VIRTUAL

ANNUAL AWARDS GALA

THURSDAY • APRIL 29 • 2021

Society for Women's Health Research
Thank you for joining us virtually for SWHR’s 31st Annual Awards Gala to celebrate the achievements of trailblazing women in health, education, and research. We are thrilled to honor three champions of women’s health: Dr. Lotus Mallbris, Dr. Valerie Montgomery Rice, and Dr. Nora Volkow.

As we enter year two of the pandemic, we are hopeful that the COVID-19 vaccines, developed by some of our sponsors and guests here tonight, will provide a pathway to a new normal. The pandemic continues to highlight longstanding disparities and inequities in health care access, medical education, and clinical trials, but it has also provided opportunities to use technology more effectively to improve patient care and outcomes. We have also witnessed the development, in record time, of new diagnostics and vaccines in response to this global health crisis.

SWHR’s mission is to promote research on biological sex differences and improve women’s health through science, policy, and education. Our vision is to make women’s health mainstream. Our science work drives policy, and policy drives change.

We cannot do this important work without you — our supporters and partners. We encourage innovation and investment in therapies, diagnostics, and devices to improve and transform women’s health across the lifespan.

Tonight, I am honored to recognize three women who have each made significant contributions to their field, mentored future women leaders, and ensured their workplaces — be it a lab, clinic, or educational institution — nurture, support, and advance women based on their hard work and accomplishments.

We sincerely thank our sponsors and partners for your ongoing support and for your work to improve women’s health. Enjoy the evening!

Sincerely,

Kathryn G. Schubert, MPP
President and Chief Executive Officer
Mission
SWHR is the national thought leader dedicated to promoting research on biological sex differences in disease and improving women’s health through science, policy, and education.

Vision
Make women’s health mainstream.

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CLOSING REMARKS

Closing Remarks
7:20 P.M.

VIRTUAL EVENING ACTIVITIES

Virtual Networking Cocktail Reception
5:30 P.M.

President’s Welcome and Opening Remarks
6:00 P.M.

Awards Presentation to Honorees
6:15 P.M.

Special Guest Speakers
6:45 P.M.

Closing Remarks
7:20 P.M.

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Dr. Dodson joined SWHR’s Board of Directors in 2015 and become Board Chair last year. She has extensive clinical and research experience in the health care and pharmaceutical industries. Dr. Dodson joined Astellas in 2012 in Medical Affairs, where she was responsible for the strategic direction of the Astellas Medical Affairs Americas organization.

In her current role she leads health systems and oversees payer and channel account management, contracts and pricing, reimbursement and market access strategy, health systems marketing, key account management, and operations.

Dr. Dodson started her career in direct patient care at the Department of Veterans Affairs, and she has also worked at Pfizer Inc. and GTx Inc. in various medical affairs leadership roles. She has received multiple awards for leadership and innovation during her career, including the National Healthcare Business Women’s Association Rising Star. She is also on the Board of Directors of the National Pharmaceutical Council. Dodson holds a Doctor of Pharmacy degree from Mercer University School of Pharmacy and completed a postdoctoral residency at the Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Nashville, Tenn.

As head of immunology at Lilly, Dr. Mallbris is working to improve the lives of millions of women with autoimmune diseases by furthering innovation in health care and solving problems for patients. Dr. Mallbris is a passionate executive leader who brings a unique perspective to the industry as she began her career as a trained physician and has diverse experience across the spectrums of patient care, academic research, pharmaceutical drug development, and global medical affairs.

Before joining Lilly, Dr. Mallbris spent several years at Pfizer and held leadership positions within the dermatology business. Prior to joining the corporate world, she was a practicing physician for more than 10 years, starting her career as a surgeon before transitioning to the field of dermatology.

Her decision to shift from academia and practicing as a dermatologist to joining a biopharmaceutical company was rooted in her desire to help more patients and bring them the treatments they need.

Dr. Mallbris has always been devoted to patients and found caring for them incredibly rewarding, but recognized an opportunity to take that devotion to the next level by joining the companies working to create the innovative solutions needed to help patients around the world. She continues to be an active member of multiple external immunology research advisory boards that focus on public health and epidemiology, bridging the external state-of-the-art research with Lilly.
Dr. Clancy has served as Acting Deputy Secretary of Veterans Affairs since January 20, 2021. A highly experienced physician executive, she has held many leadership positions at the VA, including Assistant Under Secretary for Health for Discovery, Education and Affiliate Networks; Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Executive-in-Charge; and VHA Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Organizational Excellence. She also served 10 years as the Director of the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality.

