



## Center Without Walls Program FORUM PANELISTS

**MS Forum and Webinar | Saturday, May 17, 2025**  
**Fairmont Century Plaza**  
**9:00 am Arrivals | 9:30 am Program Start**

**Also available via Zoom Webinar**

[https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_JOk5RSh9RXCyr1SMFPLxPg](https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_JOk5RSh9RXCyr1SMFPLxPg)

### **Christina Azevedo, M.D., USC**



Dr. Christina Azevedo is an Associate Professor of Neurology at the University of Southern California. She specializes in multiple sclerosis and other autoimmune disorders of the central nervous system. Dr. Azevedo earned her Bachelor's of Science from the University of Notre Dame and her medical degree from Oregon Health & Science University. She completed her neurology residency at Dartmouth, a Sylvia Lawry fellowship in clinical MS and Neuroimaging at Yale University, and a Master's degree in Public Health at Yale with a focus on Applied Biostatistics and Epidemiology. Her research focuses on brain atrophy as a surrogate marker for neurodegeneration, mechanisms of deep grey matter atrophy, and aging in MS. She has received research and training support from the

National Institutes of Health (NIH), the National MS Society, the Race to Erase MS, and the NIH-funded USC Clinical Translational Science Institute. She is a Harry Weaver Neuroscience Scholar of the National MS Society, a fellow of the American Academy of Neurology, and a member of the Alpha Omega Alpha Medical Honor Society.

### **David Hafler, M.D, Yale**



David A. Hafler, M.D. is the William S. and Lois Stiles Edgerly Professor and Chairman Department of Neurology and Professor of Immunobiology, Yale School of Medicine, and is the Neurologist-in-Chief of the Yale-New Haven Hospital. He graduated magna cum laude in 1974 from Emory University with combined B.S. and M.Sc. degrees in biochemistry, and the University of Miami School of Medicine in 1978. He then completed his internship in internal medicine at Johns Hopkins followed by a neurology residency at Cornell Medical Center-New York Hospital in New York. Dr. Hafler was trained in immunology at the Rockefeller University and then at Harvard where he joined the faculty in 1984 and later became the Breakstone Professorship of Neurology at Harvard and was a founding Associated Member of the Broad Institute at MIT. In 2009 he moved to Yale as the Chair of the

Department of Neurology. Dr. Hafler is a clinical scientist with a research interest in the mechanism of multiple sclerosis with over 400 publications in the field of MS, autoimmunity and immunology. He is a co-founder of the International MS Genetic Consortium a group that identified the genes causing MS. He has served as a member of the editorial boards for Journal of Clinical Investigation and the Journal of Experimental Medicine, and is co-founder of the Federation of Clinical Immunology Societies and leads the NIH Autoimmunity Prevention Center Grant at Yale. He was a Jacob Javits Merit Award Recipient from the NIH and has won many awards including Dystel Prize for MS research from the American Academy of Neurology, the University of Miami Annual Distinguished Alumni Award, the Raymond Adams Prize from the American Neurologic Association, and was the 2016 Frontier Lecturer at the AAN. Dr. Hafler has been elected to membership in the Alpha Omega Society, the American Society of Clinical Investigation, and the National Academy of Medicine.

### **Adam Kaplin, M.D, Ph.D., Co-founder, Director, CEO, CSO, CMO, Minerve Pharmaceuticals**

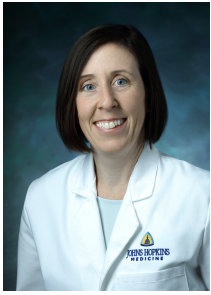


Dr. Adam Kaplin completed his undergraduate training at Yale University and his MD and PhD training at the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine. His research training experience includes having trained in the labs of two Nobel Laureates and completed his PhD and postdoctoral training in the Lab of Solomon Snyder, MD, who was the 2005 recipient of the National Medal of Science (the highest science honor in the United States). Dr. Kaplin, who maintains his Adjunct Faculty appointment at Johns Hopkins, was the Chief Psychiatric Consultant to the Johns Hopkins Multiple Sclerosis and Transverse Myelitis Centers. Dr. Kaplin investigated the

biological basis of the effects of the immune system on mood regulation and cognition, and he provided neuropsychiatric care to patients afflicted with such comorbidities. His research is focused on understanding the biological basis of depression and dementia and discovering new ways to diagnose prognosticate and treat these diseases. Dr. Kaplin worked

for Miralogx Pharmaceuticals, a scientific investigation and drug development company, where he helped launch three companies: MyMD, Mira, and Telomir Pharmaceuticals. In 2025 Dr. Kaplin co-founded Minerve Pharmaceuticals, a startup company focused on developing novel treatments for the cognitive impairment component of neurodegenerative diseases, such as Alzheimer's Disease and Multiple Sclerosis.

