

Community Brain Health Summit



Sept 19, 2026,
10 am-1 pm

The Kroc Center
1250 W 119th St,
Chicago, IL 60643

**Center for
Better Aging**
at St. Bernard Hospital



**KROC CENTER
CHICAGO**



**Rush
Alzheimer's
Disease
Center**



The Healthy Aging & Alzheimer's
Research Care Center

This event made possible by these sponsors & vendors

Agenda

Moderator: Kimberly Dean – Founder of Beyond the Burden and committee member

10:00 AM – Registration & Community Resource Fair. Check-in.
Visit community vendors and brain health resources
Blood pressure screenings and wellness information

10:30 AM – Welcome & Opening Remarks

10:45 AM – Expert Panel Discussion. The Pillars of Brain Health

Our panel of experts will discuss practical, evidence-based lifestyle strategies that support lifelong brain health and may help reduce the risk of cognitive decline.

Physical Activity (Exercise) – Ms. Sheryl

Nutrition (Brain-Healthy Diet) – Regina Hopkins, MSN, APRN

Cognitive Training – Dr. Renarda Jones

Social Engagement – Ms. Darlene Humphrey

Health Monitoring (Blood Pressure, Cholesterol, Diabetes & Other Risk Factors) – Dr. Neelum Aggarwal

11:15 AM – Real Stories from Research. U.S. POINTER Study Participants

Hear from two U.S. POINTER Study participants as they share their personal experiences participating in brain health research, what inspired them to join, and why community participation in research matters.



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Agenda

11:30 AM – Live Audience Q&A

Ask questions and engage directly with our panelists and study participants.

12:00 PM – Move for Your Brain!

Join Ms. Sheryl for a fun, interactive physical activity session demonstrating simple exercises that support brain health and overall wellness.

12:15 PM – Vendor & Community Resource Break

Take time to:

- Visit community organizations and health vendors
- Receive wellness resources
- Learn about local brain health programs
- Connect with fellow attendees

12:30 PM – Complimentary Lunch

Enjoy a complimentary lunch while networking with fellow attendees, speakers, community partners, and vendors.

Special remarks from LaJuana Weathers (SuperAger Project).

12:50 PM – Raffles

Celebrate the morning with exciting raffle prizes and closing acknowledgments.

With special thanks to our committee members: Darlene Humphrey, Kimberly Dean, Dr. Karen Graham, Judy Phillips, Ingrid Fowler, and Phyllis Timpo.

1:00 PM – Event Concludes

Thank you for joining us in advancing brain health through education, community, and research. Together, we can build healthier brains and healthier communities.



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DRN Founder/Summit Host Renarda Jones, PhD

Dr. Renarda Jones also known as Dr. Ren is the founder of Diverse Research Now (DRN), a nonprofit organization established to address the lack of diversity in clinical trials. DRN's mission is to educate, empower, and engage communities that have been underrepresented in clinical research, breaking down barriers to participation and fostering trust between researchers and the communities they serve.



In addition, Dr. Ren is the host of the Voices of Inclusive Research Podcast, a platform dedicated to bridging the gap between researchers and the community. Through the podcast, she highlights the lived experiences of underrepresented individuals in clinical research, fosters open conversations about the challenges and opportunities in diversifying research, and shares community-driven insights for improving health equity.

Dr. Ren's work is rooted in a passion for transforming clinical research into a space where diversity and inclusion are the norm, not the exception. She is dedicated to normalizing research conversations, empowering communities through education, and creating systemic change in how clinical trials are conducted.

Kimberly Dean **Event Moderator | Founder, Beyond the Burden Caregivers Foundation**

With more than 20 years of experience in the nonprofit and health insurance fields, Ms. Dean began her career as a life skills instructor at Jane Addams Hull House, helping individuals re-enter the workforce. Her path to caregiver advocacy was deeply personal: while caring for her own loved ones, she juggled doctor appointments, medications, emotional stress, and financial strain, and found that most caregiver resources felt clinical and impersonal.



That experience inspired her to create Raising Raisins, a community built on compassion and understanding, named in honor of the love and resilience passed down by her parents — because just as a raisin holds the sweetness of the fruit it once was, caregivers carry the beauty of the past while preserving the ones they love.

