



Charles River Research Models in Drug Discovery Award Presented to Sonia Vallabh and Eric Minikel of the Prion Alliance

September 12, 2017

Together, Sonia and Eric are fighting to discover a cure for genetic prion diseases

WILMINGTON, Mass.--(BUSINESS WIRE)--Sep. 12, 2017-- On Tuesday, September 26, 2017, James Foster, Chairman, President and Chief Executive Officer of Charles River Laboratories International, Inc. will present the first Charles River Research Models in Drug Discovery Award to Sonia Vallabh and Eric Minikel of the [Prion Alliance](#).

The award will be presented during the opening session of the *Inaugural Charles River World Congress on Animal Models in Drug Discovery & Development*, being held on September 26-27, 2017 in Boston, Massachusetts.

From Patient to Scientist

Prion diseases are a group of neurodegenerative diseases that have an incidence of about 1 in 1 million people, according to the World Health Organization. Genetic prion diseases are universally fatal and currently untreatable. In 2011, after watching her mother lose her battle with this rare disease, Vallabh learned that she had inherited the same genetic mutation.

In 2012, Vallabh and Minikel founded the Prion Alliance with the mission of facilitating the development of a treatment or cure for prion diseases by raising funds for research, advocating, and connecting patients and researchers. In 2014, Vallabh, a law school graduate, and Minikel, an urban planner, both started a PhD program at Harvard Medical School.

Today, Vallabh and Minikel work side-by-side, based at the Stuart Schreiber laboratory at the Broad Institute of MIT and Harvard where, together with a team of researchers and advisors, they have launched [Prions@Broad](#), an initiative to discover a treatment for prion disease.

Charles River Research Models in Drug Discovery Award

In 2017, Charles River created the Charles River Research Models in Drug Discovery Award. The \$50,000 award will be given annually at the *World Congress on Animal Models* to recognize a researcher, laboratory, or organization dedicated to supporting the development of novel therapies.

The *World Congress on Animal Models* is a two-day scientific program presented by Charles River, in partnership with BioPharm America™. Attendees also receive full access to BioPharm America™ and [a Biotech Week Boston](#) events. To learn more and register, visit [breakthroughs.criver.com](#) and follow #CRLworldcon on social media.

Approved Quotes

- “Sonia and Eric’s passion and work ethic are truly extraordinary. Driven by a uniquely personal connection to this rare disease, their work toward finding a cure for genetic prion diseases will have a profound impact on an underserved patient population.” –James C. Foster, Chairman, President and CEO at Charles River
- “We are profoundly grateful to Charles River. Drug discovery is costly, and this award will move us tangibly toward our goal of finding a cure for genetic prion diseases.” –Sonia Vallabh, Prion Scientist at the Broad Institute

About Charles River

Charles River provides essential products and services to help pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies, government agencies and leading academic institutions around the globe accelerate their research and drug development efforts. Our dedicated employees are focused on providing clients with exactly what they need to improve and expedite the discovery, early-stage development and safe manufacture of new therapies for the patients who need them. To learn more about our unique portfolio and breadth of services, visit [www.criver.com](#).

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