#### **Ellen M. Mowry, M.D., M.C.R., Johns Hopkins**



Dr. Ellen Mowry is Richard T. and Frances W. Johnson Professor of Neurology and Professor of Epidemiology at Johns Hopkins University. She completed her undergraduate degree in biology at Georgetown University, medical school at the University of Rochester, internship and neurology residency at the University of Pennsylvania, and a fellowship in multiple sclerosis and Master's degree in clinical research at the University of California, San Francisco. Her research focuses on environmental factors that influence the risk and prognosis of multiple sclerosis (MS) as well as on improving outcome measures for use in the clinic and in clinical trials. She also is/has been Principal Investigator (PI) or Co-PI of several investigator-initiated randomized trials, including Vitamin D to Ameliorate Multiple Sclerosis (VIDAMS), intranasal insulin for cognitive impairment in MS, Altering the Timing or Amount of Calories in MS (ATAC-MS), and the Traditional vs. Early Aggressive Therapy for MS (TREAT-MS) trials. Dr. Mowry also co-directs the Johns Hopkins MS Precision Medicine Center of Excellence and is Chief Medical Officer of Johns Hopkins inHealth.

#### **Nancy L. Sicotte, M.D., Cedars-Sinai**



Nancy L. Sicotte, MD, FAAN serves as Chair and Professor of Neurology in the Department of Neurology at Cedars-Sinai. She holds the Women's Guild Distinguished Chair in Neurology and is the founding Director of the Multiple Sclerosis and Neuroimmunology Program. Her research focuses on the use of advanced structural and functional imaging to study MS disease progression including cognitive impairment and depression. She is a founding member of the North American Imaging in MS (NAIMS) Cooperative, which utilizes state-of-the-art imaging approaches across multiple centers in the US and Canada to develop reliable imaging markers of disease progression in MS.

#### **Rhonda Voskuhl, M.D., UCLA**



Rhonda Voskuhl, M.D. received her MD from Vanderbilt University, completed neurology residency at the University of Texas Southwestern and fellowship at the National Institutes of Health. Dr. Voskuhl is a Professor of Neurology at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), the Director of the UCLA Multiple Sclerosis Program, holds the Jack H. Skirball Chair in MS Research, and is the Faculty Neurologist for the UCLA Comprehensive Menopause Care Program. In 2024, Voskuhl received the world's most prestigious award in MS, the John Dystel Prize, at the American Academy of Neurology. She also received the Rachel Horne Prize in Women's Health Research in MS in 2023, selected from researchers across the U.S., Europe, and Canada. Dr. Voskuhl attained a National Institutes of Health R35 Research Program Award in 2023, an eight year grant to only ten neuroscientists per year across the U.S. She received the Kenneth P. Johnson Memorial Lecture Award in 2019, and the Berlin Institute of Health Excellence Award for Sex and Gender Aspects in Health Research in 2018. Dr. Voskuhl was profiled in the #1 neurology journal (Lancet Neurology) in 2024 for her translational work from bedside (clinical observations) to bench (research) to bedside (novel clinical trials). The Voskuhl laboratory studies brain cell-specific and region-specific gene expression, comparing females versus males, as well as young versus old ages, to discover neuroprotective treatments for women and men during aging and MS. Dr. Voskuhl sees MS patients in the UCLA Neurology Clinic and healthy women with cognitive issues in the UCLA Comprehensive Menopause Care Program. Her clinical research focuses on a tailored estrogen type, dose, and timing to prevent MS disability worsening during menopause. As the lead inventor on over fifteen UCLA owned patents in the U.S. and Europe, she works with a company (CleopatraRX) and a nonprofit (The CleopatraRX Foundation).