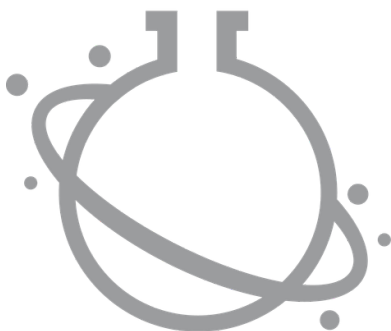
Through peer-led support circles, wellness workshops, resource navigation, and educational events, her mission is simple: to make sure no caregiver ever feels invisible again. Ms. Dean is a valued member of today's event committee, and we are honored to have her as our moderator.

Neelum Aggarwal, MD

Dr. Neelum Aggarwal, MD, is a board-certified cognitive neurologist, clinical trialist and professor in the Department of Neurological Sciences at Rush University Medical Center. She is the Senior Examining Neurologist for the Rush Alzheimer's Disease Center Clinical Core and the Cardiology Cognitive Clinic at the Rush Heart Center for Women, where she also serves as the Center's Research Director. Aggarwal's clinical interests lie in the diagnosis and clinical management of people experiencing changes in cognitive function, mild cognitive, vascular cognitive impairment, and Alzheimer's disease.



Dr. Aggarwal is co-investigator and neurologist for the MIND Study (Mediterranean Intervention for Neurodegenerative Delay) and Co-Principal Investigator for the Chicago-based Community Engagement for Early Recognition and Immediate Action in Stroke (CEERIAS) grant, a study that addresses the socioeconomic, race/ethnicity and sex and gender disparities in stroke awareness, barriers to health care access in Chicago's minority communities.



Regina Hopkins, MSN, APRN

Regina Hopkins, MSN, APRN

Director of Health Education & Community Health Leader

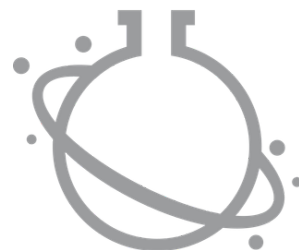
Regina Hopkins is a board-certified Advanced Practice Registered Nurse and Director of Health Education, dedicated to advancing health equity and wellness in



Chicago's South Side communities. She earned her Master of Science in Nursing, graduating with honors, and holds certification as a Family Nurse Practitioner.

With more than a decade of clinical and community health experience, Ms. Hopkins has devoted her career to expanding access to quality, whole-person care in underserved communities. Her background includes practice with Chicago Family Health Center and affiliations with Roseland Community Hospital, Advocate Trinity Hospital, and OSF HealthCare Little Company of Mary Medical Center. As a community health leader, she designs and delivers health education programs that empower individuals and families to take charge of their well-being through prevention, chronic disease management, and healthy lifestyle choices.

Ms. Hopkins is passionate about translating evidence-based health guidance into practical, everyday strategies. She joins today's expert panel to share how a brain-healthy diet can help protect cognitive function, support overall wellness, and reduce the risk of cognitive decline.



Cherl Austin

Healthy Lifestyle Coach and Trainer
Cherl Austin is a retired State of Illinois Director with extensive experience in leadership, education, and community wellness. Currently, she is on staff at the Salvation Army Kroc Center, where she works in the Fitness and Education Departments at the Kroc Center,



Cherl has developed two of the largest fitness classes and served on planning committees to integrate innovative programs for informational and educational purposes. With a background in management and social services, Cherl has held roles as a Manager at City Colleges, where she oversaw a diverse business and industry caseload, and as a Social Worker with Metropolitan Family Services, where she provided services tailored to seniors and their unique needs.

Her expertise includes healthy lifestyle promotion, fitness instruction, and nutrition education, and she is passionate about helping individuals and communities improve their overall well-being.

Thank you to our sponsors and vendors!

Thank you to our community representatives,
volunteers and our event committee!

Thank you to all our committee members: Darlene
Humphrey, Kimberly Dean, Dr. Karen Graham, Judy
Phillips, Ingrid Fowler, and Phyllis Timpo.

Thank you to our beloved community members
for attending our summit today!

We promise to continue to ensure you are included
in the latest brain health research information so
you can live your best golden years.



Contact Us



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