



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **ILLINOIS SAFE SCHOOLS ALLIANCE AND PUBLIC HEALTH INSTITUTE OF METROPOLITAN CHICAGO ANNOUNCE INTENTION TO MERGE**

*CHICAGO, IL – September 6, 2018*—The Board of Directors for the Illinois Safe Schools Alliance (Alliance) and Public Health Institute of Metropolitan Chicago (PHIMC) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) which expresses their intent to merge in December 2018. The two organizations have been meeting for the last several months to explore a potential partnership and are excited about this new endeavor.

In the Spring of 2017, following the announcement of the loss of significant grant funding from the State of Illinois, the Alliance met with funders and expressed their intention to look for an organizational partner that would help support the administrative operations while maintaining and expanding the programmatic outreach of the statewide organization.

Since January, the Alliance has met with local and national organizations to explore a partnership that would provide long term program sustainability and a stronger infrastructure while preserving the essence of the organization's longstanding core work of policy, public education, and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Questioning (LGBTQ) youth organizing.

In late Spring, it became clear that a partnership would be mutually beneficial between the Alliance and PHIMC. Over the summer, the two organizations have worked on a due diligence process and have executed an MOU with the intention of merging in December of this year. Once the due diligence process is completed, the Alliance and PHIMC expect to sign legally binding documents and begin integrating operations.

"We are very excited to move forward in our partnership with PHIMC. We have been so impressed with the depth and breadth of the organization's work and the many ways it

complements our focus on the safety, health, and well-being of LGBTQ youth,” said Mary F. Morten, Board Chair of the Alliance.

For more than 20 years, PHIMC has developed partnerships that enhance organizational capacity and build public health infrastructure. PHIMC guides resources, programs, and attention to health issues and populations most in need. The organization supports collective impact that promotes health equity and access to care while underscoring the intersection of health care and public health.

PHIMC will soon launch a new strategic plan and sees the Alliance’s mission as wholly consistent with the goals developed by PHIMC’s board and staff. These goals include promoting health equity and affirming care for all people, particularly those most marginalized by oppression, building public health capacity to respond to existing and emerging issues, and increasing the skills of the public health workforce.

“PHIMC is thrilled to be moving towards a merger with the Alliance,” stated Karen A. Reitan, PHIMC Executive Director. “Their work advocating with and for LGBTQ youth to create safe and affirming schools and communities is critically important. The connection between supportive school environments and health is indisputable and PHIMC looks forward to supporting and growing this work.”

#### [About Public Health Institute of Metropolitan Chicago](#)

Public Health Institute of Metropolitan Chicago (PHIMC) enhances the capacity of public health and health care systems to promote health equity and expand access to services. Through organizational development, system transformation, fiscal management, and program implementation, PHIMC leads efforts to strengthen public health infrastructure in Illinois

#### [About Illinois Safe Schools Alliance](#)

The mission of the Illinois Safe Schools Alliance (the Alliance) is to promote safety, support and healthy development for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning (LGBTQ) youth, in Illinois schools and communities, through advocacy, education, youth organizing and research.

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