



*Your Impact  
in Action*  
CENTRE FOR  
INFLAMMATORY  
BOWEL DISEASE

See what care can do  
for people with IBD





# Thank you.

Your generosity has propelled Sinai Health's Centre for Inflammatory Bowel Disease to new heights.

The past year has truly been a momentous one. Thanks to a landmark \$10-million gift from Jay and Barbara Hennick, our patients are receiving more personalized care and will benefit from more groundbreaking IBD research than ever before.

The opening of our new, state-of-the-art endoscopy facility is a tremendous leap forward for our team. Patients are now receiving care in a space with leading-edge services and technology, all thanks to donors of the Renew Sinai campaign.

Meanwhile, we continue to attract the best and brightest trainees to the largest Advanced IBD Fellowship Program in the world. Your support has been key to making us the training ground for the next generation of trailblazing clinicians and researchers.

As Mount Sinai Hospital marks its 100th anniversary this year, we are honoured to have played a part in this remarkable institution's history — and thrilled to look ahead to breakthroughs to come.

You, our community of donors, make everything we do possible. On behalf of our patients and their families, thank you.

*Dr. Adam Weizman and Dr. Erin Kennedy  
Co-Directors, Centre for Inflammatory  
Bowel Disease*

“Your support enables our team to provide personalized patient care, lead groundbreaking research and train providers from around the world. Thank you. ”

Dr. Adam Weizman, Co-Director,  
Centre for Inflammatory Bowel Disease

**1st**

Sinai Health is home to the world's largest IBD Fellowship Program, which allows us to attract and train the next generation of IBD specialists.

**6**

As part of our Preconception and Pregnancy in IBD clinical research program, our teams currently have six ongoing studies that are looking for ways to improve the care provided to people with IBD who are either planning a pregnancy, pregnant or postpartum.

**5,000**

There are more than 5,000 people with IBD registered in the Genetic, Environmental, Microbial (GEM) project – the largest global research project that is looking to uncover the possible triggers of Crohn's disease.

**5,200**

Our gastroenterologists care for more than 5,200 patients every year.





## **A gift to propel IBD care forward**

Thanks to a landmark gift from Jay and Barbara Hennick (pictured above) to support the IBD Program's research and highest priority needs, the future has never looked brighter for patients at Sinai Health and beyond.

A portion of this investment is being directed toward the practice-changing research of Dr. Zane Cohen, Dr. Mark Silverberg and toward jump-starting the careers of junior investigators who are often overlooked by funders.

This gift is also enabling two IBD nurse practitioners to join the team and improve patient care.

The IBD Program's co-directors, Dr. Adam Weizman and Dr. Erin Kennedy, are thrilled to provide patients with more holistic, complete care.



Stephanie Paquette, IBD nurse practitioner

"Nurse practitioners are vital in the care of IBD," says Dr. Kennedy. "Our patients are often young and facing a myriad of challenges that cannot be fully addressed within a physician's appointment."

IBD nurse practitioners provide counseling, education and support to empower patients to make informed decisions and assume an active role in the decision-making process. They also serve as a liaison to the interdisciplinary team, family physicians, and sub-specialties such as rheumatology, dermatology and surgery.

Nurse practitioner Stephanie Paquette joined the team in January 2022 and has hit the ground running.

Stephanie has created the new Urgent Inflammatory Bowel Disease Clinic, which provides rapid follow-ups for patients who are experiencing flares to help reduce admission to hospital and complications. The clinic also provides rapid outpatient consultations for ER patients with suspected IBD for early workup and diagnosis, and has recently acquired urgent endoscopy capabilities.

Two additional full-time IBD nurse practitioners will join Stephanie later this year, thanks to the generosity of the Hennicks.

"It has been extremely exciting to join an amazing group of gastroenterologists who value my input and expertise," says Stephanie. "Making a real, tangible impact on the lives of so many patients is beyond fulfilling and I'm so grateful to Jay and Barbara Hennick for making more of these roles possible."

# The next generation of IBD experts

Your support helps the best and brightest young clinician-scientists in the world participate in Sinai Health's Advanced IBD Fellowship Program: a one-year, funded position that provides participants with focused training in clinical care and research in IBD.

Meet the latest cohort of fellows who will transform IBD care across the globe.

“The clinicians at Sinai Health have shaped modern IBD care. To be able to learn from the best, in a world-leading centre, is an absolute privilege.”

Dr. Ronit Kumar Das, Advanced IBD Fellow

A graduate of King's College in London, United Kingdom, **Dr. Ronit Kumar Das** is in the final stages of completing his PhD at the University of Nottingham. His research investigates the clinical and physiological impact of stricture resolution in Crohn's disease by means of a novel therapeutic approach.

