

2025

WINTER NEWSLETTER

ATLANTA
MWCCS



2025

HAPPY NEW YEAR

IN THIS ISSUE

Letter from the PI

Chef's Corner 

Coordinator's Corner

Holiday Party Recap 

2025 Calendar of Events

Dates to Remember 

Resource Roundup

Caring for your Mental Health 

Investigator Introduction

Upcoming Visits

THIS NEWSLETTER IS YOURS

Are you interested in seeing something in the newsletter that you haven't? Would you like to be featured in the newsletter?

Let us know by telling any of the study staff or sending an email to macswihscs@emory.edu.



FROM THE PI'S DESK: GINA WINGOOD

On behalf of the Atlanta MWCCS, we would like to say Happy New Year and send our heartfelt appreciation to our amazing participants. We hope you had time to rest and relax over the holiday break. Your passion, persistence, and tireless devotion to the study has not gone unnoticed.



On December 4th, MWCCS held an Executive Meeting at the Johns Hopkins University Bloomberg Center. It was wonderful to see the scientific presentations from many investigators including our own, Dr. Cecile Lahiri. However, what was especially joyful was dinner where our site gathered for food and enrichment.



As part of this Executive Meeting, it was shared that among participants enrolled at V101, V102, and V103, our site enrolled 310 new enrollees, which is outstanding! Today, our site has more than 500 participants. Congratulations to All! In 1995, WIHS closed its initial enrollment with 2,600 women living with and without HIV. *Look at us now!*

On December 5th, MWCCS held an Anniversary Event at the National Press Club in Washington, DC. The event celebrated the 40th anniversary of MACS and 30th anniversary of WIHS, which combined in 2019 to form the MACS/WIHS Combined Cohort Study.

At the celebration, a video was shared titled, *Walking Through Our Shared History*. The video beautifully illustrated origin stories of the HIV/AIDS pandemic, beginning from the 1980s. The video also featured powerful clips that showcased HIV/AIDS activists and highlighted HIV/AIDS social movements for men and women dating back to the 1990s, representing MWCCS staff, NCAB members, NIH leaders, and scientists. Our own Dr. Igbo Ofotokun was featured in the video. (*View full anniversary event video on YouTube at bit.ly/mwccsanniversary*)

The MWCCS National Memorial AIDS quilt panel was also unveiled during the celebration. The panel will make its way to each MWCCS site for one month of viewing and then will be submitted to become a portion of the National Memorial AIDS quilt. The quilt is adorned by colorful large and small stars. The large stars represent the different MWCCS sites and each of the small stars represent ten deaths of our MWCCS participants and/or staff. Our site is recognized by the hot pink star on the far right of the panel.



Let's continue strong with V105! Thank you once again for being the heart of our study! We look forward to the vibrancy of 2025. As always, please feel free to reach out to us with any comments, thoughts or feedback. We really want to hear from you as your participation empowers our team, our participants, and our community.

ATLANTA MWCCS COMMUNITY ADVISORY BOARD

Alvin Baxter
Board Member

February Brown Hill
Board Member

Mashanda Burton
Local CAB Chair

Kelley Joseph
Board Member

Africa McCladdie
Board Member

D'Angelo Morrison
Local CAB Chair

Malcolm Reid
Board Member
National CAB Representative

Patsy Sarnor
Secretary

Joseph Smith
Board Member
National CAB Representative

The Community Advisory Board serves as representatives of our participant population. Do you have any questions or concerns for your CAB members? Please email them to macswihscs@emory.edu.

SOUP SEASON CHEF'S CORNER



Chef Cam: Casey Beaty

Chicken Gumbo

INGREDIENTS

- 3 cups fat-free, low sodium chicken broth
- OR
- 16 ounces frozen gumbo-mix vegetables, thawed
- 16 ounces frozen cut okra (without seasoning or sauce, thawed)
- OR
- 2 cups shredded cooked chicken breast, cooked without salt, all visible fat discarded
- 1 15.5-ounce can no-salt-added butter beans, rinsed and drained
- 1 15.5-ounce can no-salt-added red kidney beans, rinsed and drained
- OR
- 1 15.25-ounce can no-salt-added whole-kernel corn, rinsed and drained
- 1 14.5-ounce can no-salt-added diced tomatoes, undrained
- 2 to 3 tablespoons salt-free Cajun or Creole seasoning blend
- 1 8/8-ounce pouch brown rice
- 1 cup uncooked instant brown rice

DIRECTIONS

Put the broth, gumbo-mix vegetables, chicken, beans, corn, tomatoes with liquid, and seasoning blend in large pot.

