

# CELEBRATION OF 30 YEARS

MACS/WIHS COMBINED

Spring Issue 2024

## MWCCS Newsletter



### **Edinburgh Jewish Cultural Centre Announces 2024 Herzfeld Prize for Health Honouree Dr. Mardge Cohen**

Our very own Dr. Mardge Cohen was selected to receive the 2024 Herzfeld Prize for Health that is bestowed biennially upon a leading Jewish female in the field of health. The Herzfeld Prize for health is awarded biennially by the Edinburgh Jewish Cultural Centre and the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh. Dr Cohen is only the third Jewish woman in the world to receive this prestigious prize.

Dr. Cohen is a leading physician and international researcher and many of us know her from her time at Cook County Hospital, specifically the CORE Center, where she was an internist for over 31 years. However, Dr. Cohen has been a champion in this field and her work has been far reaching, before and beyond her years at Cook County Hospital. She has a long history of activism related to women's health, intimate partner violence, gender issues, health disparities, and fighting for high quality, single-payer health care.

In 1988, she responded to the requests of women with HIV and started the Women and Children HIV Program to provide comprehensive medical and psychosocial services to women, their partners, and children at a single site at Cook County Hospital.

### Dr. Mardge Cohen

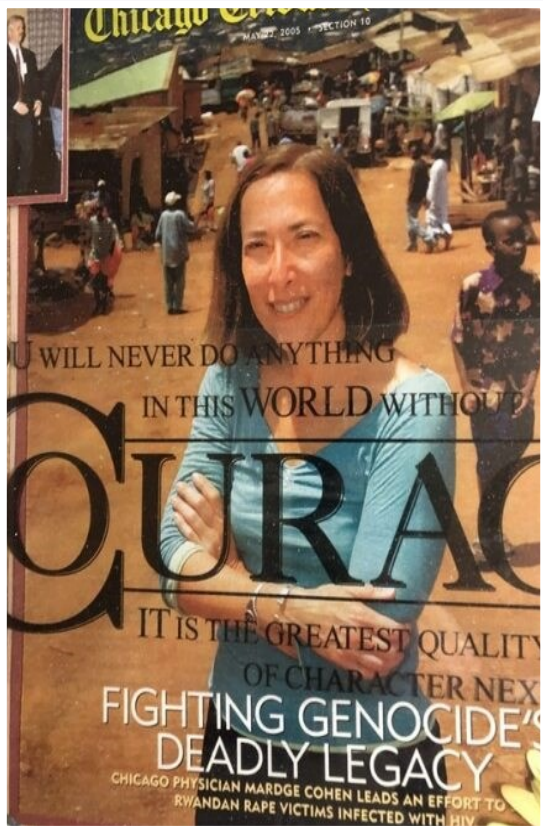
She led the CDC funded research in Chicago on HIV testing among women in labour and then directed the public health implementation of rapid HIV testing in labor and delivery areas for all Illinois birthing hospitals. Starting in 1994, she was the Principal Investigator of the Chicago consortium of the National Institute of Health's Women's Interagency HIV Study (WIHS). WIHS is a multi-site prospective epidemiologic study exploring the biologic, clinical and psychosocial aspects of women living with HIV. In 2019, the NIH combined the WIHS and the Multi - Center AIDS Cohort Study (MACS), a complementary study of men with HIV which began in 1984 to form the MACS/WIHS Combined Cohort Study (MWCCS). The MWCCS continues to explore laboratory, clinical and psychosocial issues facing women and men aging with HIV.

In 2004, she co-founded Women's Equity in Access to Care and Treatment (WE-ACTx) to facilitate HIV primary care for women who were infected after being raped during the 1994 Rwandan genocide. WE-ACTx, with the Rwandan local organization WE-ACTx For Hope, provides comprehensive HIV care to over 2500 persons in Kigali, integrating mental health care, nutrition and income generation within HIV primary care for women, children, youth and their families.

From 2012-2018, Dr Cohen co-led an NICHD research study to improve adherence to antiretroviral therapy in 14-21-year-olds with HIV in Kigali. The study evaluated a trauma-informed cognitive behaviour therapy intervention conducted by trained and supervised HIV infected older youth. This intervention is currently being implemented in several other countries in Sub-Saharan Africa.



## Dr. Mardge Cohen



Dr Cohen has described her work and philosophy of care as a matter of justice, stating that “WE-ACTx sees it as a matter of justice to provide HIV prevention and care for women in Rwanda and other developing countries. In Rwanda, we are responding to what was a preventable genocide and a subsequent predictable HIV epidemic. An estimated 67% of survivors now have HIV, some deliberately exposed to the virus via rape as a "slow poison" by the genocide perpetrators - the first historic use of HIV as a weapon of war. Providing these women with HIV drugs is a matter of justice, as well as their individual right to live.”



Dr. Mardge Cohen and her husband

Dr. Gordon Schiff with the portrait of Dr. Gertrude Herzfeld

### 2024 Women's Health Screening Check List

Do you have a doctor's appointment coming up? Do you ever wonder what you should ask your primary care provider during visits? Women, particularly once you reach age forty, should focus on some key health screenings.