In 2019, Dr. Clancy received SWHR's Health Public Service Visionary Award for her work to enhance access to and quality of care for women veterans.

In 2015, she was selected as the Outstanding Federal Executive of the Year by Disabled American Veterans. Dr. Clancy, a general internist and health services researcher, is a graduate of Boston College and the University of Massachusetts Medical School. She holds an academic appointment at George Washington University School of Medicine and serves as Senior Associate Editor for Health Services Research. She also served as member of the National Quality Forum Board of Directors, as the Chair of the AQA Alliance, and on the Board of Governors for the Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute.

Dr. Montgomery Rice is the sixth president of Morehouse School of Medicine and the first woman to lead the freestanding medical institution. A renowned infertility specialist and researcher, she most recently served as dean and executive vice president of Morehouse School of Medicine, where she has served since 2011.

Prior to joining Morehouse, Dr. Montgomery Rice held faculty positions and leadership roles at various health centers. Most notably, she was the founding director of the Center for Women's Health Research at Meharry Medical College, one of the nation’s first research centers devoted to studying diseases that disproportionately impact women of color. Through membership and Board service, Dr. Montgomery Rice lends her experience to organizations that enhance pipeline opportunities for academically diverse learners, diversifies the physician and scientific workforce, and fosters equity in health care access and health outcomes. She is a former SWHR Board member and has received numerous accolades and honors.

A Georgia native, she holds a bachelor’s degree in chemistry from the Georgia Institute of Technology, a medical degree from Harvard Medical School, an honorary degree from the University of Massachusetts Medical School, and a Doctor of Humane Letters honorary degree from Rush University. She completed her residency in obstetrics and gynecology at Emory University School of Medicine and her fellowship in reproductive endocrinology and infertility at Hutzel Hospital.
Dr. Xu has more than 30 years of neuroscience research experience and more than 20 years in neuroscience drug discovery. She joined Amgen in 2016 as a key contributor in building the company's neuroscience strategy.

Dr. Xu is a co-inventor for the first FDA-approved treatment designed to prevent migraine, which is three times more common in women than men and affects 18% of women in the U.S. In 2019, she received SWHR’s Health Industry Visionary Award for her work in discovering this treatment. Dr. Xu has also aided in the discovery and development of other therapeutics, including for schizophrenia and sleep disorders. Her focus areas include neurodegeneration, psychiatry disorders, migraine, and analgesia.

Dr. Xu obtained her PhD in pharmacology from Illinois State University and did her postdoc in University of Illinois College of Medicine. She was involved in basic research of drug abuse and neuropsychiatry for about 10 years before joining the industry. She also worked in a psychiatry institution for six years, with firsthand experience in patient interaction before entering the doctoral program.

Dr. Volkow leads the National Institute on Drug Abuse, which supports most of the world’s research on the health aspects of drug abuse and addiction. Her scientific research was instrumental in demonstrating that drug addiction is a disease of the human brain, and her work at NIDA has promoted research that improves the prevention and treatment of substance use disorders.

As NIDA director, Dr. Volkow has worked to create an inclusive environment for women researchers to thrive and championed research on biological sex differences. NIDA’s Women and Sex/Gender Differences Research Group works to support the careers of women scientists, as well as to promote conduct, translation, and dissemination of research on sex and gender differences in substance use disorders and responses to drugs of abuse.

As a research psychiatrist, Dr. Volkow pioneered the use of brain imaging to investigate the toxic and addictive effects of abusable drugs. Her studies documented disruption of the dopamine system in addiction with its consequential functional impairment of frontal brain regions involved with motivation, executive function and self-regulation. She has also made important contributions to the neurobiology of obesity and ADHD.

Dr. Volkow has published more than 820 peer-reviewed articles, written more than 100 book chapters and non-peer-reviewed manuscripts, co-edited a Neuroscience Encyclopedia, and edited four books on neuroimaging for mental and addictive disorders.
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Dr. Parikh has spent two decades at the nexus of science, policy, and business. Before joining AAAS, he was senior vice president and managing director at DIA Global, a neutral, multidisciplinary organization bringing together regulators, industry, academia, patients, and other stakeholders interested in health care product development. He led strategy in the Americas and oversaw DIA programs that catalyzed progress globally toward novel regulatory frameworks for advanced therapies not amenable to existing regulations.

Prior to DIA, Dr. Parikh was general manager of the Health and Consumer Solutions business unit and vice president at Battelle, a multibillion-dollar research and development organization. He led a $150 million business unit that performed basic and applied research, developed medicines and health care devices, and created advanced analytics and AI applications to improve human health.

