



**SHERMAN  
PRIZE**

## **Sherman Prize for Excellence in Crohn's and Colitis Announces 2016 Award Recipients**

*Award Recipients' Achievements Include Developing Innovative Psychosocial Care Models for Complex IBD Patients; Building a National IBD Research Exchange Platform; Advancing Research in the Interaction of Diet, Gut Bacteria, and IBD; and Providing Superior Care to Underserved Communities*

WASHINGTON, September 20, 2016 – The Bruce and Cynthia Sherman Charitable Foundation today announced the 2016 recipients of the inaugural Sherman Prize for Excellence in Crohn's and Colitis. **Eva Szigethy**, MD, PhD, co-director of the UPMC Total Care-IBD Program and associate professor of psychiatry, medicine and pediatrics in the Department of Psychiatry at the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine, and **James D. Lewis**, MD, MSCE, a professor of medicine and epidemiology and associate director of the Inflammatory Bowel Disease Program at the University of Pennsylvania Perelman School of Medicine, will each be awarded a \$100,000 Sherman Prize for their unique contributions to improving health outcomes for people with Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis. **Lea Ann Chen**, MD, an assistant professor of medicine at the NYU School of Medicine, and an attending physician at NYC Health + Hospitals/Bellevue, will be awarded the \$25,000 Sherman Emerging Leader Prize for her achievements as a physician-scientist with a focus on underserved communities.

The Sherman Prize is the first prize of its kind to honor exceptional and pioneering achievements in Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis, recognizing outstanding contributions by health care professionals, medical researchers, public health advocates, and educators who are advancing patient care, medical research, and public service in the field of inflammatory bowel disease (IBD).

"I am proud to recognize and honor the first-ever Sherman Prize recipients, who are true visionaries in advancing the care of people with Crohn's and colitis," said Bruce Sherman, the founder of the annual prize. "Through their work developing innovative psychosocial care models, advancing the understanding of IBD and its treatment, and providing superior care to underserved patients, Drs. Szigethy, Lewis, and Chen are at the vanguard of improving health outcomes for people with IBD. As a parent of children with Crohn's, I'm thankful for the relentless dedication of these Sherman Prize recipients and excited to provide funding to help them advance their important research and care initiatives."

### **2016 Sherman Prize Award Recipients**

#### **Dr. Eva Szigethy: Shifting Treatment Paradigms and Improving Health Outcomes by Integrating Behavioral Health into the Comprehensive Care of IBD Patients**

Dr. Szigethy is a psychiatrist who specializes in integrating behavioral and medical care for children and adults with IBD—that is, by teaching behavioral specialists about the gut and medical specialists about the brain. Dr. Szigethy built the nation's first behavioral health program for pediatric IBD patients, addressing the emotional and behavioral challenges of IBD, co-locating a psychiatrist and psychologist within the pediatric gastroenterology clinic at Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh. She has since replicated that model for adult patients, founding the Visceral Inflammation and Pain Center to provide psychological and psychiatric services for patients at the University of

Pittsburgh Medical Center IBD Center. Dr. Szigethy has proven that providing behavioral and medical care in tandem improves health outcomes and reduces medical costs.

“Early on in my career, I was struck by the level of unaddressed emotional distress faced by people with IBD, and set my goal to show that behavioral treatment could improve their quality of life,” said Dr. Szigethy. “I look forward to using the Sherman Prize funding to further explore the relationship between the inflammatory biomarkers of IBD, genetic markers, GI symptoms, and psychiatric symptoms to better understand the treatment of psychiatric co-morbidities of IBD.”

#### **Dr. James D. Lewis: Optimizing IBD Therapy through Rigorous Clinical Study and Exploring Novel Treatment Strategies to Improve Outcomes with Less Toxicity**

As a renowned clinician-scientist in the field of gastroenterology, Dr. Lewis has dedicated his 20-year career to optimizing medical therapies for IBD patients. His latest work focuses on exploring the influence of diet and gut microorganisms on the course of IBD to identify novel treatment strategies that are not based on systemic immunosuppression. This research builds on the seminal work he recently published on the relationship between diet and the composition of gut microbiota, and it may lead to diet-based treatments for Crohn’s and colitis. While directing multiple IBD treatment studies, Dr. Lewis is also spearheading the creation of IBD Plexus, an innovative IBD research and information exchange platform that will standardize data collection and sharing, allowing researchers to mine vast troves of patient data for new insights into Crohn’s and colitis.

