

Thank You

Dear Friends,

PHIMC's last non-COVID focused newsletter feels like it was sent long ago, but in truth, it has only been five months. Since then, the world has changed so dramatically that it can hardly be recognized. We are living in a global pandemic occurring at the same time as so many in the United States are demanding an end to racism and the injustice it creates.

On behalf of PHIMC's staff and board, please accept my thanks for all your hard work -- whether you are treating patients in an ICU, protesting in support of justice, marshalling public health resources, supporting the Black Lives Matter movement, engaging in COVID case-finding, or doing the personal work needed to move closer to being anti-racist -- you are making Illinois a stronger state. When our communities are facing so much uncertainty, knowing that you are our partners gives me confidence that we will make it through these dual crises and emerge into a healthier and more just environment.

In the midst of all this, PHIMC's work has continued stronger than ever. We recently said thank you to this year's AmeriCorps members, many of whom completed their service terms earlier this month, and we offer thanks to staff of the Illinois Helpline for Opioids and Other Substances, who -- without interruption -- have continued to support people addressing substance use disorder in the middle of a pandemic. We also appreciate the impact Illinois Safe Schools Alliance has on PHIMC and celebrate the merger of our two organizations exactly one year ago on July 15!

I hope you will take a moment to read these and other highlights of PHIMC's recent work with partners across the state, and join us in welcoming new staff and new VISTA volunteers who have joined our ranks. If you would like to reply with feedback or questions, please know that we are always happy to hear from you and someone on our team will respond.



Sincerely,

Karen A. Reitan
President & Chief Executive Officer

Trying to Find Our Way to Justice

"Racism is a public health crisis. That cannot be denied. Study after study documents the disproportionate burden of chronic and infectious diseases among people of color. The chronic stress of being black in America, particularly among women, has been shown to

contribute to heart disease, hypertension, and premature death. In Chicago's wealthy and predominately white Streeterville community, residents live to be 90 on average, while nine miles south, in Chicago's impoverished and predominantly black Englewood community, residents live only to 60. Everywhere we look, the connection between racism and poor health is clear.

"Like many of you, the board and staff of PHIMC hope that this will be a galvanizing moment for the United States as it lays bare the impact of deliberately institutionalized racism. Our hearts are broken for the family of George Floyd and all the families who have lost their sons and daughters at the hands of police. Our blood boils at the injustice of white women calling the police when black people are bird watching, jogging, picnicking, selling lemonade, walking, or engaging in the panoply of activities that comprise daily life. Our souls cry out for a national sea change that transforms our structures of injustice and lays a new foundation for equity.

". . . Like you, we are trying to find our way to justice."

~ Excerpt from [Statement by PHIMC President and CEO Karen A. Reitan](#),
published June 2, 2020

Illinois Helpline: Expanded Services



The Illinois Helpline for Opioids & Other Substances at 833-2FINDHELP and [HELPLINEIL.ORG](https://www.helplineil.org), seeks to reduce barriers to treatment and recovery by providing help at any time, at any step, for anyone.

Illinois Helpline for Opioids & other Substances is a central referral system to connect people to substance use disorder services throughout the state. It's free, confidential, available 24 hours a day, and can be used to find resources for yourself or someone else. "Help is Here." **The Helpline is a resource and referral center, not a Crisis or Hotline.**

PHIMC manages promotion for the Illinois Helpline.

Phone: On April 1, 833-2FINDHELP expanded to serve as a central access point for Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) benefits, services, and support, including information on the State response to COVID-19. Help for opioids and other substances is option #1 and all calls are answered by caring, non-judgmental staff who are trained, certified Screening and Information Specialists, often with lived experience.

Website: The website at [HELPLINEIL.ORG](https://www.helplineil.org) connects people to substance use disorder services through the use of a self-guided assessment or live chat feature. [HELPLINEIL.ORG](https://www.helplineil.org) has been updated with [COVID-19 resources](#), including links to online support and recovery meetings.

Provider Portal: The Helpline also serves as a resource for providers through the use of the [Provider Portal](#), also at [HELPLINEIL.ORG](https://www.helplineil.org). This feature allows Providers to update important information, such as walk-in and operating hours, services provided, and availability of beds, making sure that the Helpline users have access to the most current information. Helpline staff is in

the process of reaching out to Illinois providers to encourage and offer support in updating the database. If you are a provider of substance use disorder services and have questions about the Helpline, please contact Bryan Gooding at bryan.gooding@phimc.org

Learn more and spread the word. If you would like more information or to request a speaker or training for your organization, staff, support group, health fair, or outreach event, PHIMC can help. For materials, information, and support, reach out to Bryan Gooding at bryan.gooding@phimc.org.