Bring to a boil over high heat. Reduce the heat to medium. Simmer, covered, for 15 minutes.

Meanwhile, prepare the rice using the package directions, leaving out the salt and margarine. Put the rice into bowls. Ladle the gumbo over the rice. Serve immediately.

Cooking Tip: Rice will soak up a lot of soup's or stew's liquid, so always add it just before serving.

Recipe courtesy of the American Heart Association. Find more on recipes.heart.org!



COORDINATOR'S CORNER



Kayla Wright



Charles Fountain

SUCCESS STORY: *Celebrating Together*

Thinking back to what brought joy and connection to our study community last year, we can't help but to remember our many events. Our research team hosted quarterly birthday parties, a movie night, a Back-to-School Summer BBQ picnic, and our Annual Holiday Party for our participants. Every celebration serves as chances for everyone to gather, relax, and bond outside of the usual research setting.

Events not only brought our participants together, but also made a lasting impact on their mental well-being. A few participants shared that they've felt isolated and that attending events has lifted their spirits and reminded them of the importance of community. From delicious food and fun games to the ability to meet new people, our events are more than just a celebration—it is a reminder of the supportive community they're a part of through the study.

Events are a hit with everyone involved, from participants to staff, who come together to make it feel special. Our entire team is thrilled to see the positive impact of creating these moments for our participants, reminding them of the strong sense of community that fuels our research efforts. Thank you to everyone who helps make our celebrations such a success!

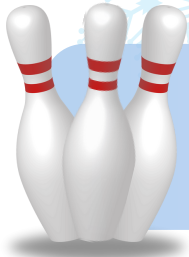
Looking forward to an eventful 2025 with our community!

HIGHLIGHT REEL ANNUAL HOLIDAY PARTY



Thank you to **EVERYONE** who was able to spend the evening with us to celebrate the holidays and celebrate YOU! It was truly a special evening.

SAVE THE DATES!
2025
CALENDAR OF EVENTS



Saturday, March 15, 2025
BOWLING PARTY

Friday, June 13, 2025
MOVIE NIGHT



Saturday, August 3, 2025
Back-to-School
SUMMER BBQ

Thursday, December 11, 2025
HOLIDAY PARTY



DATES TO REMEMBER

February 7
National Black
HIV/AIDS
Awareness Day



February 28
HIV Is Not a
Crime
Awareness Day



March 10
National Women
& Girls HIV/AIDS
Awareness Day



March 20
National Native
HIV/AIDS
Awareness Day



RESOURCE ROUNDUP

The Salvation Army Red Shield

469 Marietta Street
Atlanta, GA 30313

404-486-2700
sahelp.org

Hours:
Monday - Friday, 8:00 AM - 3:00 PM

Services Provided:

- Shelter
- Utility Assistance
- Food Pantry

City of Refuge, Inc.

1300 Joseph E. Boone Blvd Blvd. NW
Atlanta, GA 30314

404-874-2241 (Main Line)
404-564-7764 (Housing)
cityofrefugeatl.org

Hours:
Monday - Friday, 8:00 AM - 4:00 PM

Services Provided:

- Health & Wellness (Residents only): medical, dental, vision, and mental health services
- Three hot meals daily

Housing:

- *Eden Village*: For single women, mothers, and children
- *House of Cherith*: For survivors of domestic violence trauma

Job Training (*Residents only*):

- Advanced Manufacturing
- Automotive Technology
- Banking
- Culinary Arts
- Information Technology
- Security

Youth Development:

- Day childcare
- After-school programs

Shepherd's Inn (*Shelter for Men*)

165 Ivan Allen Blvd Jr. Blvd NW
Atlanta, GA 30313

404-367-2493
atlantamission.org/shepherds-inn

Intake Screenings: Monday - Friday
8:30 AM (*Arrive by 6:00 AM; services available for only 5-10 men daily*)

Services Provided:

- Shelter beds
- Assistance with ID, birth certificate, and Social Security card
- Laundry services
- Life skills classes
- Three meals per day
- One-on-one counseling
- Spiritual services
- Social services
- Vocational training

Jars of Clay

937 Sims Street SW
Atlanta, GA 30310

470-851-5472 (Emergency Assistance)
470-851-5474 (Appointments)
jjocatlanta.org

Hours:
Monday - Thursday, 9:30 AM - 2:30 PM

Services Provided:

- Clothing Closet
- Emergency Housing
- Emergency Storage
- Employment Assistance
- Transportation

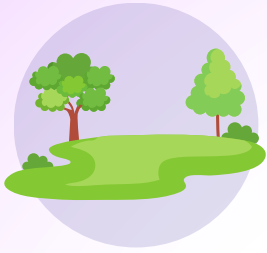
REMINDER: IRS REPORTING REGULATIONS

If you participate in one or more research studies, you are **required** to report income that totals \$600 or more in a calendar year on your IRS Form 1099-MISC, Miscellaneous Income.