### **Emmanuelle L. Waubant, M.D., Ph.D., UCSF**



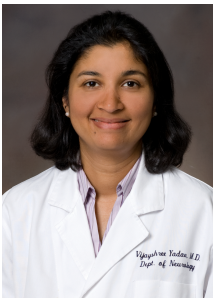
Emmanuelle L. Waubant, MD, Ph.D., received her medical degree at the University of Lille, France. She then trained in France as well as at the University of California, San Francisco (UCSF) in adult neurology, neuroimmunology, and MS clinical research. She is currently Professor of Neurology and Pediatrics at UCSF. She has served as the Race to Erase MS medical director since 2001. She also directs the Regional Pediatric MS Center at UCSF and is the President of ACTRIMS (the North American Committee on Treatment and Research in MS). Dr. Waubant serves or has served on the scientific professional advisory board, clinical care advisory board, and fellowship and research grant review committees of the National Multiple Sclerosis Society. She is the Chair of the Clinical Trial Task Force of the International Pediatric MS Study Group. She is a member of the International Pediatric MS Study Group Steering Committee. She also directs several translational research projects and mentors medical students, fellows, and junior faculty on various clinical, research, and career development aspects in the field of MS and related diseases. In 2018, Dr. Waubant started an international consortium (International Women in MS) to foster a diverse community of clinicians and scientists and contribute to mentoring junior investigators in the field of MS. Dr. Waubant's specific interests include the translation of promising agents from the bench to bedside to advance patients' care, and risk factors for MS susceptibility and disease modification in pediatric and adult MS.

### **Howard Weiner, M.D., Harvard**



Howard L. Weiner is the Robert L. Kroc Professor of Neurology at the Harvard Medical School, Director and Founder of the Partners MS Center, and Co-Director of the Ann Romney Center for Neurologic Diseases at Brigham & Women's Hospital in Boston. The Partners MS Center is the first integrated MS Center that combines clinical care, MRI imaging, and immune monitoring the MS patient as part of the 2000 patient CLIMB cohort study. He has pioneered immunotherapy in MS and has investigated immune mechanisms in nervous system diseases including MS, Alzheimer's Disease, ALS, stroke, and brain tumors. He has also pioneered the investigation of the mucosal immune system for the treatment of autoimmune and other diseases and the use of anti-CD3 to induce regulatory T cells for the treatment of these diseases. As part of his interest in the mucosal immune system, he is investigating the gut microbiome in MS. He is the author of the book CURING MS and the award-winning film documentary WHAT IS LIFE? THE MOVIE. In 2004, Harvard Medical School honored him with the establishment of the Howard L. Weiner Professorship of Neurologic Diseases. Dr. Weiner is the 2007 recipient of the John Dystel Prize for MS Research and the Koetser Memorial Prize for Brain Research. In 2012 he received the NIH Director's Transformative Research Award for investigating the innate immune system in Alzheimer's disease.

### **Vijayshree Yadav, M.D., Oregon Health Sciences**



Dr. Yadav is a MS Fellowship trained Board-Certified Neurologist and a Clinician-Scientist with joint appointments as a Professor of Neurology at Oregon Health & Science University (OHSU) and a Veterans Affairs Merit Grant Awardee at the Veterans Affairs Portland Health Care Services (VAPORHCS). She is the Director of the OHSU Multiple Sclerosis (MS) Center, a Staff Neurologist at the VAPORHCS and an Assistant Director of Clinical Care at the MS Center of Excellence-West (MSCoE) at the VAPORHCS. Dr. Yadav holds Endowed Professorship by Tykeson Family Foundation in Wellness Research since 2015. Dr. Yadav also serves as the Fellowship Training Director of the Joint MS and Neuroimmunology program at OHSU and VAPORHCS. She also holds a Master's degree in Clinical Research. Her research includes examining the role of Vascular Disease Risk Factors on brain

metabolism in people with MS using advanced brain imaging techniques. She is currently evaluating role of an oral antioxidant called Mitoquinone on fatigue in MS. She led a novel study evaluating role of low-fat diet in people with relapsing-remitting MS that showed significant improvement in fatigue. Her research has been funded by National Institute of Health, Department of Veterans Affairs, National MS Society, Private Foundations and Pharmaceutical Companies. Dr. Yadav's interest and research in Complementary and Alternative (CAM) therapies for MS has been recognized nationally and internationally. She has published several peer reviewed journal articles and regularly presents her research at national and international meeting.