**Dr. Olivera Sendra** is a trained gastroenterologist from Argentina whose research focuses on the safety profile of newer therapies for the treatment of IBD and their comparative efficacy with established advanced therapies. He plans to pursue a Master's degree in Clinical Epidemiology at the University of Toronto with an aim to answer clinical and epidemiological questions derived from direct patient care.

**Dr. Roxana Chis** is currently pursuing a Master of Science degree in Clinical Epidemiology & Health Care Research at the Institute of Health Policy, Management and Evaluation at the University of Toronto. She plans to focus her research and clinical work on merging the fields of IBD and therapeutic endoscopy.

Joining us from New York City, **Dr. Erin Ly** conducted IBD research at Mount Sinai Hospital in Manhattan and completed her Masters in Nutrition at Columbia University with a focus in paediatric Crohn's disease. She hopes to eventually bring her clinical training skills back to the United States and continue ongoing collaboration across the border.





## GEM Project achieves major breakthroughs

The GEM (Genetics, Environmental and Microbial) Project, now in its 15th year, made waves in 2022 with groundbreaking findings about the triggers of Crohn's disease.

The GEM Project aims to define biomarkers that will quantify risk and predict who will develop Crohn's disease. Using the food frequency questionnaire data, the team found that a Mediterranean-like dietary pattern was strongly associated with a defined microbial composition and lower levels of subclinical gut inflammation. The GEM team published their exciting results in several prestigious journals and presented at high profile conferences around the world, including the European Crohn's and Colitis Organisation conference.

"After years of painstakingly collecting data from healthy first-degree relatives of Crohn's patients from around the world, we are now harvesting the fruits of our labour," says Dr. Ken Croitoru, the project's lead. "Our findings are painting the clearest picture yet of the onset of disease, which will set the stage for novel interventions."

### Donors establish the Mount Sinai 100 Dr. Zane Cohen Chair in Inflammatory Bowel Disease

As Canada's first surgeon to use novel surgical techniques for patients with ulcerative colitis, Dr. Zane Cohen has transformed care for patients with IBD.

Now donor support has cemented his unparalleled legacy even further with the creation of the Mount Sinai 100 Dr. Zane Cohen Chair in Inflammatory Bowel Disease. This endowed Chair will attract and retain leaders in IBD from around the world in perpetuity, building on Dr. Cohen's legacy of offering the most innovative and effective treatments.

"It is deeply humbling to know that my name will be forever linked to leadership in IBD care, treatments and research," says Dr. Cohen. "I can't thank our community of donors enough."



## Surgical team using data to improve patient outcomes

Mount Sinai Hospital has become one of only six hospitals, and the only academic teaching hospital in Ontario, to achieve “meritorious” (exemplary) outcomes for surgical patient care by The American College of Surgeons’ National Surgical Quality Improvement Program (ACS NSQIP) – which analyzes the outcomes of inpatient and outpatient surgical procedures over the course of a year. In fact, our surgical teams represent the top 10 per cent of the 700 ACS NSQIP hospitals around the world.

“Receiving this recognition is a testament to the contributions of the multiple teams that care for our patients throughout their surgical journey,” says Dr. Erin Kennedy (top left), Head, Division of General Surgery and Surgical Director of the IBD Program. “This is a great indication of what is possible when our teams work together.”

Mount Sinai Hospital joined NSQIP in 2018 and has collected and assessed data from 1,700 randomly assigned patients every year, measuring surgical results such as infections, illnesses, and deaths 30 days postoperatively.

The results and insights gained from this data not only illustrate our surgical expertise, but will also directly inform initiatives to improve the quality of care and surgical outcomes for our patients.

With this latest global recognition, our IBD surgical team is also participating with many of North America’s high-volume centres – including the Cleveland Clinic and Cedars Sinai Medical Center – in a surgical IBD consortium dedicated to expediting clinical studies in IBD patients undergoing surgery. This group has plans to launch an IBD biobank that will be an invaluable tool to improve research and personalize treatment.

### State-of-the-art endoscopy unit unveiled



Thanks to donor support, the IBD Program is now home to a new endoscopy facility that will both dramatically increase capacity and improve care for patients.

Made possible by Renew Sinai, the largest and most ambitious redevelopment in Mount Sinai’s history, the brand-new facility includes leading edge cleaning and processing facilities, and a spacious recovery area for patients.

“We are thrilled to get to come to work in this beautiful, new state-of-the-art facility,” says Dr. Adam Weizman. “But most importantly, this is really going to elevate the quality of care we provide our patients.”