“None of my research and educational efforts would have meaning if it were not for the potential to improve the lives of patients with IBD,” said Dr. Lewis. “Crohn’s and colitis still pose severe challenges, despite available therapies. Until we have a cure, I will continue to study ways to optimize current treatments and develop less toxic therapies—potentially including dietary changes—to help patients control their IBD and enjoy a better quality of life.”

#### **Dr. Lea Ann Chen: An Emerging Physician-Scientist Studying IBD in Diverse Populations**

Dr. Chen’s passion is caring for patients with IBD and conducting research to understand the disease—how and why it develops and how it can be effectively treated and even prevented. Through her work as a clinician, Dr. Chen is able to identify knowledge gaps in IBD management that she explores through her investigator-initiated research studies that will advance the scientific knowledge of the disease and, ultimately, benefit future patients who have or are at risk for IBD. Already, she has made important contributions to the understanding of the gut microbiome and the role it plays in IBD. As a member of the NYU School of Medicine faculty, Dr. Chen works closely with colleagues at both NYU Langone Medical Center and NYC Health + Hospitals/Bellevue, to allow for the study of IBD in a widely diverse population of patients—including the underserved.

As part of her efforts, Dr. Chen serves as an attending physician at the IBD Clinic at Bellevue Hospital, directed by Lisa B. Malter, MD, an associate professor of medicine at the NYU School of Medicine. There, Dr. Chen and her colleagues address the challenges of caring for underserved patients who are most vulnerable to the severe, and sometimes devastating, complications of Crohn’s and colitis. Their comprehensive approach to care includes advocacy and care coordination—such as assisting with medical assistance forms, navigating the health care system, and facilitating access to other specialized medical and interpretation services when needed.

“I’m very grateful to the Sherman Prize committee for helping to continue our work caring for the diverse, underserved patients at Bellevue and conducting research initiatives that we hope will improve clinical outcomes of future patients with IBD,” said Dr. Chen.

### **About the Sherman Prize**

The Sherman Prize is an annual program initiated in 2016 that provides recipients with funding to advance their work, with an aim to create a ripple effect of inspiring excellence among others who are striving to improve the understanding and treatment of Crohn’s disease and ulcerative colitis. Two Sherman Prizes of \$100,000 are awarded each year to individuals who have made extraordinary contributions to caring for patients or advocating on their behalf, advancing medical research, and/or providing public education. The program also awards a \$25,000 Sherman Emerging Leader Prize to an individual who demonstrates high potential in the field of Crohn’s and colitis. 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 the nation’s preeminent Crohn’s and colitis scholars, clinicians, and advocates. To learn more about the Sherman Prize and sign up for updates and notification of the 2017 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. Common symptoms of Crohn’s include persistent diarrhea, rectal bleeding, an urgent need to move the bowels, abdominal cramps and pain, and weight loss. Similarly, the symptoms of ulcerative colitis include urgent, loose bowel movements and persistent diarrhea accompanied by abdominal pain and blood in the stool.

Many people with Crohn’s and colitis require surgical interventions that may involve lengthy hospital stays and recuperation time. Up to 70 percent of people with Crohn’s and about one third of longtime colitis sufferers ultimately require surgery; the standard surgery for colitis is removal of the colon and rectum. In addition to the complications associated with severe disease, those suffering from Crohn’s and colitis are at higher risk for other serious health problems, including colorectal cancer, deep vein thrombosis, and pulmonary embolism.

While there are treatments for Crohn’s and colitis, there is no cure, and available medicines do not work for everyone. Over a lifetime, these diseases can take a significant physical and emotional toll, both on those who suffer, as well as their families. Great strides have been made in understanding and treating Crohn’s and colitis, but many challenges remain, including delays in diagnosis, insufficient understanding of what causes the diseases or leads to progression, limited treatment options, limited knowledge as to the psychosocial and behavioral consequences of inflammatory bowel disease, and disparities in quality of care and support.

### **About the Bruce and Cynthia Sherman Charitable Foundation**

The Bruce and Cynthia Sherman Charitable Foundation is a federally registered private foundation established in 2005, with initial and ongoing support provided exclusively by Bruce and Cynthia Sherman. It supports a variety of charitable and philanthropic causes, including childhood development, advanced medical research and education, and the performing and visual arts. The Bruce and Cynthia Sherman Charitable Foundation is the sole funder of the Sherman Prize.

**Media Contact:** Shannon Richardson, 202-997-1982