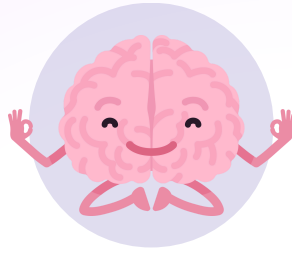


CARING FOR YOUR MENTAL HEALTH

Showing yourself care can be as simple as taking a walk.
Check out these tips to get started!



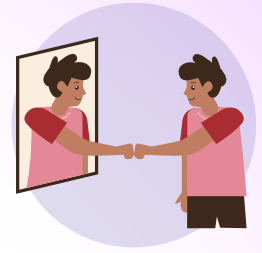
Go outside and be active
(e.g., walk in the park)



Practice relaxing
(e.g., take deep breaths)



Practice self-care
(e.g., take deep breaths)



Check in with yourself
(how are you feeling?)



Laugh
(e.g., watch something funny)



Find a hobby
(learn and do something new of interest)



Practice gratitude
(e.g., share your appreciation)



Maintain or build community

Learn more tips from CDC at bit.ly/cdcwellbeing

WELCOME INVESTIGATOR INTRODUCTION



My name is Wendy Fujita, and I am a new faculty member joining the MWCCS team as an investigator. I recently completed my infectious diseases fellowship

training here at Emory and am an HIV physician at the Ponce Center. I am interested in the intersection of HIV and addiction, and during my fellowship, I studied rates of substance use and treatment among WIHS participants. I joined Emory as faculty in September 2024, and I'm excited to continue working with the MWCCS team to understand the experiences of people who use drugs and how we can improve HIV and addiction care for people who use drugs. One of my favorite parts of working with the MWCCS is working alongside such passionate and brilliant researchers and staff and having the opportunity to meet the wonderful, dedicated participants. My goal this year is to get to know more of the MWCCS team and meet more of its participants.

Outside of work, I love to run and hike. I have a 2-year old son, another little one expected in April, and an energetic Border Collie who keep me busy!



UPCOMING VISITS

**BEFORE
YOUR
VISIT:**



No food or drinks after midnight the day before your visit, **except water**. Drink plenty of water!

Baseline/Annual Visit



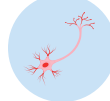
Complete full informed consent or re-consent, as needed



Frailty assessment
(for participants 40 years and older)



Review and update contact information
(for study purposes and ClinCard)



Neuropathy assessment
(nerve damage questionnaire)



Lab visit
(up to 23 tubes of blood)



Photograph of teeth



Full or targeted exam



BrainBaseline Assessment of Cognition and Everyday Function (BRACE)
(completed on iPad)



GYN exam
(assigned female at birth only)



Pulmonary Function Test (PFT)
*(tests lung health)
(requires additional time and offered if not completed at short visit)*



In-person or computer-assisted interview



Computerized Adaptive Test for Mental Health (CAT-MH)
(tests for mood disorders and behavioral health - completed on iPad)



Fibroscan of your liver
(liver health)

Echocardiogram

We will schedule your ECHO at your baseline/core or CIDI visit.

An echocardiogram (or ECHO) is an ultrasound of the heart. This test takes a closer look at your heart, using sound waves to create pictures of the heart, showing how the heart is beating and pumping blood.

It will be done one-time only.

Short Visit



Complete full informed consent or re-consent, as needed



PFT
*(tests lung health)
(requires additional time and offered if not completed at short visit)*



BRACE+
*(completed on iPad)
(if not completed during earlier visit)*



Lab visit
(up to 23 tubes of blood)



In-person or computer-assisted interview

Composite International Diagnostic Interview (CIDI)

We will schedule your CIDI interview sometime between your core and short visit.

Some MACS/WIHS CCS participants will be asked to complete a CIDI interview based on length of time in study. The CIDI interview is a one-time, in-depth mental health evaluation completed separate from the core and short visits.

No blood draws or physical exams are needed at this visit.