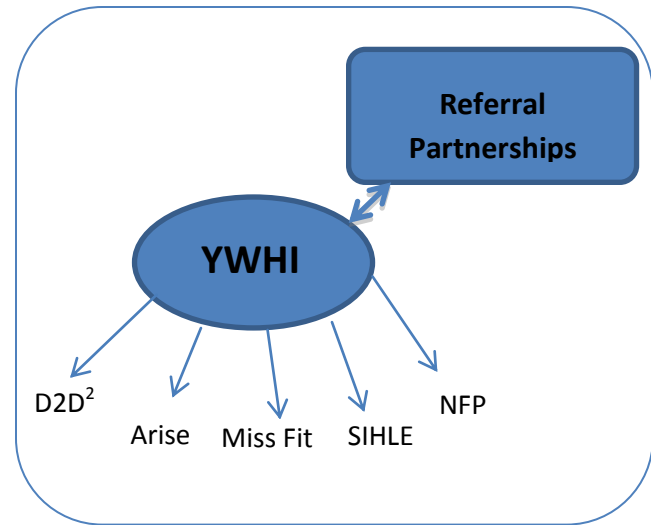


# Young Women's Health Initiative

## A New Cycle. A Different Circle. A Revolution of Urban Health.

Founded in December, 2009, the Young Women's Health Initiative (YWHI) is a Chicago-based umbrella organization under the auspices of Mercy's Family Health Center. YWHI governs multiple community-based programs with the goal of creating a paradigm shift in the behaviors and attitudes not only among young women, but also among health care providers and policy makers.

Specifically, YWHI combines evidence-based programs and collaborative partnerships to revolutionize the social, sexual, and reproductive health behavior and care for girls and young women on Chicago's South side. Committed to an immediate end to the traditional inequities in urban healthcare, YWHI erases longstanding disparities and radically improves the healthcare and wellness of young urban women.



YWHI Medical Director, Dr. Karen A. Scott, is a board-certified OB/GYN at Mercy Hospital and Medical Center. Dr. Scott, who has long had a special interest in adolescent gynecology and pregnancy, is firmly committed to actively discovering ways to promote a brighter, healthier future for urban young women. Given her clinical background, it was important to Dr. Scott that all YWHI programs have proven effectiveness.

In a nutshell, "evidence based" means that the program's development and implementation are based upon the best practices of similar programs that have undergone stringent evaluation and/or scientific study where data is collected and analyzed to determine what does and doesn't work. Further, each program is continually evaluated to ensure that outcomes are in alignment with those of the reference model; if the results fall short, the program is promptly modified. This is the best way to ensure that the program will have immediate benefit for the target population and remain fiscally responsible.

YWHI represents girls and young women throughout the reproductive cycle: non pregnant (preconception), pregnant, and into parenting (interconception) The programs under YWHI are also strategically coordinated to tackle multiple problem areas in the urban community, including reproductive health, mental and behavioral health, and physical fitness. With centralized leadership, YWHI programs can refer amongst each other as well as to other partner organizations. Current YWHI programs include:

**NFP (Nurse-Family Partnership®)** – NFP is a national, evidence-based maternal and child health program for first-time, low-income mothers that is centered around nurse home visits from early pregnancy through the child's second birthday. The most heavily researched program of its' kind, NFP has proven, multi-generational benefits.

**Miss Fit** - Developed with a Doctor of Physical Therapy and Certified Perinatal Fitness Instructor, this program provides education and fitness training customized for perinatal teens and young women. The goal is to increase physical activity and provide nutrition and weight management education to young mothers in the months before, during and after conception.

**Arise** – A collaboration among a board certified OB/GYN, a Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor, and the Ounce Infant Mental Health Learning Group, this program builds and enhances home visiting program and staff capacity to support the healthy social and emotional development and respond to the mental health needs of pregnant and parenting young mothers and their children ages 0 – 2.

**SIHLE** (Sisters Informing, Healing, Living, Empowering) – Working directly with SIHLE founder Dr. Ralph DiClemente and his master trainers, this peer-led group intervention reduces high sexual risk behavior, STDs, and pregnancy. Specifically, SIHLE provides female teens with four 4-hour sessions emphasizing ethnic and gender pride, HIV knowledge, communication, condom use skills, and healthy relationships.

**Day to Day Daddy** – Conceived and developed in collaboration with university experts, this program provides support for young fathers. This program also serves as a vehicle through which to gain insight into the experiences and perspectives of young, low income, first-time fathers regarding their involvement in pregnancy-related clinical health services.

**PASS** (Partnership for Academic Support for Students) - An academic support program developed with an expert in educational psychology and research, with a focus on the clarifying the rights of pregnant and parenting students under Title IX, developing support and guidance for schools, and developing academic resources for mothers.

For any client of Chicago South Side NFP, the relationship between the mom and her Nurse Home Visitor is maintained as she participates in most other YWHI programs.

YWHI is in the Mercy Medical - Chatham building – 8541 S. State Street, Suite 1A. For additional information, contact: Karen A. Scott, MD, FACOG, YWHI Medical Director, at 815.514.6035 or email [YWHI@YWHIChicago.org](mailto:YWHI@YWHIChicago.org).