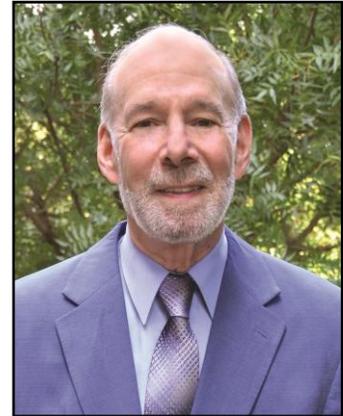


2016 Clarke Prize Laureate

*Mark D. Sobsey, Ph.D.
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Engineering
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Mark D. Sobsey was selected as the 2016 recipient of the NWRI Athalie Richardson Irvine Clarke Prize for his outstanding leadership and contribution to the fields of environmental health microbiology, virology, and water sanitation and hygiene. His research has resulted in tremendous advancements in the water industry, particularly in minimizing the risk of exposure to waterborne disease.

A microbiologist and environmental health scientist by training, Dr. Sobsey has worked nationally and globally for 45 years to improve water quality and protect public health. He has led groundbreaking efforts to understand, detect, and control waterborne viruses (such as norovirus and Hepatitis A and E viruses), bacteria, and parasites, and his work has directly influenced the development of guidance and policies by prominent public health safety organizations like the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and World Health Organization.

Among his most notable achievements, Sobsey's work on methods to concentrate and examine viruses (including fecal indicator viruses) in groundwater has become the standard for the water industry. For example, he developed an innovative filtration technique – known as the MDS filter – that was more practical and effective than conventional filters and, ultimately, helped develop a better understanding of the occurrence, concentration, and public health significance of viruses in the environment. His work in this area informed the analytical method used for viruses in the USEPA's Ground Water Rule, which standardized practices in the United States to detect and control the presence of microbial pathogens (particularly viruses) in drinking water wells. In addition, his efforts to develop improved methods to detect and control numerous waterborne viruses influenced the Surface Water Treatment Rule under the USEPA's Safe Drinking Water Act.

Dr. Sobsey received a B.S. in Biology and an M.S. in Hygiene from the University of Pittsburgh, and a Ph.D. in Environmental Health Sciences from the University of California, Berkeley.