

Mount Sinai grad student, 25, named to Forbes '30 Under 30' in Science and Healthcare

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Jillian Shapiro, a third-year graduate student at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, has been named to the second annual *Forbes* "30 Under 30" list in "Science and Health." The honorees "reflect the way that the health care landscape is transforming for the better, opening up to revolutionary new ideas and new approaches," according to the editors of *Forbes*.

Ms. Shapiro, 25, a native of Rochester, New York, discovered a new molecular pathway that can be used to deliver [small interfering RNA \(siRNA\)](#) into cells that could have significant implications in the development of future therapeutics across disease types. Present technology uses nuclear viruses that cause a number of problems such as genome integration and bottlenecking of nuclear export that can be averted by Ms. Shapiro's method. Equally important, the research reveals a way to produce very high levels of the desired small RNAs without impacting the normal small RNA profile.

Her discovery was so significant that her thesis committee granted her permission to defend her PhD after only two years instead of the normal five, but she has decided to continue in the lab until her final paper is accepted, likely in the Spring of 2013.

"Being named to the *Forbes* list is such an extraordinary honor," said Ms. Shapiro. "It is incredibly rewarding to have all of my hard work and

dedication to research recognized in such a prestigious fashion, especially as a graduate student."

Ms. Shapiro participated in the Summer Undergraduate Research Program (SURP), a fellowship offered by the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, the summer after her junior year at New York University. She stayed on in the lab during her senior year performing research full time while simultaneously finishing her undergraduate degree. Following her graduation, she officially joined the lab of Benjamin tenOever, PhD, Irene and Arthur Fishberg Professor of Medicine.

"I am delighted that *Forbes* recognizes the significance of Jillian Shapiro's research and the amazing accomplishment of having achieved this success by the age of 25," said Dr. tenOever. "I am incredibly proud of Jillian for these achievements and have no doubt that she will continue producing this type of paradigm-shifting research. This recognition is very well deserved and speaks volumes to the strength of Mount Sinai and the Department of Microbiology."

Dr. tenOever's lab broadly focuses on the molecular interactions between viruses and their host. The overall objective of this lab is to gain a thorough understanding of the molecular basis of virus disease in an effort to generate improved vaccines and therapeutics, something Jillian's research embodies.

Ms. Shapiro has already published two first-author papers in [RNA](#) and two second-author papers, in *Cell Host and Microbe* and *Molecular Therapy* and is working on her third first-author paper.

Provided by The Mount Sinai Hospital

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