

Launch of Columbia's Cohen Center for Health and Recovery from Tick-Borne Diseases



Dr. Brian Fallon

A group of Columbia physicians, led by Brian Fallon MD, MPH, Professor of Psychiatry at Columbia University Irving Medical Center and the director of Columbia's Lyme and Tick-Borne Diseases Research Center, continues with plans to dramatically expand their efforts in combating the growing threat of Lyme & TBD to public health in the US. Thanks to a \$16 million gift from the Steven & Alexandra Cohen Foundation, announced earlier this year, the group recently launched a new clinical program, the Cohen Center for Health and Recovery from Tick-Borne Diseases. The center, committed solely to the treatment of Lyme and similar conditions, such as anaplasmosis, babesiosis, and Rocky Mountain spotted fever, will be the first of its kind in New York City.

Columbia's Lyme and Tick-Borne Diseases Research Center* has been conducting critical research as well as specializing in

treatment of the most complex cases. Cohen Center for Health and Recovery from Tick-Borne Diseases will provide clinical services to patients in all stages of disease, with a focus on helping those who suffer from chronic health complications that are likely the result of infections contracted months or even years prior. *(The Research Center was established in 2008 by the Lyme Disease Association Inc. and Time for Lyme [GLA]).

Dr. Fallon had this to say, "Tick-borne illnesses have long been shrouded in mystery, with scientists disagreeing on some of the most fundamental questions about how they affect the body, especially over the long term, ... But there's been a tremendous amount of scientific progress made in the past few years, and I think we're finally ready to start translating that knowledge into safer, more effective treatments."

NOTE from LDA President Pat Smith posted on March 30 about the announcement of the Cohen gift: "This is the best possible news for patients who have been neglected for decades by much of the medical community. Often unable to get a timely diagnosis and appropriate treatment, many patients have gone on to develop chronic Lyme disease, facing debilitating manifestations, which have prevented them from working or going to school and even causing death. Having a Treatment Center, a Clinical Trials Network, and a Research Center in one institution will certainly provide a three prong attack on a disease causing 476,000 people annually to be diagnosed and treated in the U.S.—Lyme disease—and allows for other tick-borne diseases to be addressed at the same time. "

Read coverage of this story in *Columbia Magazine*.

Read more about the Columbia University & Steven & Alexandra Cohen Foundation Partnership.