PHIMC welcomes Prevention Coordinator Bryan Gooding, who is taking over Illinois Helpline responsibilities from Nate Muckley. The Helpline extends a big thank you to Nate for his work in developing relationships and supporting the program during his tenure. Nate has transitioned to a new role at PHIMC.

AmeriCorps Seeks Host Sites and Members - Apply now!

Apply to become a Host Site. Public Health Institute of Metropolitan Chicago (PHIMC) seeks applications from organizations interested in hosting AmeriCorps members for 2020-2021 as part of the National Health Corps Chicago (NHC Chicago) or Substance Use Disorder (SUD) Allies program. For more information on becoming a host site, please visit bit.ly/AmeriCorps20phimc.

Apply to become a Member. Substance Use Disorder (SUD) Allies and National Health Corps Chicago (NHC Chicago) are still accepting applications for the upcoming service term! These AmeriCorps programs provide individuals with the opportunity to gain hands-on experience in public health and to develop professionally. To apply for the August 2020 program year, visit bit.ly/AmeriCorpsPHIMC.

Member positions will adapt to the pandemic needs and stay at home orders. In-person and remote activities are available throughout the duration of COVID-19.



HIV Prevention During COVID-19

PHIMC's Region 8 partners continue to provide critical HIV prevention services in this challenging public health context. Agencies have strategically adapted their HIV prevention services in suburban Cook County to operate during COVID-19 by developing protocols for socially distanced service delivery of HIV testing and evidence-based interventions for reducing risk of HIV transmission. This includes offering services over the phone and through digital platforms, as well as providing in-person services using personal protective equipment, sanitizing procedures, and plastic dividers. PHIMC applauds our Region 8 partners for their flexibility, creativity, and commitment to providing quality HIV prevention services.

Happy Merger Anniversary:
PHIMC + Illinois Safe Schools Alliance

We are excited to mark the one-year anniversary of the union between Illinois Safe Schools Alliance and PHIMC.

In the spring of 2017, the Alliance expressed their intention to seek an organizational partner 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. The Alliance found such a partner in 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. PHIMC supports collective impact that promotes health equity and access to care, while underscoring the intersection of healthcare and public health.

In July 2019, the Alliance merged with PHIMC, formally partnering for a shared vision of health equity, with vibrant benefits for both organizations. A reception was held at Edgewater's Historic Colvin House on January 26, 2020 to celebrate this merger, with nearly 80 guests raising glasses to support the organizations' combined work. Celebratory remarks reign true now more than ever.

"There's a constant struggle in our nation," said PHIMC CEO Karen A. Reitan during the reception, "between people who strive to maintain our national infrastructure of discrimination and inequity, and those - like everyone in this room - who would demolish it. What sometimes gets lost in all of this mess is that at the root of all public health crises in America is injustice."

We are grateful that now, a year into this union, we continue to learn with and from one another as we walk the road to justice with all of you. Happy Anniversary!



The Union Ceremony, January 2020

L-R: Mary F. Morten, Co-founder and Immediate Past Board Chair of Illinois Safe Schools Alliance, representing the Alliance; Laura McAlpine, Co-founder of Illinois Safe Schools Alliance, and Sidney Thomas, PHIMC Board Chair, officiating; and Karen A. Reitan, PHIMC Executive Director, representing PHIMC. Photo by Gracie Meier.



Staff Celebrates the Merger, July 2019

Back Row, L-R: Meghana Menon, Vince Pagán, Clare Healy, Caitlyn Hicks, Nat Duran, Sarah Boulton, Alisha Jani, Sarah Bergen, and Susanne Schnell and Front Row, L-R: Karen Reitan, Blair Harvey, and Becky McNamara

LGBTQ Inclusive Curriculum Law Takes Effect

Students in Illinois public schools will learn about the roles and contributions of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people in state and national history because of the Inclusive Curriculum Law, formerly known as HB 246, which took effect on July 1, 2020 for the 2020-2021 school year.

The Inclusive Curriculum Law is an initiative of Equality Illinois, PHIMC's Illinois Safe Schools Alliance, and the Legacy Project and was sponsored by State Rep. Anna Moeller (D-Elgin) and State Sen. Heather Steans (D-Chicago). The law passed the Illinois General Assembly last year with bipartisan support and was approved by Governor JB Pritzker on August 9, 2019.

According to a recent joint press release authored by Equality Illinois:

"An inclusive curriculum can have positive, affirming benefits and help counteract some disturbing trends. Sadly, in schools across Illinois and the United States, LGBTQ students are told, through bullying, harassment, and exclusion, that they do not belong. These conditions have created a school environment where LGBTQ students are forced to hide who they are to protect themselves. According to GLSEN'S 2017 School Climate Survey, 88% of LGBTQ students in Illinois have heard the word "gay" as a slur. And only 24% of LGBTQ students in Illinois were taught anything positive in classrooms about people like them.

