

May 25, 2024

The Honorable Brian Mast
2182 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Re: Support for the Dr. Joseph B. Kirsner Congressional Gold Medal Act

Dear Representative Mast:

The Crohn's & Colitis Foundation is pleased to endorse the Dr. Joseph B. Kirsner Congressional Gold Medal Act, which would award Dr. Joseph B. Kirsner a (posthumous) Congressional Gold Medal. Dr. Kirsner was a pioneer in the understanding and treatment of inflammatory bowel disease (IBD). At a time when little was understood about IBD, his focus on the study and treatment of IBD patients transformed the field of gastroenterology into the evidence-based medical specialty that it is today.

Dr. Kirsner's accomplishments extend far beyond his research, as he served as a teacher and mentor for more than 200 of the field's leading specialists, many of whom continue to carry the legacy of his life's work. Additionally, Dr. Kirsner authored an IBD textbook that became the authoritative text for the specialty, while he influenced many others through his more than 800 publications.

In the early days of this new specialty, Dr. Kirsner supported the field broadly. He was instrumental in creating professional organizations that continue to support physicians and their patients. He was also a tireless fundraiser for medical research, and his work on behalf of the Crohn's & Colitis Foundation has been invaluable.

Dr. Kirsner's contributions to the Crohn's & Colitis Foundation were recognized, first with a Distinguished Service Award when the organization was still known as the National Foundation for Ileitis and Colitis, and twice with Lifetime Achievement Awards after the organization became the Crohn's & Colitis Foundation.

Above all, Dr. Kirsner was a role model, as he saw his greatest contributions to be the care of patients, the service to his community, and the training of those who would continue his work into the future.

The Crohn's & Colitis Foundation is proud to support this legislation and to join you in your effort to honor the legacy of Dr. Joseph B. Kirsner.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael Osso". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Michael Osso
President & CEO
Crohn's & Colitis Foundation