



# Peggy Lillis Foundation

*Fighting C. diff through Education and Advocacy*

## Welcome – Liam Lillis

Welcome to the Peggy Lillis Foundation's 7th Annual FIGHT C. DIFF Gala. Thank you for coming out tonight to support our efforts to educate the public, empower advocates, and shape policy.

It's hard to believe it's been nearly 7 years since we've lost our mother Peggy to a C. Diff infection. Over these last few years, with your support and the help of many others, we have worked hard to honor her memory and raise awareness of this deadly disease so other families never have to experience a loss like ours.

And it's working – in just a few short years, we have accomplished a great deal. First and foremost, we have grown the Peggy Lillis Foundation into a leading resource for those looking for information about C. Diff. There is no better example of that than the invitations we've received – and continue to receive – to participate in discussions and events about infectious disease, patient safety and specifically how to address the growing prevalence of C. Diff.

In just the last year, we have made tremendous strides in creating a national conversation around C. Diff and the need for better interventions.

- In February, we participated in the Consumers Union's Patient Safety Summit and Lobby Day in Washington, DC. During the Summit, we spoke to key New York politicians about:
  - the importance of funding for hospital acquired infections
  - smarter antibiotic use
  - C. Diff infection rates in New York
  - and PLF's plans for statewide advocacy to increase transparent reporting on infections.
- In May, we participated in a Summit at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention with the agency's leadership and 20 fellow patient advocates, focused on prevention of antibiotic resistant bacterial infections and sepsis.
  - The meeting resulted in new collaborative initiatives between advocates and the CDC, including an increased focus on sepsis and plans to feature Peggy in the agency's Get Smart About Antibiotics Week this November.



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- We also represented C. diff patients at the June 2016 public meeting of the President's Advisory Council on Combating Antibiotic Resistant Bacteria.
- The Foundation was also invited to join in the National Quality Forum's Antibiotic Stewardship Task Force. In this role, we:
  - helped to develop and launch a "playbook" to aid hospitals in implementing new requirements for Medicare and Medicaid participation.
  - Spoke on a panel at NQF's annual conference, focused on how hospitals can use the playbook to engage patients and caregivers

Finally, from a pure consumer education perspective, we have greatly extended our online presence and reach. We have increased traffic to our website by more than 250% and have reached more than 65,000 people with valuable information about C. diff since January.

We are incredibly proud of how far we've come over the last 7 years, as well as the strides we've made since last year's Gala, however, there is still much more work to be done. While awareness of C. diff has increased, particularly among healthcare workers and policymakers, 77% of Americans have never heard of C. diff. As we learned with the tragic death of our mother, it is impossible to prevent a disease you don't know exists. We need to change this, and that's why we're here:

- To provide the information and resources to educate the general public.
- To help those living with C. diff break the taboo of talking about diarrhea and share their personal stories, which might help someone recognize the symptoms of C. diff and push for proper testing.
- To fight for better tracking and public reporting of infections
- To advocate for responsible use of antibiotics to reduce overuse, which leads to bacterial resistance and the development of "superbugs", and contributes to C. diff infections

As you'll hear a little later tonight, we are in good company in this fight. Tonight we will honor individuals and organizations that exemplify what it takes to make a difference in the fight against C. diff. Leadership. Innovation. Advocacy.

Over the past 18 months, Mount Sinai Health System has demonstrated that true leadership at every level of hospital and clinical operations can have an enormous and lifesaving impact in reducing C. diff infections. The Northwell



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Health CDIFFerently Care Team's innovative approach to assembling and mobilizing a multidisciplinary team reduced C. diff infections.

Lastly, tonight we are thrilled to recognize two exceptional elected officials and lifelong advocates.

- **Senator Ruth Hassell-Thompson** has dedicated her career to helping others, first as a pediatric nurse, then as a successful executive, and, most recently, serving 16 years as a New York State Senator. Senator Hassell-Thompson is also a C. diff survivor, having battled the disease following knee surgery.
- **Senator Martin J. Golden** was our mother Peggy's representative. Senator Golden is also a champion for our state's senior citizens, and under his leadership, a number of significant bills affecting older Americans have been enacted, including:
  - the Senior Bill of Rights
  - Long Term Care Reform
  - internet posting of retail prescription drug prices
  - and a single EPIC/Medicare prescription drug card.

Before we introduce the first award, we have a lot of people to thank for making this Gala a success. We're on track to raise \$75,000! I want to thank our incredibly generous sponsors, including:

- Lead Sponsor Synthetic Biologics
- Supporting Sponsors Sanofi Pasteur and Seres Therapeutics, and
- Our Angel Sponsors Cepheid and Rebiotix

Now, to introduce the first award of the evening, and our first-ever Leadership Award, my brother and our executive director, Christian John Lillis.