◇ **Blood Pressure**

You should have your blood pressure checked at least once a year. And it should be checked more often if you are Black, have certain health conditions or have a close relative with high blood pressure.

◇ **Breast Cancer**

Women ages 40 to 75 should talk to their provider about a screening mammogram. Depending on your risk factors for cancer, you might need a mammogram every 1 to 2 years.

◇ **Cervical Cancer**

If you have your uterus and cervix, you should have a pap test screening every 3 years between the ages of 30 and 65. Those who have been treated for precancer should continue pap tests for up to 20 years or age 65.

◇ **Cholesterol**

Starting at age 45, women should get a cholesterol screening. These screenings should start at age 20 if there are known risk factors for heart disease.

◇ **Colorectal Cancer**

If you are between the ages of 45 through 75 you should be screened. Particularly if you have a strong family history of colon cancer or polyps.

◇ **Diabetes**

Every three years, starting at age 35, women who have no risk factors should be screened. Risk factors, such as obesity, high blood pressure or a close relative with diabetes should trigger more frequent screenings.

◇ **Osteoporosis**

You should discuss a low bone density screening with your provider starting at age 50 and continuing through age 64 if you have risk factors such as low body weight, smoking or heavy alcohol use.

As we get older, going to the doctor can cause anxiety. But if you know what to ask, you can advocate for yourself and your health!

### Stress and Your Health

Everyone experiences stress, the mental and emotional strain that accompanies daily life. The causes of stress in women are numerous. Money matters, workplace issues and relationship problems can plague men as well as women. But studies have found that because women play so many roles in today's society – partners, caregivers and breadwinners to name a few -- they may experience stressors that aren't as prevalent in men.

Body aches, especially headaches, back and neck pain. Difficulty sleeping. Rashes. These are some possible consequences of stress on your body. And that's just physically. Stress can also take a toll on your mental wellbeing. Forgetfulness, worry, irritability. Even anxiety, depression and burnout can be caused by stress.

Some people cope with stress in unhealthy ways. Smoking, overeating, lack of exercise and not taking medications as prescribed are some of the poor choices people make when dealing with stress. But learning to manage stressful situations can free you from some of the worst outcomes for your health.

According to the Department of Health and Human Services, here are six ways to better manage stress:

Exercising regularly can reduce stress. It can even help relieve anxiety and depression.

Getting enough sleep is important in managing stress. Most adults need between seven and nine hours per night.

Prioritizing relaxation. Meditating, listening to music and other leisure activities lower stress.

Socializing, such as making time for friends and family, can beat stress.

Pursuing a hobby you enjoy can steer your focus away from negative thoughts.

Sustaining a positive attitude can overwhelm stressful thoughts.

Women will always experience stress in everyday life. By practicing self-care, you can avoid the worst symptoms of stress and enjoy a healthier life.

### Women and Stroke When to Act F.A.S.T.

Do you know your risk of having a stroke? It might be higher than you think. According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 1 in 5 US women between the ages of 55 and 75 will have a stroke.

Among women of color, the numbers are alarming. The CDC reports that African Americans have the highest rate of death due to stroke among all racial and ethnic groups and stroke is the fourth leading cause of death for Hispanic women. So what can be done about stroke? Start by knowing your risk:

High blood pressure, or hypertension is a leading risk factor for stroke. Manage the risk by having regular blood pressure screening and, if necessary, taking medication to control high blood pressure.

Diabetes is also a condition that can lead to stroke. Getting tested and treatment for diabetes sooner rather than later lowers risk.

Obesity increases the risk for stroke. According to Harvard Medical School, losing as little as 5% to 10% of your starting weight can lower your risk.

There are other healthy lifestyle choices that minimize stroke risk:

Talking to your doctor about your stroke risk

Eating a healthier diet, with foods lower in sodium and rich in fiber.

Taking Aspirin lessens risk of blood clots, consult your doctor.

Getting regular exercise supports overall health.

Smoking greatly increases stroke risk. So just don't do it.

### Women and Stroke When to Act F.A.S.T.

What do you do if you suspect that you or someone else is having a stroke?

The CDC recommends acting F.A.S.T. to survive a stroke by noticing the following:

- **Face** – Does one side of the face droop?
- **Arms** – Does one arm drift downward when both are raised?
- **Speech** – Pay attention to slurred or strange speech.
- **Time** – Don't wait. If you see any of these signs call 9-1-1 right away.

Remember, the possibility of having a stroke is very real. Decrease your chances of suffering or surviving a stroke by lowering your risk.



### Spring Cleaning Cleaning Out More than Just the Home

It's that time of year when we look to clean up our surroundings to make a fresh start for 2024. Spring officially started on March 21<sup>st</sup> -- but spring cleaning or a general “decluttering” can happen any time during the year. It can include anything that you feel is important to get in “order”. Sometimes the hardest part of spring cleaning is just getting motivated. The following are some helpful tips on how you can “spring” into getting this yearly tradition started.

