



Heidi Drescher, MMS, PA-C

Physician Assistant, Community Physician Group
Community Medical Center, Missoula, MT

Ms. Drescher is a community based Physician Assistant and Registered Dietitian currently employed in Missoula, Montana. She delivers individualized care to rural IBD patients who might not otherwise have access to treatment. Her patient base encompasses a 200-mile radius, which also includes eastern Idaho and isolated agricultural towns near the Canadian border.

She earned her Bachelor of Science degree in Human Nutrition at Arizona State University in Tempe, AZ. She then completed a Dietetic Internship at Westchester Medical Center in Valhalla, NY. During her training, she developed an interest in the dynamic interplay of the gut biome and how it could influence the immune system and patient outcomes. As a result, she has long incorporated nutrition, wellness and mindfulness into her patient care.

Ms. Drescher earned a Master's of Medical Science in Physician Assistant Studies at Midwestern University in Glendale, AZ, enabling her to be more impactful in her approach to treating those living with Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis. As part of her comprehensive approach, she and her team also address the psychosocial, cultural and financial needs of each patient. She is a tireless, persistent advocate for her patients, in collaboration with her nurse, and a Licensed Clinical Social Worker in her community who specializes in working with IBD patients. Coordinating Patient Assistance for pharmaceutical coverage, facilitating referrals, and arranging travel to tertiary care centers up to 300 miles away are all a daily part of the services her small but dedicated team provides to her largely underinsured or uninsured patient community.

Through her experiences with patients, she recognizes that a diagnosis of Crohn's disease or ulcerative colitis can be devastating and burdensome to individuals, their families and by extension their communities. Ms. Drescher and her team consider it their mission to assist in any way possible, to minimize the impacts of these diseases, and help improve the quality of life for each patient.

In 2017, Ms. Drescher was awarded the Sherman Emerging Leader Prize for her pioneering work and high potential.