



ADVANCING IBD CARE & RESEARCH

An Impact Report for Sinai Health's
Inflammatory Bowel Disease Centre

See
what
care
can
do.



“Your gifts offer hope for a brighter future for people living with, or at risk of developing, IBD.”

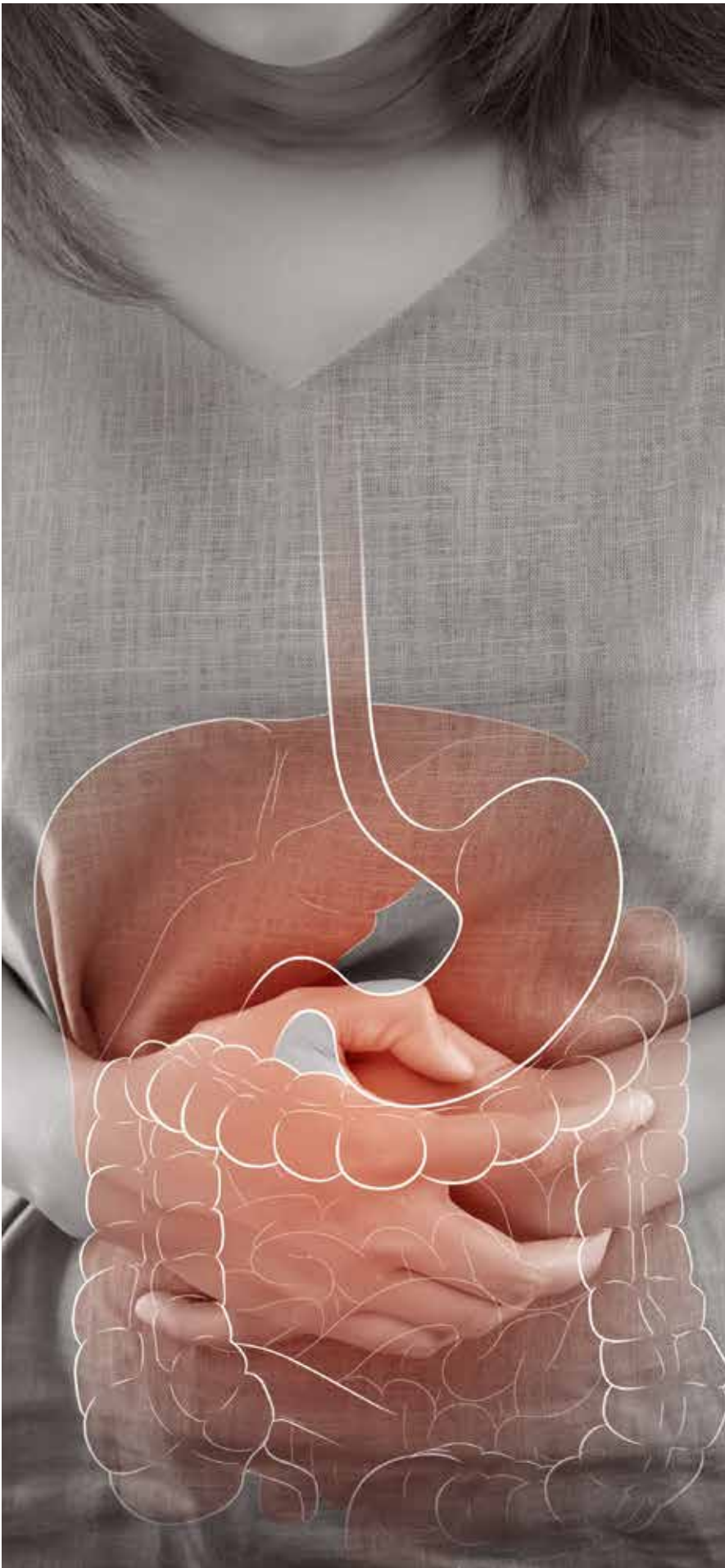
Dr. Adam Weizman
Medical Director,
Inflammatory Bowel
Disease Centre

When the COVID-19 pandemic landed in Canada, Sinai Health’s Inflammatory Bowel Disease Centre was better placed than most to pivot, where possible, to virtual patient care. Patients in remote Ontario communities were already benefiting from virtual care offered by the expert team in our PACE program. Similarly, we’d previously moved some care for pregnant women with IBD online, to better meet their needs.

Despite the many challenges we faced

in 2020, your gifts advanced the fight to defeat IBD. As just one example, donors are currently supporting a record six gastroenterologists in our Advanced IBD Fellowship Program. These elite talents from around the globe will become the IBD leaders of tomorrow and our lifelong research collaborators.

This report highlights many such examples of your philanthropic impact. On behalf of all those benefiting from your generosity, thank you so much.



One in 140 Canadians has IBD and the numbers are rising. Your gifts advance care and research towards a cure. Thank you.

