



In the Health Center

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— Dr. Cheryl E. Woodson

The small things Dr. Cheryl Woodson does for her patients make a clear difference. She gives them calendars that show medication doses and times. Sometimes, she tapes pills to the instruction sheets so patients can recognize the medications easily. In her waiting room, patients find a library of books on health and self-empowerment instead of a television.

Woodson first saw patients who were confused by their doctors when she was in medical school.

“People couldn’t fully participate in their health care because they didn’t understand,” says Woodson. “It also bothered me that older patients weren’t receiving certain therapies just because of the day they came onto

this planet. I decided then to work with older patients and teach geriatrics so I could influence other doctors to give better care to older adults.”

After 20 years of medical practice, Woodson’s dream of a center that gives fair, quality care to all adults came true. In 2001, she opened Woodson Center for Adult HealthCare in Chicago Heights, Illinois. The center’s motto is “age is not a disease.”

Every Wednesday, Woodson Center provides geriatric assessments. These evaluations look at physical health, memory and the ability to stay independent. The center blends traditional medicine with other therapies, such as nutrition, mental health, meditation and massage. There is a strong focus on exercise, including tae kwon do, in which Woodson holds a second-degree black belt.

Woodson coordinates care with psychologists, social workers and other medical specialists who can help the patient. Afterward, she holds a family meeting.

“Health literacy is an important part of my work,” says Woodson. “It isn’t only about education levels or which languages are spoken; it’s about all types of communication. I take time to explain things clearly. The whole family learns exactly what kind of care is needed, and they find out how to do it right.”

At the end of the meeting, everyone knows what the future looks like for the patient and the family.

“If anyone leaves my office without a clear understanding of what they need to do to improve their health, I haven’t done my job,” says Woodson. “When people know what’s going on with their bodies, they can make better health care decisions.”

Woodson also offers medical care to younger adults and caregivers. She understands caregiver stress. Woodson was a professional caregiver for 20 years. She also was a caregiver for 10 years to her mother, who died of Alzheimer’s disease.

Woodson shares insights in her new book, *To Survive Caregiving: A Daughter’s Experience, A Doctor’s Advice on Finding Hope, Help and Health*. The book helps caregivers protect their health, finances and relationships while providing great care.

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
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Fact Number 8

Many people 65 and older have significant difficulty reading and understanding medical information that is pertinent to their health.

1 1879: Mary Eliza Mahoney graduates from New England Hospital for Women and Children, becoming the first black professional nurse in America.	2 1924: James Baldwin, author of <i>Go Tell It on the Mountain</i> , <i>The Fire Next Time</i> and <i>Another Country</i> , born.
3 1800: Gabriel Prosser leads slave revolt in Richmond, Virginia.	4 1810: Abolitionist Robert Purvis born.
5 1962: Nelson Mandela, South African freedom fighter, imprisoned. He was not released until 1990.	6 1965: President Lyndon B. Johnson signs Voting Rights Act, outlawing literacy test for voting eligibility in the South.
7 1907: Ralph Bunche, first African American Nobel prize winner, born. 1989: Congressman Mickey Leland dies in plane crash during a humanitarian mission to Ethiopia.	8 2005: John H. Johnson, founder and publisher of <i>Ebony</i> and <i>Jet</i> magazines, dies.
9 1936: Jesse Owens wins fourth gold medal at Summer Olympics in Berlin.	10 1989: Gen. Colin Powell is nominated chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, the first African American to hold this post.
11 1872: Solomon Carter Fuller, acknowledged as first black psychiatrist, born. 1921: Alex Haley, author of <i>Roots</i> , born.	12 1977: Steven Biko, leader of Black Consciousness Movement in South Africa, arrested.
13 1981: Reagan administration undertakes its review of 30 Federal regulations, including rules on civil rights to prevent job discrimination.	14 1989: First National Black Theater Festival held in Winston-Salem, North Carolina.
15 1888: Granville T. Woods patents electromechanical brake. 2007: Max Roach, first jazz musician honored with a MacArthur Fellowship, dies.	16 1922: Author Louis E. Lomax born.
17 1849: Lawyer-activist Archibald Henry Grimké, who challenged segregationist policies of President Woodrow Wilson, born.	18 1859: Harriet Wilson’s <i>Our Nig</i> is first novel published by a black writer.
19 1954: Dr. Ralph J. Bunche named undersecretary of United Nations.	20 1993: Dr. David Satcher named director of the Centers for Disease Control.
21 1904: Bandleader and composer William “Count” Basie born.	22 1880: Cartoonist George Herriman born.
23 1926: Carter Woodson, historian, author, inaugurates Negro History Week.	24 1950: Judge Edith Sampson named first black delegate to United Nations.
25 1925: A. Phillip Randolph founds Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters.	26 1946: Composer, singer and producer Valerie Simpson Ashford born.
27 1935: Mary McLeod Bethune founds National Council of Negro Women. 1963: W.E.B. DuBois, scholar, civil rights activist and founding father of the NAACP, dies.	28 1963: Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. delivers “I Have A Dream” speech during March on Washington, D.C.
29 1920: Saxophonist Charlie “Bird” Parker born.	30 1983: Lt. Col. Guion S. Bluford Jr. becomes the first African American astronaut in space.