

Taiwanese scientist conducting influential hepatitis research to receive the 2025 Baruch S. Blumberg Prize

Pei-Jer Chen, MD, PhD, of the National Taiwan University, is a clinician, scientist and advocate for people living with hepatitis B.

Doylestown, Pa., Nov. 15, 2024 – The Hepatitis B Foundation announced today (Nov. 15) that **Pei-Jer Chen**, MD, PhD, a Distinguished Investigator at the National Taiwan University and globally recognized expert on liver diseases, has been chosen to receive its 2025 Baruch S. Blumberg Prize.

“We are recognizing Dr. Chen for his major contributions to the clinical study of hepatitis B and hepatitis D therapeutics and biomarkers,” Hepatitis B Foundation President Chari A. Cohen, DrPH, MPH, said. “Not only is he an accomplished scientist and clinician, Dr. Chen is an important voice on hepatitis B in Asia and around the world.”



Pei-Jer Chen, MD, PhD

Ju-Tao Guo, PhD, acting president and chief scientific officer of the Blumberg Institute, which is the sister organization of the Foundation focused on research, said: “Dr. Chen has been a pioneer in hepatitis B and hepatitis D virology research and clinical management for several decades. His recent work on the molecular oncogenesis of hepatitis B associated liver cancer paves the way for its early detection and precision therapy of this deadly cancer.”

Dr. Chen said: “I am truly honored and excited to receive the Blumberg Prize. Dr. Blumberg’s groundbreaking work unveiled a fascinating science of hepatitis B and D viruses and led to effective vaccines and treatment in controlling the diseases devastating human beings. For decades, my team and I followed in his footsteps and those of other pioneers to identify novel viral proteins and their functions for antiviral development. And we developed an easy-to-use, immune-competent hepatitis B persistent mouse model for immunology and carcinogenesis research. These results have led to new biomarkers or therapies for hepatitis B and D and related liver cancer in clinical trials.”

Along with his research, Dr. Chen is a strong voice for those living with hepatitis B.

“I am very much sympathetic to the millions of chronic hepatitis B patients waiting for antiviral therapies,” Dr. Chen said. “We need to not only accelerate developing innovative curative therapies, but advocate for providing current therapies to treat more patients, as the new World Health Organization guidelines recommend.”

The Blumberg Prize will be presented to Dr. Chen at the 2025 Hepatitis B Foundation Gala, which will be held on April 4 in Warrington, Pa.

Dr. Chen has made significant contributions in understanding hepatitis B and hepatitis D biology, such as biological function of spliced HBV RNA, HDV RNA replication and phosphorylation of Delta antigen. He has been a part of almost every major clinical study of therapeutics and biomarkers of hepatitis B and D related disease for the past two decades. As a physician-scientist, Dr. Chen also made important contributions to research in the pathogenesis, diagnosis and treatment of hepatitis B-related liver cancer. He is a member of Academia Sinica and has published more than 600 articles in the areas of hepatitis and liver cancer.

The Baruch S. Blumberg Prize is the Hepatitis B Foundation's highest honor. It is named for Baruch S. Blumberg, MD, DPhil, who received the Nobel Prize in Medicine and Physiology in 1976 for discovering the hepatitis B virus. He was instrumental in the creation of the Foundation, served on our Scientific and Medical Advisory Board and was the Foundation's Distinguished Scholar from 1992 until his death in 2011. The Foundation's research arm was renamed the Baruch S. Blumberg Institute in his honor.

A committee of former Blumberg Prize recipients annually selects each new honoree. Past recipients include Dr. Harvey Alter, who was among the winners of the 2020 Nobel Prize in Medicine and Physiology; Dr. Anna Lok, assistant dean for clinical research, University of Michigan Medical School; and Prof. Stephan Urban, inventor of the world's first and only approved therapy for hepatitis D and head of Translational Virology in the Department of Infectious Diseases, Molecular Virology, at Heidelberg University Hospital.

About Hepatitis B: Hepatitis B is the most common serious liver infection in the world. It is caused by the hepatitis B virus that attacks and injures the liver. Each year more than 1 million people die from hepatitis B worldwide, even though it is preventable and treatable. Hepatitis B is a "silent epidemic" because most people do not have symptoms when they are newly or chronically infected. Thus, they can unknowingly infect others and continue the spread of hepatitis B. For people who are chronically infected but don't have any symptoms, their livers are still being silently damaged, which can develop into serious liver diseases such as cirrhosis or liver cancer.

About the Hepatitis B Foundation: As the world's leading hepatitis B advocacy and research organization, the Hepatitis B Foundation is one of the most active proponents of improving hepatitis B screening, prevention and treatment of the disease. We are the only nonprofit organization solely dedicated to finding a cure for hepatitis B and improving the quality of life for those affected worldwide through research, education and patient advocacy. Founded in 1991, the Hepatitis B Foundation is based in Doylestown, Pa., with offices in Washington, D.C., and Philadelphia. To learn more, go to www.hepb.org, read our blog, follow us on LinkedIn, Twitter, Instagram and Facebook (@hepbfoundation) or contact us through info@hepb.org or 215-489-4900.