# Our IBD experts achieve national recognition



**Dr. Zane Cohen, C.M.**, left, Director of the Zane Cohen Centre at Sinai Health, was appointed to the Order of Canada in 2022 for his innovative surgical methods in the field of colorectal surgery and for his leadership in the treatment of gastrointestinal diseases. Dr. Cohen was the first Canadian surgeon to use novel surgical techniques for patients with ulcerative colitis, including the Kock pouch and the J-pouch. These techniques have since transformed the lives of countless patients.

**Dr. Adam Weizman** was awarded the 2022 Outstanding Physician Award from Crohn's and Colitis Canada. Nominated by patients and their families, this award is a celebration of physicians who display a steadfast commitment to their patients, serving as both physician and patient advocate. Dr. Vivian Huang is thrilled for her colleague's recognition: "Dr. Weizman is a true role model for current and future colleagues and a champion for providing the best care for patients."

**Brenda O'Connor** was awarded the 2022 Finkelstein Award from Crohn's and Colitis Canada for her exceptional work as Clinical Trials Coordinator within the IBD Program. The Finkelstein Award recognizes an individual whose contributions reflect excellence, either through a particular accomplishment or through continuous efforts over time.

**Dr. Vivian Huang** received the 2023 Canadian Association of Gastroenterology Young Investigator in Quality Innovation Award for her outstanding contributions to IBD care in Canada. In particular, this award recognizes her collaborations across disciplines to build a multifaceted clinical and educational program to improve the care of women with IBD who are managing their disease before, during and after pregnancy.



# At the global forefront of IBD research, thanks to you

With your help, Sinai Health is home to world-leading research that is transforming IBD care and bringing us closer to a cure.

## Improving outcomes for mothers with IBD and their babies

Led by Dr. Vivian Huang, the Preconception and Pregnancy in IBD clinical research program continues to study the complex interaction between IBD, IBD therapies, and maternal and neonatal outcomes.

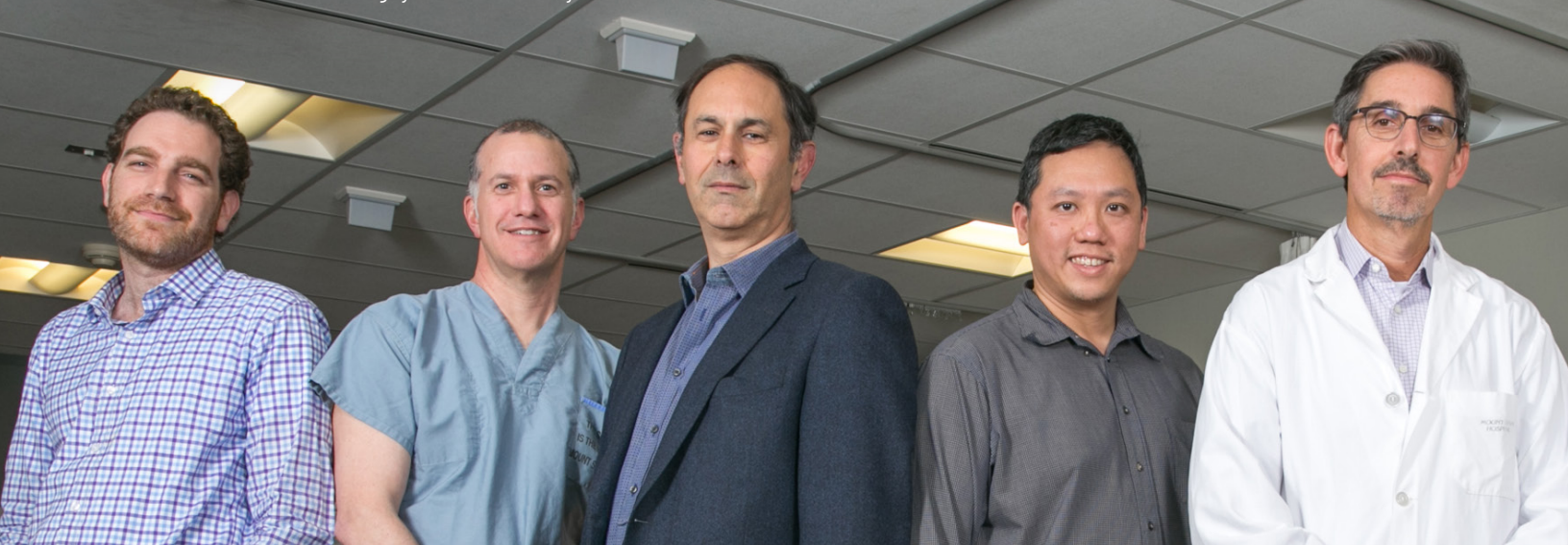
Current landmark studies include an investigation of how IBD may affect breast milk composition and whether composition affects infant growth and development. The team has developed comprehensive questionnaires for patients from pregnancy to postpartum and are analyzing breast milk samples from mothers one and three months postpartum. Another vital study aims to better understand the relationship between pregnancy, mood, stress and IBD — as well as the challenges of accessing mental health services during pregnancy.

