



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Illinois Safe Schools Alliance Merges with Public Health Institute of Metropolitan Chicago

Chicago, IL – After almost a year of integrating operations, the Boards of Directors for [Public Health Institute of Metropolitan Chicago](#) (PHIMC) and [Illinois Safe Schools Alliance](#) (the Alliance) are delighted to announce their merger. Going forward, the Alliance will be a program of PHIMC. The two organizations signed a memorandum of understanding in September 2018, expressing their intent to merge. Since then, PHIMC and the Alliance have worked together to consolidate daily operations, unite strategic goals, and create a strong, dynamic partnership. Last month, in a unanimous vote, leaders of both organizations approved the merger.

“PHIMC is thrilled to finalize this merger with the Alliance,” said Karen A. Reitan, PHIMC Executive Director. “Their critical work advocating with and for LGBTQ youth to create welcoming, affirming school environments complements our mission to promote health equity in Illinois communities. The link between supportive schools and health outcomes is undeniable. With this merger, PHIMC and the Alliance have officially integrated our organizations; we are proud to continue this work together.”

“We are excited to officially become part of PHIMC. From the very beginning of our conversations we have been encouraged by their deep interest and willingness to conduct this process in a manner that upholds the values and mission of the Alliance, while providing a new partnership which will elevate our work on behalf of LGBTQ youth,” said Mary F. Morten, Board Chair of the Alliance.

In the spring of 2017, facing reduced 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 administrative operations while maintaining and expanding their statewide programmatic outreach.

The Alliance sought a partnership that would provide long term program sustainability and a stronger infrastructure, while preserving the organization's longstanding dedication to policy, public education, and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning (LGBTQ) youth organizing. They found such a home at PHIMC.

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 healthcare and public health.

PHIMC recently launched a new strategic plan and sees the Alliance's mission as wholly consistent with the goals developed by PHIMC's board and staff, the first of which is to reduce health inequities caused by institutionalized and systemic oppression and discrimination. Further goals include promoting 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 Illinois' public health workforce.

About Public Health Institute of Metropolitan Chicago

Public Health Institute of Metropolitan Chicago (PHIMC) enhances the capacity of public health and healthcare 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. Learn more about PHIMC's mission and initiatives [here](#).

About Illinois Safe Schools Alliance

The mission of 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. Learn more about the Alliance's mission and work [here](#).