



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

December 3, 2019

**MEDIA CONTACT:**

RoiAnn Phillips, Communications Director  
roiann.phillips@phimc.org  
312.629.2988, ext.142 (office) or 708.466.2650 (mobile)

**Getting to Zero community by community:**  
*HIV prevention services in suburban Cook County*

Chicago, IL – In keeping with the 2019 World AIDS Day theme of “Ending the HIV/AIDS Epidemic: Community by Community,” Public Health Institute of Metropolitan Chicago (PHIMC) applauds our community partners, a total of sixteen community-based organizations and local health departments providing HIV prevention services for residents of suburban Cook County. These sixteen entities comprise the 2020 HIV Prevention Regional Implementation Group (RIG) for Illinois Region 8, which encompasses all of suburban Cook County except for the City of Chicago. Our community partners serve people who are living with or vulnerable to HIV, through support from an Illinois Department of Public Health grant which PHIMC coordinates and oversees.

As of January 2019, there were over 5,000 people living with HIV/AIDS in suburban Cook County. This funding allows partners to provide HIV prevention services in over 30 communities in suburban Cook County. Since July 2019, RIG partners have conducted more than 630 HIV tests, with 93% delivered to prioritized populations at highest risk of HIV. RIG projects aim to reduce the number of new HIV infections, increase access to care, improve health outcomes for people living with HIV, diversify the HIV workforce to better reflect the epidemic, and reduce HIV-related health disparities. These priorities align with the High Impact Prevention (HIP) strategies and interventions to achieve the National HIV/AIDS Strategy (NHAS) 2020 goals and the Illinois Getting to Zero Plan.

“Our partners’ tactics are wide-ranging and community-specific,” says Karen A. Reitan, Executive Director of PHIMC, the agency which administers the grant. “Some are using HIV testing vans and strategic community partnerships to provide services in areas where there are not permanent fixed locations offering HIV prevention services. Others advertise on social media sites and hook-up apps to engage communities at the highest risk in their HIV prevention services.”

In recognizing World AIDS Day this year, PHIMC is encouraged by the work of these tremendous partners supporting communities in Region 8 including: AIDS Healthcare Foundation with CALOR and South Side Help Center Affiliates, Aunt Martha’s Health and Wellness, Brothers Health Collective, Chicago Center for HIV Elimination, Chicago Recovery Alliance, Christian Community Health Center, City of Evanston – Health and Human Services Department, Corazon Community Services, Howard Brown Health, Making A Daily Effort (M.A.D.E.), Open Door Health Center, Proactive Community Services, Puerto Rican Cultural Center, Renz Addiction Counseling Center, South Suburban HIV/AIDS Regional Clinics, and Village of Oak Park Health Department.

###