



**SHERMAN  
PRIZE**

**Sherman Prize, Inspiring Excellence in Crohn's and Colitis,  
Announces 2017 Award Recipients**

*Honorees Have Led Trailblazing Treatment Breakthroughs; Raised Pediatric Remission Rates; and  
Provided Comprehensive Care to Rural, Underserved Patients*

NAPLES, Florida, July 19, 2017 – The Bruce and Cynthia Sherman Charitable Foundation today announced the 2017 recipients of the Sherman Prize. **Stephan R. Targan**, MD, Director of the Inflammatory Bowel and Immunobiology Research Institute at Cedars-Sinai and **Lee A. Denson**, MD, Director of the Schubert-Martin IBD Center at the Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center, are each honored with a \$100,000 Sherman Prize for their significant achievements in advancing research and innovative care models that have improved the health and wellness of millions of Americans living with Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis, also known as inflammatory bowel diseases (IBD). **Heidi Drescher**, MMS, PA-C, of the Community Physician Group, Community Medical Center in Missoula, Montana, is honored with the \$25,000 Sherman Emerging Leader Prize for her relentless dedication to ensuring her rural, underserved patients benefit from best practices in IBD care.

Highlights of their achievements:

- Dr. Stephan R. Targan is a luminary in the field of IBD, known as a collegial integrator who has assembled world-class teams to hasten discoveries that have led to treatment breakthroughs.
- Dr. Lee A. Denson has devoted his career to helping children with IBD by sharing best practices through processes he's helped develop, and studying new treatments that have transformed the status quo.
- Ms. Heidi Drescher is an energetic, caring and tireless clinician and advocate in a remote area of Montana, providing exceptional care to underserved patients across a wide geographical area.

The Sherman Prize is the first prize of its kind to honor outstanding individuals who go above and beyond to make exceptional contributions in the fight to overcome Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis, chronic, inflammatory diseases of the gastrointestinal tract that are estimated to impact more than three million Americans.

"Since founding the Sherman Prize last year, I have had the wonderful opportunity to get to know many talented individuals at the forefront of advancing IBD care," said Bruce Sherman. "This year's Sherman Prize recipients, Drs. Targan and Denson and Ms. Drescher, are exceptional leaders in the field of IBD and I stand humbled by their achievements. Each works tirelessly, in their own way, to push the boundaries of science and medicine and change what is 'accepted practice' to improve the quality of life

of people living with IBD. I am thankful to these pioneers and proud to honor and reward their outstanding contributions to the field of IBD.”

The Sherman Prize selection decisions are made by the Sherman Prize Board of Directors, with significant guidance and support from the Sherman Prize Selection Committee, a group of six of the nation’s preeminent scholars, clinicians, and advocates working in the field of Crohn’s disease and ulcerative colitis.

“We had a tremendous group of nominees for the 2017 Sherman Prizes and it was inspiring to see all the great work being done to improve the quality of life of those with Crohn’s disease and ulcerative colitis,” said Dr. David Rubin, the Sherman Prize Selection Committee Chair and Chief of the Section of Gastroenterology, Hepatology and Nutrition at The University of Chicago Medicine. “I’m proud to help recognize and honor my colleagues’ work, both to celebrate their achievements in these difficult-to-treat diseases and to inspire the wider IBD community that their continued work towards better treatment and, ultimately, a cure has incredible value.”

### **2017 Sherman Prize Recipients**

#### **Dr. Stephan R. Targan: Driving new paradigms in IBD research that led to major treatment breakthroughs benefitting millions living with IBD**

Dr. Stephan R. Targan, Director of the Inflammatory Bowel and Immunobiology Research Institute at Cedars-Sinai, has been focused on finding solutions to complex scientific problems ever since childhood. Drawn to the study of IBD because, he says, “it was one of the most difficult puzzles to solve,” Dr. Targan has become one of the IBD field’s most renowned physician scientists. Perhaps one of his most significant contributions to the field is his training and mentorship of hundreds of physicians, locally and globally, who have emerged as international thought leaders in their own right, creating a positive ripple effect that has benefitted patients worldwide.

