



Thomas Lehner, PhD, MPH, Joins the New York Genome Center as Scientific Director of Neuropsychiatric Disease Genomics

NEW YORK, NY (October 24, 2019) – The New York Genome Center (NYGC) is pleased to announce the appointment of Thomas Lehner, PhD, MPH, as its Scientific Director of Neuropsychiatric Disease Genomics. A highly regarded expert in neuropsychiatric genomics, Dr. Lehner will join the NYGC on January 6, 2020. In this new position, he will provide leadership for the NYGC’s research activities in this key area, developing and spearheading the overarching scientific strategy for neuropsychiatric disease genomics research at the Center. Dr. Lehner will lead the NYGC’s expansion of its innovative, large-scale whole genome autism research into other neuropsychiatric disease areas including schizophrenia and bipolar disorder.

Dr. Lehner comes to the NYGC from a distinguished 15-year tenure at the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), a division of the National Institutes of Health (NIH), where he most recently served as Director, Office of Genomics Research Coordination and Senior Genomics Advisor, Intramural Research Program. Dr. Lehner was instrumental in the conception and development of the NIMH’s comprehensive neuropsychiatric genomics program.

“Dr. Lehner will accelerate collaborative and inter-institutional genomic research in neuropsychiatric disease aimed at illuminating the mechanisms of these complex genetic disorders,” said Tom Maniatis, PhD, NYGC’s Scientific Director and CEO. “The New York psychiatric research community looks forward to Thomas’ arrival.”

Over the last four years, the NYGC’s Center for Common Disease Genomics (CCDG) has received more than \$40 million from the National Human Genome Research Institute (NHGRI), a division of the NIH, to support whole genome sequencing studies of autism and other complex diseases. The Principal Investigators of this grant are Tom Maniatis, PhD, Scientific Director and CEO, NYGC; Michael Zody, PhD, Scientific Director of Computational Biology, NYGC; and Mike Wigler, PhD, Senior Associate Core Member, NYGC, and Russell and Janet Doubleday Professor of Cancer Research, Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory. NYGC researchers are also collaborating in the ongoing SPARK (Simons Foundation Powering Autism Research for Knowledge) project, sponsored by the Simons Foundation Autism Research Initiative and the NHGRI CCDG program, as well as contributing to an array of other collaborative neuropsychiatric disease-related genomic studies.

Reporting to Dr. Maniatis, Dr. Lehner will work closely with the NYGC’s Neuropsychiatric Scientific Working Group and be responsible for coordinating collaborative research with academic and industrial partners, as well as leading efforts to secure external research funding

from grants, contracts, industry and philanthropic sources to support critical neuropsychiatric research projects.

“I am honored to be joining the New York Genome Center and look forward to working closely with the outstanding team of scientists here who are focused on neuropsychiatric genomic research,” said Dr. Lehner. “We all share the same enthusiasm about the exciting potential of new insights that can be uncovered through multi-institutional initiatives that leverage the diversity and the large patient population in the New York region.”

Prior to joining NIMH in 2004, Dr. Lehner held academic research positions at Columbia University and The Rockefeller University; in industry at Millennium Pharmaceuticals and as founder of a molecular medicine startup; and worked in government for New York State. He holds a PhD in Human Biology and Genetics from the University of Vienna and conducted postdoctoral studies in psychiatry at Columbia University, where he also obtained his Master of Public Health.

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About the New York Genome Center

The New York Genome Center (NYGC) is an independent, nonprofit academic research institution focused on furthering genomic research that leads to scientific advances and new insights and therapies for patients with neurodegenerative disease, neuropsychiatric disease, and cancer. Leveraging our strengths in whole genome sequencing, genomic analysis, and development of new genomic tools, the NYGC serves as a nexus for collaboration in disease-focused genomic research for the New York community and beyond.

NYGC harnesses the expertise and builds on the combined strengths of our faculty, staff scientists, member institutions, scientific working groups, affiliate members, and industry partners to advance genomic discovery. Central to our scientific mission is an outstanding faculty who are leading independent research labs based at the NYGC and one of our member institutions, bringing a multidisciplinary and in-depth approach to the field of genomics.

Institutional founding members are: Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory, Columbia University, Albert Einstein College of Medicine, The Jackson Laboratory, Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center, Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, New York-Presbyterian Hospital, New York University, Northwell Health, The Rockefeller University, Stony Brook University, and Weill Cornell Medicine. Institutional associate members are: American Museum of Natural History, Hospital for Special Surgery, The New York Stem Cell Foundation, Princeton University, and Roswell Park Cancer Institute. For more information on the NYGC, please visit: <http://www.nygenome.org>.

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