4,000

patients with IBD are under Mount Sinai's care, making about 10,000 visits each year.

350+

patients have received care in our PACE IBD Telemedicine Program. Wait times to see a specialist for people in remote areas fell from 126 to 17 days over three years.

95

participants in the GEM project have so far been diagnosed with Crohn's disease, of the 5,000+ healthy relatives of CD patients enrolled in the global study.

586

surgical procedures for IBD were performed at Mount Sinai in 2019.

For women with IBD, typical concerns about pregnancy are often magnified. Mount Sinai's combined specialties in IBD and obstetrics help us offer prospective parents the best possible care.

Dr. Vivian Huang manages a pregnancy IBD clinic, which offers personalized education and counselling, close monitoring of patients' IBD, referrals to medical and surgical consultants as needed, and telemedicine visits.

Her team's current research includes:

- The pilot Optimizing Maternal and Neonatal outcomes in IBD (OMNI) study, allowing women to monitor symptoms and receive feedback from the comfort of their homes.
- A web-based Pregnancy in IBD Decision Aid, being tested worldwide.
- The RAPID study of our urgent IBD clinic, which is expected to reinforce the need for this kind of support.

PACE widens access to specialized expertise across Ontario

The Promoting Access and Care through Centres of Excellence (PACE) Telemedicine Program, led by **Dr. Geoffrey Nguyen**, gives patients in remote areas of Ontario access to specialized care teams at Mount Sinai. More than 80 telemedicine studios are now part of this project that has saved costs and reduced wait times.

Dr. Nguyen is also leading cross-Canada research that seeks to discover patient preferences in the management of their IBD and compare their responses with physician specialists. The goals are to enhance the patient perspective in planning healthcare delivery and to improve patient-physician communication.

Advancing surgical care, training and education



Mount Sinai's surgeons have been innovators in pouch surgeries for over 30 years, beginning with **Dr. Zane Cohen's** pioneering approaches.

Dr. Anthony de Buck van Overstraeten and **Dr. Mantaj Brar** are moving these techniques to a new level, with transanal surgeries that use minimally invasive surgical instruments and avoid open incisions. Patients experience less pain and scarring and recover faster.

Our surgeons are leading the international multicentre FUNCTION trial to see whether these short-term benefits translate into long-term better outcomes. The results will validate whether this procedure becomes the future standard of care.

Meanwhile, **Dr. Erin Kennedy** is conducting research on an app she developed that supports patients at home after surgery. And **Dr. Helen MacRae** is training and educating the next generation of surgical leaders by leading our colorectal surgical fellowship program and U of T's colorectal surgery residency program.

Your investment in research brings us closer to a cure

Your gifts support world-leading research that advances medical and surgical treatments for IBD, effective prevention measures and ultimately, a cure.

Mount Sinai is headquarters to the world's largest ever study focused on discovering why people develop Crohn's disease. Started in 2008 and led by **Dr. Ken Croitoru**, holder of a Canada Research Chair in IBD, the **Genetic, Environmental and Microbial (GEM) project**, is following more than 5,000 healthy relatives of patients with Crohn's disease.

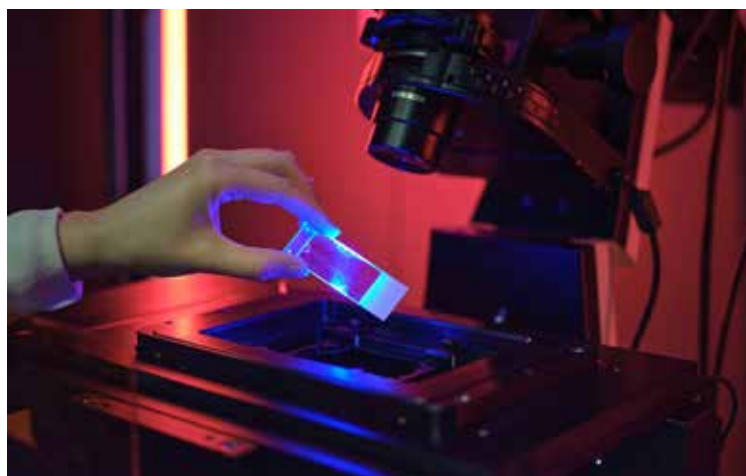
Our data analyses are now uncovering key triggers for Crohn's disease and for ulcerative colitis. These will help to develop predictive tests to identify individuals who will develop the disease, even before symptoms appear. For example, new GEM research concluded that a "leaky gut" predicted an elevated risk for developing CD.

Another new study found significant differences in the microbiomes of 13 people who later developed UC compared to those who remained healthy. This pre-disease functional microbial signature could lead to earlier diagnosis and new treatments.

Meanwhile, **Dr. Hillary Steinhart** and his team are participating in several **international clinical trials investigating promising new medications** for CD and UC. These trials are investigating microbiome-based therapeutics, biologics and even various dietary approaches.