From 2001-2009, Dr. Parikh served as science advisor and professional staff to the U.S. Senate Appropriations Committee, where he was responsible for negotiating budgets for the NIH, CDC, AHRQ, BARDA, and other scientific and health agencies. Dr. Parikh serves as a board member and officer for Research!America, Friends of Cancer Research, and ACT for NIH. He has received multiple public service awards, including from the American Association of Immunologists, the National AIDS Alliance, the Coalition for Health Services Research, and the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation.

Dr. Louis is the Chair of the Department of OB/GYN at University of South Florida. She has a joint faculty appointment in both the College of Public Health and the College of Medicine. A specialist in Maternal Fetal Medicine, Dr. Louis has been active in SMFM for many years. In addition to being Immediate Past President, she has served on the group’s board of directors, as representative for the Women’s Preventive Services Initiative Taskforce, on its publications committee. She also earned SMFM’s President’s Award for Research Excellence.

Her research in obstructive sleep apnea in pregnant women led to a career focused on maternal morbidity and mortality. Dr. Louis has authored numerous scientific articles and book chapters on sleep apnea and maternal morbidity/mortality. She also served as a member of SWHR’s Interdisciplinary Network on Sleep, which worked to bring attention to sleep health issues in women and enhance discussions between health care providers and patients to better address women’s sleep needs.

Through her work as a clinical leader for the Florida Perinatal Quality Collaborative, Dr. Louis has led statewide programs to improve management of obstetric emergencies in the state of Florida. She is passionate about making pregnancy safer for all women and in particular, improving maternal health across the lifespan.
Amgen is proud to support the Society for Women’s Health Research.

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SWHR Policy Activities

Despite the progress in women’s health since SWHR was founded in 1990, we still have much to accomplish in order to ensure the optimal health of all women nationwide. Now is the time to propel women’s health forward through policy action. SWHR’s annual Women’s Health Policy Agenda outlines policies that we support across five key areas: public health, research & clinical trials, lifespan issues, coverage & access, and biomedical workforce.

Read the Agenda

Policy Advisory Council

The Policy Advisory Council is a forum for thought leaders in senior-level policy, advocacy, government and regulatory affairs, and commercial roles at industry, nonprofit, and other healthcare stakeholder organizations to support emerging research and public policy that will improve health care for women. Members have an opportunity to work collaboratively to develop positions, promote research, and create materials that benefit women’s health.

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Alzheimer’s Disease

Two-thirds of Alzheimer’s patients are women, and it is also the 5th leading cause of death in women. A growing body of research confirms that biological sex plays a role in disease risk, as well as presentation and progression of dementia. This program raises awareness about these sex differences and advocating for their consideration in future research and policies related to Alzheimer’s.

- Commentary: Biological Sex Differences in Alzheimer’s Preclinical Research: A Call to Action, Alzheimer’s & Dementia: Translational Research & Clinical Interventions

Autoimmune Skin Diseases

This program will focus on alopecia, atopic dermatitis, and psoriatic arthritis and the impact of these autoimmune skin diseases on women as patients and as caregivers. In the U.S., an estimated 6.8 million people have been diagnosed with alopecia, 18 million with atopic dermatitis, and 8 million with psoriatic arthritis.

- Roundtable and Public Forum, Summer 2021

Bone Health

About 54 million Americans have low bone mass, placing them at increased risk for osteoporosis. Of the estimated 10 million Americans with osteoporosis, 80% are women. About 1 in 2 women over age 50 will break a bone because of osteoporosis. A woman’s risk of breaking a hip is equal to her risk of breast, uterine, and ovarian cancer combined, making osteoporosis a huge area of need in women’s health.

- Report on Osteoporosis-Related Bone Fractures Reveals High Burden on Women and Society
- It’s Time for a Mood Change on Menopause

Endometriosis and Uterine Fibroids

The normalization of women’s pain and the stigmatization of menstrual issues have resulted in a lack of scientific innovation and public awareness for endometriosis, uterine fibroids, and related conditions. This program raises awareness of the gaps in research, diagnosis, treatment, and care for these diseases and related symptoms.

- Webinar: Endometriosis Awareness: Empowering Patients
- Public Forum: Focus on Fibroids: What Do Women Need for Better Care?
- Roundtable: Assessing Research Gaps and Unmet Needs in Uterine Fibroids

Fertility Options

Women want fertility options that offer better outcomes for women and babies, are accessible and cost-effective, and improve health equity for all women who want to become mothers. This program will explore the risks and benefits of different fertility options for women.