**30-day cleaning checklist:** According to the Spruce.com making a 30-day check list can help tackle small projects each day. Adding tasks such as, remove junk “day 7” and clean garage “day 18” not only projects a goal, but also helps fights the urge to quit when things get boring or overwhelming.

|  Spring Cleaning<br>Calendar |                            |                                     |                               |                                           |                        |                                      |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Dust Ceiling Fans and Light Fixtures                                                                             | Wash Mini-Blinds           | Wash, Dust, or Steam Clean Curtains | Dust Picture Frames           | Wash Mirrors                              | Wash Windows           | Clean Window Sills & Sashes          |
| Sanitize Kitchen Counters and Faucet                                                                             | Wipe Down Kitchen Cabinets | Clean Inside Fridge and Freezer     | Clean Under and Behind Fridge | Wipe Down & Clean Small Appliances        | Clean Oven (inside)    | Clean Stovetop                       |
| Wash & Sanitize Doorknobs                                                                                        | Wash Blankets and Throws   | Scrub Trash Cans and Litter Boxes   | Vacuum Under Couch Cushions   | Clean Seals and Filter in Washing Machine | Clean Lint in Dryer    | Clean Washer and Dryer               |
| Wipe Down Bathroom Vanities                                                                                      | Sanitize Bathroom Fixtures | Wash Bath Toys/ Tub Mats            | Scrub Tub & Toilets           | Wash Shower Curtains & Shower Doors       | Clean Grout and Reseal | Vacuum Under Beds & Behind Furniture |



**Digital Spring cleaning is a thing!** While traditionally we only think about spring cleaning our homes, back yards or tossing out old clothes, many of us have an entire cyber life that could use some “cleaning”. The North Carolina Department of Information Technology (NCDIT) recommends a “digital” spring cleaning to include:

- **Online accounts** (Such as unused credit cards saved for stores/ stored passwords/paying for accounts no longer in use.)
- **Email accounts** (Delete old email accounts/ old emails/ unsubscribe to recurring emails.)
- **Social media accounts** (Are security codes current? Do you need/want the same social media presence?)
- **Phone/Device Clean up** (Deleting unused apps/removing downloads/ old contacts/ update access codes/passwords.)
- **Web browsers** (Clean up browsing history on all devices.)
- **Home networks** (Check/update hardware, if possible, for more home network security. Change to a more unique and complex home internet password.)
- **Back-up** (Store things on DVDs/CDs/cloud.)
- **Shred/recycle**

Cleaning up for spring can seem like a huge task that is always coming our way. But hopefully, with some helpful tips, it can feel less daunting and more like a refresh for the new year!



### READ/WATCH/LISTEN (Staff Picks)

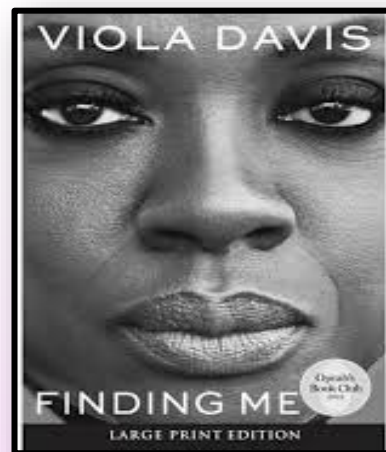
Springtime in Chicago is a tricky thing. Before you know it, we have snow, a few rainstorms and then it is summer. However, Spring is an official season, and we want to kick it off with our MWCSS staff giving their favorite springtime reads, watch and music picks!

#### Read (Books/Magazine/Articles)

##### Darlene's Pick!

*Finding Me: Memoir by Viola Davis*

(available in paperback/hardback/Kindle/Audible)



#### Watch (TV/Movies/Online)

##### Ruby's Pick!

*Them* (TV Series-2021)

A Black family moves from North Carolina to an all-white Los Angeles neighborhood in 1953, where their idyllic home becomes ground zero for malevolent forces.

(available on Prime video)



#### Listen (Music/Podcast)

##### Crystal's Pick!

Andre 3000 New Blue Sun (Instrumental/Meditation)

(available on iTunes, Spotify, Apple Music, YouTube Music/streaming services)



## MWCCS Staff Updates

### Happier Birthdays!

MWCCS participants celebrating birthdays will get a special new treat starting in May! More details to come. Expect a call from MWCCS staff during your birthday month.

## Community Advisory Board Update

The **Local MWCCS CAB** has 4 meeting dates per year and all participants are welcomed to submit questions to an MWCCS staff person to be addressed at one of our local CAB meetings. The meeting dates are:

**June 11th**

**September 10th**

**December 10th**

**\*(dates subject to change)**

The **National Community Advisory Board (NCAB)** meeting will happen in May. National topics include:

- The effects of antiretrovirals on changes in body composition and insulin resistance
- High blood pressure and hypertension (2 highest co-morbidities in the cohort)
- Homelessness & housing as a barrier

Update from the NCAB meeting will be shared with local CAB members and included in the upcoming MWCCS Fall newsletter.



#### MWCCS

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