Dr. Mark Silverberg continues to lead a very busy research program, including recently launched studies on a dietary intervention for UC patients, a prospective pouch study and a UC relapse study to understand why some patients flare.

His program, and others, rely heavily on the contributions of gastroenterologists from around the world participating in the globe's largest **Advanced IBD Fellowship Program** he leads. Supported by donors, we're currently hosting six fellows, which also reinforces our collaborations with centres around the world.



For example, current fellow **Dr. Sun-Ho Lee**, from South Korea, and former fellow **Dr. Margaret Walshe**, from Ireland, collaborated with researchers at the Asan Medical Centre in South Korea to find out why some people with UC benefit from anti-TNF drugs like Remicade and Humira while others don't. They discovered that changes in the levels of serum albumin early in treatment predicted failure to respond to the drug. This finding will help guide future treatments.

Our research would be impossible without the donor-supported, large **databases** we have maintained for decades. This treasure trove of data on pouch surgeries and CD patients, housed in the **Zane Cohen Centre** and managed by **Brenda O'Connor**, supports research here and around the globe.

Shining a light on mental health

Patient-centred care the overarching goal

Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis can cause excruciating pain and discomfort – but IBD is an illness that can be invisible to others and hard to talk about. Patients are often first diagnosed while still in school or just entering the workforce.

Our IBD Support Network, managed by **Brenda O'Connor**, has long offered a forum for support and advice.

Now, Mount Sinai gastroenterologist **Dr. Laura Targownik**, the University of Toronto's Departmental Division Director of Gastroenterology and Hepatology, is developing models of care that will increase access to mental health supports for people with IBD in varied health-care settings.

She is also leading an initiative to standardize data collection from clinical encounters for people with IBD. This will create research opportunities examining how patients are managing their IBD in the real world. These findings will help improve care.



Our Mount Sinai teams are on the leading edge

Sinai Health gastroenterologist **Dr. Adam Weizman** was named Medical Director of the IBD program in 2020. He's an Associate Professor of Medicine at the University of Toronto.

Dr. Weizman received his medical degree from the University of Manitoba and Residency in Internal Medicine and Fellowship in Gastroenterology at the U of T. He completed the Advanced Fellowship in IBD at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center and his MSc in Quality Improvement and Patient Safety from the U of T.

- Colorectal surgeon **Dr. Erin Kennedy** was named Head of Sinai Health's Division of General Surgery. She's an internationally recognized expert in patient-centred care, qualitative research methods and shared decision-making in surgery.
- **Dr. Vivian Huang** received the 2020 Women in IBD Award for the best Emerging Researcher from Crohn's and Colitis Canada, for outstanding contributions in understanding the impact of IBD on fertility, pregnancy and maternal and infant outcomes.



"His cutting edge techniques in the field of IBD and inherited colorectal cancer were the first to be deployed in Canada."

From the announcement naming Dr. Zane Cohen to the Order of Ontario. Our donors are also honouring this trailblazer by endowing an IBD Sinai 100 Chair in his name to mark Mount Sinai's 100-year anniversary in 2023.



The mother of two young boys she delivered at Mount Sinai, Inge Neal has lived with Crohn's disease for more than three decades. After years of gut-wrenching pain, her trusted surgeon, Dr. Helen MacRae helped her make the decision to have an ostomy, which, Inge says, led to "a stronger, healthier me." Inge credits the "amazing network" at Mount Sinai caring for her and says, "I don't think I'd be here today if it wasn't for Sinai Health."

Guiding our patients through COVID-19

The pandemic has had a profound impact

Our clinicians and researchers are helping in many ways.

For example, **Dr. Laura Targownik** serves on the Crohn's and Colitis Canada COVID-19 task force, providing expert guidance to the GI community and patients on how best to maintain control of their disease while limiting the risk of acquiring COVID.

Dr. Zane Gallinger is advocating with the Ontario Ministry of Health for patients with IBD to have equitable access to vaccination as supplies become available.

Dr. Mark Silverberg and his international colleagues developed guidelines on how to determine which people with IBD should be prioritized to receive endoscopy.

And through **Dr. Geoffrey Nguyen's** research to promote implementation of telehealth services, we have seamlessly transitioned into providing comprehensive patient-centred IBD care virtually.



Your philanthropy drives our discovery and delivery of life-changing care. With you by our side, our future as a centre for excellence in IBD is bright.

Inflammatory bowel disease is one of Sinai Health's key areas of specialization and expertise.

Our IBD group has begun developing a long-term vision and strategic plan to continue building our world-class centre for care, research, education and training. We look forward to sharing our plans and opportunities with you as they develop.

In the meantime, we're working with the Renew Sinai project team towards our goal to create a "one stop shop" for IBD, where patients can see their physicians, surgeons, dietitians, social work and other team members, in a single visit. We're also placing an even stronger emphasis on clinical trials, which give our patients first access to promising new therapies.

Your support powers our care into the future. Thank you so much.

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