

Harvard Medical Faculty Physicians and BIDMC Department of Dermatology

Announce Robert S. Stern, MD, Chair in Dermatology

Dear Dermatology colleagues,

In collaboration with Harvard Medical Faculty Physicians at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center (HMFP), the BIDMC Department of Dermatology is extremely honored and excited to announce the establishment of the Harvard Medical Faculty Physicians at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center Robert S. Stern, MD, Chair in Dermatology.

The chair honors the remarkable legacy of Dr. Stern, the department's former chief from 2000 -2017. Under his leadership, the department experienced substantial growth and became a world-renowned leader in clinical research and advanced patient care. In addition, he nurtured the careers of countless physicians. Since then he has continued his research efforts as the Carl J. Herzog Professor of Dermatology at Harvard Medical School (HMS). On July 1, 2024, Dr. Stern announced his retirement and is now an emeritus professor at HMS. Click [here](#) for more on his career accomplishments and impact.

Along with HMFP, and on behalf of our department, we extend our admiration and deep gratitude to Dr. Stern for his exceptional leadership, dedication to faculty, expansion of our services and capabilities, advancement of clinical research and practice, and unwavering commitment to our patients.

Moving forward, our department will begin the process to select the first incumbent to serve as chair to further his inspiring legacy of excellence in research, education, patient care, and leadership. We also plan to embark on a fundraising effort so others can honor Dr. Stern by adding to the foundational support provided by the Department. In the interim, let's continue our work with his legacy as our inspiration, which is the true measure of his ongoing and immeasurable imprint on our department and each other.

With regards,
Rachel Reynolds, MD
Interim Chief

The Legacy of Robert S. Stern, MD

Robert S. Stern, MD, is a remarkably accomplished clinician, educator, and researcher whose many contributions to the field of dermatology impact how we practice today. As a pioneer in the application of epidemiological and health services methods to study the treatment of skin diseases, he advanced our field in many areas, especially in our understanding of severe cutaneous adverse drug reactions, nonmelanoma skin cancer, psoriasis, and photomedicine. He spearheaded research methods that incorporate data from the patient's perspective. In 1976, he founded and directed the PUVA Follow-Up Study, a prospective NIH-funded multicenter cohort analysis of 1,380 patients followed over 20 years that was foundational in establishing our knowledge of skin cancer and other risks from intense ultraviolet light used to treat psoriasis. His research and expertise in photomedicine also informed current public health practices, as he established that use of sunscreen and photoprotection for the first 18 years of life dramatically reduces lifetime risk for skin cancer.

Dr. Stern is a nationally and internationally recognized expert in dermatoepidemiology, in particular for his contributions to our understanding of drug-associated severe reactions in the skin. Nationally, he has served on committees of several federal agencies, including the National Institutes of Health, the Centers for Disease Control, and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), where he served as chair of the FDA Dermatologic Drugs Advisory Committee. His government work earned him a Presidential Letter of Commendation in 1971. He has been a board member of the National Psoriasis Foundation, the Photomedicine Society, and the International Dermatoepidemiology Association. His many scholarly contributions were acknowledged with the FEDERA award for lifetime contributions to research and the Founder's award from the American DermatoEpidemiology Network in 2019. In addition to his many publications in the highest-impact dermatology journals, he is widely published in the most prestigious medical journals, including *The New England Journal of Medicine* and *The Journal of the American Medical Association*. His work in healthcare economics shed light on the effects of reimbursement policy on medical costs and outcomes, and the relationship between socioeconomic status and access to healthcare.

Dr. Stern has mentored numerous clinical and research trainees, both nationally and internationally, creating a legacy of academic excellence and scholarly work across the globe. An outstanding educator, colleagues and patients alike benefit from his vast and deep medical knowledge, be it in the clinic, the lecture hall, or grand rounds. He is a model clinician and upholds the highest standards of care and compassion for his patients.