Dr. Targan is also highly regarded for his ability to envision novel approaches to research that have improved the understanding of the underlying causes of IBD and led to the development of effective therapies that have transformed IBD care.

Early in his career Dr. Targan recognized that parallel research efforts in IBD would be slow to make a difference to patients. He set out to engage the scientific community in integrating their research efforts, and convened an inter-disciplinary summit of IBD experts in 1989 when he was chairman of the Crohn’s and Colitis Foundation’s National Scientific Advisory Committee. A scientific agenda produced from the summit guided industry research and prioritized foundation and federal funding for the next two decades. One of the critical priorities identified in the summit was to focus on defining subcategories of Crohn’s

disease and ulcerative colitis using genetic, laboratory, clinical and diagnostic data. Dr. Targan has been credited with introducing this concept to the field of IBD, which resulted in the identification of multiple biomarkers for IBD subgroups that have been developed into diagnostic tests, marking the origin of personalized medicine for IBD.

Throughout his trailblazing career, Dr. Targan has driven multiple treatment advances, one of the most significant being the advent of biologic therapies which changed the course of the disease and made remission possible for many patients. Working with colleagues in his lab, Dr. Targan discovered that IBD patients had elevated levels of tumor necrosis factor (TNF), which mediates inflammation in IBD. This research led him to initiate the first clinical trial for a TNF-inhibitor (infliximab), which ultimately became the first biologic approved for the treatment of IBD.

Today, Dr. Targan leads a 360° IBD program at Cedars-Sinai, bringing together physicians, researchers and patients in a reciprocal partnership to identify new treatment approaches. With the nation's first academic-based IBD target discovery and development program for IBD, Dr. Targan and his team have identified a potential treatment target – TL1A, a protein that is a member of the TNF family – and are planning clinical trials of a novel antibody to block this protein. Early research has shown that inhibiting production of TL1A may reverse the fibrosis associated with Crohn's disease.

“Throughout my career, I've been focused on caring for individual patients, one at a time,” said Dr. Targan. “At the same time, I've always looked ahead, imagined what's possible and united my colleagues behind research to drive advances that would help tens of thousands of patients. It's been incredibly rewarding to see this research benefit the IBD community on both a macro level and for individual patients as they put their disease into remission and get back to enjoying life.”

**Dr. Lee A. Denson: Significantly improving pediatric remission rates and leading research to identify underlying IBD causes and potential therapies**

Dr. Lee A. Denson, Director of the Schubert-Martin IBD Center at the Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center, has dedicated his 25-year career to caring for children with IBD. He currently supervises Cincinnati Children's growing regional and referral practice which provides care to children in 20 states, including those in underserved areas. Dr. Denson says he draws inspiration from his young patients, noting that “most kids, especially young ones, are very resilient.”

One of Dr. Denson's most significant contributions has been his leading role in the IBD community to identify and share best practices in pediatric IBD care. Under Dr. Denson's leadership, Cincinnati Children's became one of the seven founding sites for the Pediatric IBD Quality Improvement Network – now known as Improve Care Now (ICN). By leading the establishment of careful monitoring, tracking and planning processes tailored to each individual patient, Dr. Denson and his team have improved remission rates at Cincinnati Children's from 60 percent to 85 percent. One of the most successful components of

this plan has been the implementation of a self-management program for teens that helps them comply with their therapeutic regimen. This program empowers his teen patients to successfully transition to adult care when they head off to college – a critical juncture for young people with IBD.

