July 4, 2018

The American Medical Women’s Association (AMWA) is honored to be hosting the Centennial Congress of the Medical Women’s International Association (MWIA).

Nearly one hundred years ago, MWIA was founded at the Waldorf Astoria Hotel, then located at the site of the current Empire State Building in New York City. The American Women’s Hospitals, a committee of the Medical Women’s National Association (later renamed AMWA), was hosting a special dinner to honor AWH physicians who had served abroad in France during WWI and to recognize the foreign medical women who were in town for the International Conference of Women Physicians, held under the auspices of the YWCA. There were 141 guests representing 16 nationalities. It was during this meeting that the idea for an international association for women in medicine was born. Just a few days later, on October 25, 1919, a committee of 12 elected representatives met again at the Waldorf Astoria Hotel to strategize. A constitution was adopted and officers elected. AMWA leader, Dr. Esther Pohl Lovejoy, was elected the first president of MWIA.

Over the past century, MWIA has had a rich and vibrant history, speaking out on issues of importance to women in medicine, including work-life balance, maternity leave and career progression, as well as global health issues such as maternal and infant mortality, women’s reproductive health, and violence against women and girls. Congresses have been held every few years to share medical knowledge and build international relations. We are thrilled to carry on this tradition and welcome our global colleagues back to New York to attend the centenary celebrations of MWIA. May this be a time to reflect on our shared history, exchange medical knowledge, and build collegial relationships.

We look forward to an exciting and memorable Congress.

In peace, health, and human rights,

Connie Newman, MD, FACP, FAHA, FAMWA
AMWA President 2018-2019

Roberta Gebhard, DO, FAMWA
AMWA President 2019-2020

Eliza Lo Chin, MD, MPH, FACP, FAMWA
AMWA Executive Director

Padmini Murthy, MD, MPH, FRSPH, FAMWA
MWIA Vice-President of North America