### **Panelists with MS:**



### **Mark Barondess**



A lawyer for 37 years, Mr. Barondess has earned a well-established national reputation as a respected aggressive civil trial advocate. As the co-founding partner of the forty lawyer Los Angeles litigation boutique law firm, Miller Barondess, LLP, Mr. Barondess has developed a national stature of respect amongst members of the Bar and Judiciary, especially in the settlement or trial of complex high-profile litigation of matters in the civil litigation field and entertainment and family law practices. His high-profile clients have included a former major Presidential candidate, an Academy Award winning best actress, Emmy award winners, Grammy Award winners, Rock & Roll Hall of Fame Inductees and various sports legends including two Olympic Gold Medalists. In support of the community, Mr. Barondess is the Vice-Chairman, General Counsel and a Member of the Board of Directors of the We are Family Foundation, a not for profit organization founded by music legend Nile Rodgers, which is dedicated to the vision of a global family by creating and supporting programs that promote cultural diversity while nurturing and mentoring the vision, talents, and ideas of young people who are positively changing the world. He also serves on the Board of Ambassadors of The Johns Hopkins Project Restore, which strives to restore hope, restore function and restore the lives of patients like him and families suffering with transverse myelitis and multiple sclerosis.

### **Claudia Curry Hill, Moderator and Board Member**



Claudia Curry Hill was diagnosed with Primary Progressive MS over 30 years ago. An activist for women's health and the disabled, she is very active in founding and serving on Non-Profit and Community Boards and Committees, including the Race to Erase MS and Colorado, Wyoming MS Society Government Relations Committee, and is a spokesperson for Multiple Sclerosis. Claudia is married, the mother of three, and the owner of CCH Connections, a non-profit and event consulting group in Colorado. She believes that exercise, a positive attitude, and empowering yourself with all the information you can find to improve your quality of life.

### **Nancy Davis, Founder of Race to Erase MS**



Nancy Davis, one of five children, was born and raised in Denver, Colorado. In 1987 she moved to California and now resides in Los Angeles with her husband and children. She is an extremely dedicated philanthropist, jewelry and now clothing designer, and author. Nancy was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis at the age of 33 in 1991. After being told by her doctors that she would be "lucky" to operate a remote control on her TV, she realized she was too young and too busy to let the disease stop her life in its tracks. She was determined to devote her time, relationships, and resources to finding a cure. Nancy's hope, courage, and strength continue to inspire her to maintain a vibrant quality of life despite this chronic disease, but most of all, she remains positive, continues to live her life to the fullest, and is tireless in her efforts to find the cure for MS.

### **Chad King, Board Member**



True to the meaning of its name, A Great Big World encompasses the GRAMMY® Award winning artistry of Ian Axel and Chad King as well as the duo's songwriting, scoring, collaborations, and projects across film, television, animation, theater, and beyond. The world fell in love with their music across a series of acclaimed albums. During 2013, A Great Big World delivered "Say Something" with Christina Aguilera. It notably reached 6x-Platinum status, gathered over 1 billion streams, and garnered a 2015 GRAMMY® for "Best Pop Duo/Group Performance." Their 2014 full-length debut, *Is There Anybody Out There?*, debuted in the Top 3 of the Billboard 200 and went Gold. Meanwhile, they continued to captivate with *When The Morning Comes* [2015] and *Particles* [2021], and in February 2025 released a new EP "then there were sparks". As creators who can write in either pop, folk, or even classical, their presence has unassumingly coursed through popular culture. Among countless syncs and licenses, the cast of *Glee* famously performed their song "This

Is The New Year" in a 2013 episode, as well as their song "Rockstar" shortly thereafter. During 2018, they penned "Fall On Me" for Andrea Bocelli and his son Matteo Bocelli, and the duet graced the soundtrack and end credits of the film *The Nutcracker and the Four Realms*. They later wrote "Return to Love" for Andrea Bocelli and Ellie Goulding and have since collaborated and released music with Ingrid Michaelson and Jason Mraz. In 2023, they contributed music to popular



children's brand Slumberkins® and most recently released "Nothing's Impossible" featuring Rachel Platten, a song the duo wrote for Studio Ponoc's feature film, *The Imaginary*. The pair is currently writing the musical adaptation of *Wonder*, based on the novel by R.J. Palacio and the Lionsgate film. Ian and Chad maintain a commitment to vulnerable, clever, earnest, and heartfelt songwriting above all. Chad King was a senior at New York University ('07) when he was diagnosed with Relapsing Remitting Multiple Sclerosis. Since his diagnosis, he has continued to adapt to the challenges MS has brought to his life. Chad maintains an optimistic spirit and an unwavering commitment to his health and well-being.