## Ontario-wide initiative harnessing data to improve care

Over the last two years, Dr. Laura Targownik and her team have been building a platform to improve the collection of patient-centred data on IBD processes and outcomes, with an aim to cement Sinai Health as the premier source for real-world data and improve care.

The Ontario Best Practices Research Initiative-Inflammatory Bowel Disease (OBRI-IBD) has now been launched and is capturing valuable data within clinical care practices at Mount Sinai Hospital. Data from the registry is already being incorporated into several studies and the team is working to attract more clinics and physicians to build OBRI-IBD further.





## Sinai drives IBD network's expansion and impact

The Promoting Access and Care through Centres of Excellence (PACE) network brings together leading inflammatory bowel disease centres from across the country to improve health outcomes, address gaps in care, and develop solutions that can create changes in the public health-care system.

Dr. Geoffrey Nguyen and his team continue to lead PACE initiatives at Sinai Health with great success.

**PACE Telemedicine Initiative:** Since 2016, Mount Sinai Hospital has successfully implemented the PACE Ontario telemedicine network to provide excellent IBD care for those who have limited access to gastroenterologists. With evidence of shortened wait times and cost savings, this initiative was expanded in 2022 to five additional provinces: Alberta, Quebec, Manitoba, Nova Scotia and Saskatchewan.

**Prevention of Readmissions at IBD Centres of Excellence:** The aim of this study is to evaluate a nurse-led initiative to reduce readmission rates at IBD Centres of Excellence, including Sinai Health. With a shortage of IBD-trained nurses across Canada, the team is evaluating the impact of IBD nursing staff post-discharge and their potential impact on patient outcomes.

**Eliciting Patient Preference for Prioritization of Healthcare Processes in the Management of Inflammatory Bowel Disease:** Because patient perspectives are often under-represented in clinical guideline and quality indicator (QI) development, the team is collaborating with the University of Calgary to develop and launch two online surveys to compare preferences of IBD-related health-care processes and outcomes in a nationally representative sample of patients and providers. Our patient survey was recently selected to be launched through IBD Partners — a patient-centred research network with more than 16,000 IBD patients in the United States.

**Addressing Depression and Anxiety Symptoms in Patients with Inflammatory Bowel Disease (ADAPT-IBD):** While anxiety and depression are more common in people with IBD than in the general population, it is often under-diagnosed and under-treated. In an effort to improve mental health care in people with IBD, our team is testing the impact of web-based cognitive behavioural therapy.





## A community effort

Every year, members of our community organize innovative fundraising events in support of Sinai Health's unparalleled IBD care and research.

Since 2019, **Spin for Sinai** has raised more than \$1.1 million to help fund the Advanced IBD Fellowship. The latest event, held in October 2022, was another energizing afternoon of spinning for a great cause.

Organizers Stacey and Jonathan Gitlin are passionate about improving outcomes for patients with IBD. "I am so grateful for the care and support that I have received from Sinai Health," says Stacey, who has lived with Crohn's disease for 26 years. "It is so important to us to support research to improve treatments and, ultimately, find ways to prevent the disease."

Like the Gitlins, Mary Cincinnato was inspired by her own experiences to fundraise for IBD research. "Dr. Zane Cohen took care of me at a time when my Crohn's disease was impossible to manage. He saved my life," says Mary. After her daughter, Melissarose, was diagnosed with Crohn's and received exceptional treatment at Sinai Health, she created the **Our Wings to Fight**



gala in support of the Zane Cohen Centre for Digestive Diseases in 2013.

"So many people live in pain from Crohn's disease, but Melissarose was smiling and pain free for the first time in a long time. I thought 'How can I keep her smiling? How can I help other people living with this?' And that's how Our Wings to Fight got started," says Mary.

The eighth annual gala took place on September 16, 2022, and brought Our Wings to Fight's fundraising total to \$110,000 in support of practice-changing research.





Your support is enhancing care and improving outcomes for patients with IBD across Canada and around the world.

Thanks to you, our IBD team is putting into action a robust strategic plan with a long-term vision to strengthen our world-class centre for care, research, education and training.

Over the next five years, we will continue to build staff capacity for an integrated multidisciplinary clinical program that provides coordinated and holistic care to patients — all in one visit.

And we will propel IBD research forward with an integrated, multidimensional research program in which every patient has opportunity to enrol in studies and every provider is contributing to knowledge.

As we educate the next generation of clinicians, we will strengthen our collaboration, partnership and outreach to the community and beyond.

Thank you for enabling Sinai Health's Inflammatory Bowel Disease Centre to define the future of IBD care. We are truly grateful for your generosity.



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