Active Surveillance Patients International Inc.
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Active Surveillance Patients International honors PCRI's Dr. Mark Scholz with the Chodak Award for his pioneering contributions to Active Surveillance of low-risk prostate cancer

Los Angeles, California, June 19, 2025 —Dr. Mark Scholz, a pioneer in Active Surveillance for low-risk prostate cancer and co-founder of the Prostate Cancer Research Institute (PCRI), has been awarded the prestigious Chodak Award by Active Surveillance Patients International (ASPI). This award recognizes Dr. Scholz's significant contributions to the care of patients undergoing Active Surveillance for low-risk prostate cancer and advocacy of Active Surveillance.

"Scholz, co-author of 'The Invasion of the Prostate Snatchers,' has been a strong advocate for Active Surveillance, a strategy involving close monitoring of low-risk prostate cancer, rather than immediately resorting to aggressive treatments that can have significant side effects," said Mark Lichty, co-founder of ASPI, who himself has been on Surveillance for nearly 20 years.

ASPI was founded in 2018 in Los Angeles during the annual meeting of PCRI, a major gathering place for patients with prostate cancer.

The award is named after Dr. Gerald W. Chodak, a University of Chicago urologist, who was ASPI's first medical advisor and laid the groundwork for conservative management of prostate cancer in a study in the New England Journal of Medicine. He died in 2019 at age 72.

Dr. Scholz said, "Dr. Chodak was a true pioneer in Active Surveillance, and it means a great deal to me to be recognized in his name. As you know, helping men avoid unnecessary

treatment has been a passion of mine, and I deeply appreciate the work ASPI is doing to educate and support patients."

Dr. Scholz is a rare medical oncologist who focuses on treating prostate cancer and has been a long-time advocate of AS to follow patients with low-risk cancer.

"Half the men that are diagnosed every year are eligible for Active Surveillance, so it'd be difficult to claim to be a prostate oncology specialist if I didn't take care of men with low-risk prostate cancer," said Dr. Scholz.

Dr. Laurence Klotz of the University of Toronto, one of the founders of AS in the 1990s and a mentee of Dr. Chodak, agreed that Dr. Scholz is a worthy recipient of the Chodak Award, saying, "Dr. Scholz has a unique perspective; he is totally focused on patient well-being and outcome. And he's really been a voice of reason, a contrarian against conventional wisdom, when it comes to low-risk prostate cancer."

He recalled that during the early days of Active Surveillance, when the approach was still met with a lot of resistance, he had just finished a tough presentation and was feeling the weight of the criticism. That's when Dr. Scholz came up to him and said, "Klotz, you're onto something. Don't let people get you down. Keep on with this."

Dr. Klotz continued, "it was phenomenally helpful to have some support, and he's really championed conservatism and a holistic approach to patient welfare. His book, 'The Invasion of the Prostate Snatchers,' put stake in the ground, taking on conventional wisdom. It was very much a note of caution in the era when radical prostatectomy was being utilized so widely. And he's continued to promote the primacy of patient welfare and skepticism about the value of a lot of conventional therapies,"

Klotz was the first recipient in 2022 of the Chodak Award for his pioneering research and advocacy for AS.

Howard Wolinsky, co-founder of ASPI and chairman of the Chodak Awards Committee, said his nearly 15-year course on AS was strongly influenced by Scholz's book. "'The Invasion of the Prostate Snatchers' gave me the courage in 2010 to reject a strong recommendation to rush into an OR for a radical prostatectomy--for a single core of Gleason 6. Dr. Scholz's books and PCRI programs have spared hundreds of thousands, maybe millions, of men from unnecessary treatment and its side effects."

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Dr. Chodak was an artist. His widow, Robin Chodak, has donated a duplicate of a ceremonial bowl made by Dr. Chodak that has been presented to the winners of the award since the program started in 2022.

“I am deeply honored that ASPI has created this award in memory of my late husband, Gerry,” Robin said. “He poured his heart and soul into helping prostate cancer patients, always searching for what was best for them. If he were alive today, he would be actively involved and thrilled to see doctors continue to seek and provide the best therapies for their patients, including Active Surveillance. Every doctor chosen for the award exhibits Dr. Chodak’s philosophies regarding patient care. Dr. Scholz is a well-deserved recipient this year. He is not afraid to challenge conventional medicine and aligns with Active Surveillance.”

The Chodak Awards committee includes Robin Chodak, Lichty and Wolinsky along with James Schaidt, a prostate cancer patient, past board member of ASPI, and a current board member of ZERO Prostate Cancer; Paul Schellhammer, MD, a prostate cancer patient and a past president of the AUA, and a urology professor emeritus at East Virginia Medical College; and Govinda Ramakrishna, an ASPI board member, who founded a prostate cancer education and support group in India.

In addition to Dr. Klotz, previous recipients of the Chodak Award include Dr. Peter Albertsen, of the University of Connecticut, and Dr. Peter Carroll, of the University of California, San Francisco.

Active Surveillance Patients International (ASPI) is a non-profit based in San Diego, California, created by men with prostate cancer for men with prostate cancer. **For more information, contact ASPI at contactus@aspatients.org.**