Dr. Denson also manages the Denson Research Lab, leading a multi-center research program to discover underlying mechanisms of disease and better therapeutic approaches for children with IBD. Most recently, as a co-principal investigator in the RISK study, Dr. Denson helped to identify a risk stratification model to predict which children with Crohn’s disease are more likely to develop complications – an important breakthrough in the field. The study – and a companion study on ulcerative colitis called PROTECT – is ongoing with the goal of developing diagnostic tools to help physicians provide more precise treatment tailored to their patients’ needs.

For Dr. Denson, clinical care and improving quality of life for his patients has been at the center of everything he’s accomplished in research and quality improvement.

“I recently had an appointment with a ten-year-old who I’ve been treating for half of his young life,” he said. “We were able to stop some of his medications because his condition had improved, and his eyes lit up. Seeing a child improve, and helping them live more normal, more confident lives is what has driven me from the beginning.”

#### **Heidi Drescher: Improving Outcomes for Underserved, Rural Patients**

Ms. Heidi Drescher, MMS, PA-C, of the Community Physician Group, Community Medical Center in Missoula, Montana, is an inspiration to both IBD patients and gastroenterology providers in her rural community. The only IBD-focused health professional in a 200-mile radius, Ms. Drescher has built a reputation as an innovative, determined and caring IBD specialist.

Following the latest research, Ms. Drescher ensures her patients benefit from the most recent advances and best practices in IBD treatment. This includes using approved medications, aggressively when needed, and taking a holistic approach to patient care. In every visit, Ms. Drescher talks to her patients about diet, exercise and wellness, as well as coordinates psychosocial support from behavioral health specialists who understand the special needs of people with IBD. In doing so, she has observed a dramatic reduction in her patients’ need for narcotic pain control, acute office care and emergency room visits.

Beyond providing medical care, Ms. Drescher wears many hats — at times taking on the role of social worker and advocate to help her patients through difficult circumstances. Many are uninsured or underinsured, and Ms. Drescher has been known to follow up personally with insurers and patient assistance programs, as well as stand up at state Medicaid meetings to defend patients’ access to a broad range of medication options.

“All IBD patients deserve to receive excellent evidence-based care – whether being treated at a major medical center or in a small practice like mine,” said Ms. Drescher. “We now have powerful medications at our disposal that can often change the disease course if we recognize, diagnose and treat in a timely fashion, and that’s what I strive to do every day on behalf of my patients.”

### **About the Sherman Prize**

The Sherman Prize was established in 2016 by the Bruce and Cynthia Sherman Foundation to recognize and reward outstanding contributions by healthcare professionals, medical researchers, public health advocates and educators who are advancing patient care, medical research and public service in the field of Crohn’s and colitis. Every year, two Sherman Prizes of \$100,000 each are awarded to individuals with extraordinary records of achievement addressing the challenges of IBD, and a \$25,000 Sherman Emerging Leader Prize is awarded to an individual who demonstrates high potential. By consistently elevating excellent work in IBD and supporting future efforts, the Sherman Prize aims to inspire others through a ripple effect, as word of successes spreads from community to community. To learn more about the Sherman Prize and sign up for notification of the 2018 nomination period, please visit [www.ShermanPrize.org](http://www.ShermanPrize.org).

### **About Crohn’s Disease and Ulcerative Colitis**

Millions of people worldwide suffer from Crohn’s disease and ulcerative colitis, which are chronic, inflammatory diseases that damage the gastrointestinal tract. While there are effective treatments, there is no cure and available medicines do not work for everyone. Up to 70 percent of people with Crohn’s disease and as many as one third of people with ulcerative colitis require surgery. The standard surgery for ulcerative colitis is removal of the colon and rectum. Over a lifetime, Crohn’s and colitis can take a significant physical and emotional toll, both on those who suffer, as well as their families. Although great strides have been made in understanding and treating these diseases, many challenges remain, including delays in diagnosis, insufficient understanding of what causes the diseases or leads to relapses, limited treatment options, limited knowledge of the psychosocial and behavioral consequences of IBD, and disparities in quality of care and support.

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