- Roundtable: Fertility Options for Women: The Need for Lower Costs, Better Outcomes, and Improved Health Equity, Summer 2021

SWHR ENDOMETRIOSIS TOOLKIT HELPS PATIENTS NAVIGATE THEIR CARE

VIEW THE TOOLKIT »
HPV-Related Diseases

Human papillomavirus (HPV) can cause cervical, oropharyngeal, vaginal, vulvar, and anal cancers. Regular screenings can help decrease the rate of cervical cancer, especially for older women who didn’t have the opportunity to get the HPV vaccine. This program raises awareness of the gaps in research, clinical practice, and patient education that need to be addressed to improve health outcomes in women with HPV pre-cancers and cancers.

Liver Health

The liver performs hundreds of functions vital to our health, including processing food, medicine, alcohol, and other toxins. Research shows clear differences in liver health and disease between women and men. This blog series raises awareness about women’s liver health issues, such as primary biliary cholangitis, a chronic and progressive autoimmune liver disease that overwhelmingly affects women.

Maternal and Infant Health Disparities

Maternal mortality rates in the U.S. are higher than anywhere else in the developed world, with Black and American Indian/Alaska Native women much more likely to die than white women. These stark racial disparities also hold true for infant mortality. This outreach campaign explores these disparities and related issues affecting underserved populations, including Black, Native American, and Hispanic mothers and babies.

Menopause

With life expectancy increasing, many women will spend a third to half of their lives postmenopausal. Most women experience multiple symptoms of menopause, including hot flashes, night sweats, bone loss, mood swings, and genitourinary syndrome. This program raises awareness of knowledge gaps and unmet needs related to the menopausal transition across areas of education, clinical care, research, and policy.
Migraine

Migraine is three times more common in women than men, and women tend to experience longer, more intense migraine attacks and have greater levels of migraine-related disability. This program engages, educates, and empowers patients, healthcare professionals, and healthcare decision-makers about the burden of migraine on women.

Webinar: Living Well with Migraine: Embracing Wellness in the Face of Chronic Disease

Patient Resources:
- Migraine Patient Toolkit: Living Well with Migraine
- Migraine Patient Toolkit: A Guide to Your Care

Noninvasive Prenatal Screening

Advancements in NIPS can benefit women’s health and highlight the need for women — regardless of risk, age, race/ethnicity, or health insurance coverage — to have access to appropriate screening technologies to support their family planning and reproductive plans. This program will explore how access to innovations in NIPS may benefit individuals and families who are pregnant or planning to become pregnant.

Webinar: Stakeholder Convening: Eliminating Barriers to Access and Reducing Health Disparities for Prenatal Screening Innovations, Summer 2021

Patient Resources:
- Migraine Patient Toolkit: Living Well with Migraine
- Migraine Patient Toolkit: A Guide to Your Care

Pre-pregnancy and Prenatal Expanded Carrier Screening

ECS allows for the screening of potentially hundreds of genetic conditions at once thanks to innovation in genetic technologies. These advancements are cost-effective and efficient tools that can help women make informed decisions about their reproductive health and pregnancy management. This program will address access and coverage issues for ECS innovations and improving health equity for all women, regardless of risk, age, or ethnic/racial background.

Webinar: Stakeholder Convening: Eliminating Barriers to Access and Reducing Health Disparities for Expanded Carrier Screening Innovations, Summer 2021

Patient Resources:
- Migraine Patient Toolkit: Living Well with Migraine
- Migraine Patient Toolkit: A Guide to Your Care

Vaccination Education

This public education, community outreach, and communications initiative will educate women from diverse communities, especially traditionally underserved and historically underrepresented populations, about the importance of vaccines in preventive health care for adults and children. As chief medical officers of the family, women need scientifically-based information on vaccines to make informed decisions to optimize their family’s health.

Webinar: Roundtable, Summer 2021

Vision Health

The majority of eye diseases affect women disproportionately compared to men. In the U.S., the majority of the 4.4 million Americans age 40 and older who are visually impaired or blind are female. This program raises awareness of sex and gender disparities in eye health and strategies for improving women’s eye health across the life span.

Webinar: Roundtable: Understanding Women’s Vision Health Across the Lifespan
Dedicated to all patients around the world, from different communities, with a focus on improving their health and well-being.

AbbVie proudly supports the Society for Women’s Health Research and their efforts to make a remarkable impact in women’s lives.

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Charlotte Owens, MD
Women’s health lead, U.S. medical affairs

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We care about women and women's health. And about doing our part to help them stay strong and healthy. And we are proud to support the work of SWHR.

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