

## PRESS RELEASE

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Contacts: Rivka Solomon: Events@MassMECFS.org // (617) 471-5559

Jane Collins: Geisel School of Medicine at Dartmouth // (603) 650-8105

### **GEISEL SCHOOL OF MEDICINE & DARTMOUTH HITCHCOCK MEDICAL CTR: SUNDANCE AWARD-WINNING, OSCAR-CONTENDER FILM & PANEL DISCUSSION**

**Event is the first in NH to focus on ME/CFS, a little-known, hidden disease afflicting millions**

**Lebanon, NH** — An event hosted by Geisel School of Medicine and Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center, held October 16, 2018, 4 pm, (1 Medical Center Drive, Lebanon NH, Auditorium E) will focus on a little-known public health issue: the highly debilitating disease ME/CFS (Myalgic Encephalomyelitis / Chronic Fatigue Syndrome). This is the first event ever held in New Hampshire to focus on ME/CFS.

The Centers for Disease Control calls ME/CFS "[America's hidden health crisis](#)." The disease disables at least 4000 people in New Hampshire and 1-2.5 million in the U.S., with 75% being women. Even though ME/CFS has severe neurological, immunological and energy production impairments, it is largely forgotten by the medical and research community. Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center is one of only a handful of medical centers in the country researching the disease.

For more information about the event, and to register:

<https://geiselmed.dartmouth.edu/news/2018/unrest-movie-and-expert-panel-qa/>

This free event features an excerpt of [UNREST](#), a Sundance and Boston Globe (Globe Docs) award-winning documentary that was short-listed for an Oscar nomination, followed by a panel discussion with ME/CFS experts. The event moderator is Paul Guyre, PhD, An Active Emeritus Professor at the Geisel School of Medicine. Panelists include a Harvard physician scientist, a national advocate, a Massachusetts physician who treats ME/CFS patients, and a local OB/GYN/Functional Medicine physician. The audience will be healthcare professionals, medical and nursing students, researchers and the public. Similar events have been held by the Centers for Disease Control and the Massachusetts Department of Public Health.

The panel includes physician scientist David Systrom, M.D. Dr. Systrom is a member of the dedicated research team using state-of-the-art approaches to study ME/CFS at Harvard Medical School and affiliated hospitals in collaboration with Stanford University and the [Open Medicine Foundation](#).

Rivka Solomon, from the advocacy organization Massachusetts ME/CFS & FM Association, said, "This event will raise awareness about a severely debilitating disease which disables millions, many of whom live invisible lives, due to being homebound and bedridden. We hope to change the conversation about ME/CFS by helping medical professionals and the public understand the devastation ME/CFS brings to a family and a community."

**Film:** UNREST merges a love story with a medical mystery and a fight for health care equality. Jen Brea is working on her PhD at Harvard and is months away from marrying when she gets a mysterious fever that leaves her bedridden. Disbelieved by doctors, she turns her camera on herself and discovers a hidden world of millions with ME/CFS confined to their homes and bedrooms.

**Media attention:** UNREST has received extensive national media attention: [The Boston Globe](#), [NPR's Here & Now](#), [NPR's Science Friday](#), [Cosmopolitan](#) and [Vogue](#), [Today Show](#), [New York Times](#), [Los Angeles Times](#), [Chicago Tribune](#) and [more](#).

**Political advances:** Recently, Massachusetts Senator Ed Markey introduced a Senate Resolution (SR508) for ME/CFS, co-sponsored by Senators Susan Collins of Maine, Elizabeth Warren of MA and many others. [Sen. Markey also held a congressional briefing](#) on the disease. In 2017 the entire MA Congressional Delegation issued the following [joint statement](#):

“Without meaningful and immediate investments in biomedical research, the 28,000 people living with ME/CFS in Massachusetts will struggle to find answers to critical questions about the disease’s cause, diagnosis, and treatment. ... We will keep our constituents with ME/CFS in mind as we push for expanded biomedical research opportunities and funding in the U.S. House and Senate.”

Awareness raising events have been held across Massachusetts, including at the MA State House, Massachusetts General Hospital, Wellesley College, Brandeis University, Harvard Medical School and Emerson College. This is the first such event in New Hampshire.

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Contact:  
Rivka Solomon  
Massachusetts ME/CFS & FM Association  
Events@MassMECFS.org // (617) 471-5559  
[www.massmecfs.org](http://www.massmecfs.org)