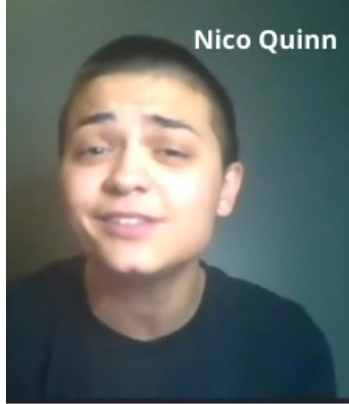
"Illinois is one of five states to enact such a law. The other states are California, New Jersey, Colorado, and Oregon."

PHIMC's Illinois Safe Schools Alliance, [The Legacy Project](#), and [Equality Illinois](#) continue to work with Illinois State Board of Education, teachers' unions, regional superintendents, young people, and other stakeholders to develop guidance, resources, lesson plans, and [professional development](#) to support educators across the state in implementing this law.

To get involved and ensure effective implementation of the Inclusive Curriculum Law, please [sign up here](#) for the Illinois Inclusive Curriculum Advisory Council Newsletter.

A summary of the law and its early supporters can be found [here](#).

Night of Noise



Nico Quinn



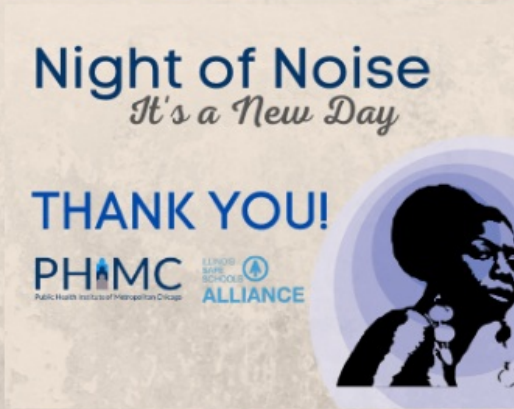
Roderick Hawkins



Mykele Deville



Amy Tien



Brill Barrett



Vic Wynter



McKenzie Chinn



June

Thank you to those who joined us on May 16 at Night of Noise 2020: It's a New Day! We had a great time with our attendees and enjoyed performances from these amazing artists while being hosted by our phenomenal emcee, Roderick Hawkins.

Night of Noise, traditionally held in late April, marks the end of a Day of Silence, wherein students in over 10,000 middle schools, high schools, and universities worldwide take a day-long vow of silence to honor those in the LGBTQ+ community who are often silenced.

Thank you to everyone who helped make this virtual Night of Noise an evening to remember and for continuing to support the important work of Illinois Safe Schools Alliance and PHIMC.

In the News . . .

- [OUT CHICAGO](#) on WCPT 820AM

Co-Hosts Scott Duff and Ellen Miller spoke with Grecia Magdaleno, PHIMC's Policy and Advocacy Manager for Illinois Safe Schools Alliance, on July 12, 2020 about reopening schools. This portion of the program begins at minute marker 45:00.

- ["The Truth is Out"](#) on WGHC 98.3FM

Skim Sams had a candid conversation about HIV, substance use prevention, and harm reduction with PHIMC's new Prevention Coordinator Bryan Gooding on June 10, 2020.

- ["This Is What I Want To Tell My White Professors When They Ask, 'How Are You Today?'"](#)

"My entire experience in higher education has involved centering my professors' and colleagues' white comfort, often at the expense of my own mental wellness," writes LaShyra "Lash" Nolen, Harvard Medical School Class President and former National Health Corps Chicago member, in Huffington Post, published June 8, 2020.

- Lash was also featured in February 2020 here in Teen Vogue [Lash Nolen Is Harvard Medical School's First Black Woman Class President](#)
- [Town hall addresses youths' needs during pandemic](#), by Matt Simonette, published in the Windy City Times on May 4, 2020, features Nat Duran PHIMC Youth Engagement Manager for Illinois Safe Schools Alliance.

Congratulations, Jacey!



2019-2020 NATIONAL HEALTH CORPS SERVICE AWARD RECIPIENT

JACEY HUTCHINSON

in honor of AmeriCorps National Service Recognition Day



[Proviso Partners for Health \(PP4H\)](#) and [National Health Corps \(NHC\) Chicago](#) are excited to share that NHC member, Jacey Hutchinson, received the National Service Recognition Award from National Health Corps! This award recognizes six NHC members across the country each year for exemplifying NHC and AmeriCorps values and going above and beyond in their commitment to service and their efforts to strengthen the communities with whom they partner. PHIMC is a 2019-2020 NHC Chicago host site on behalf of PP4H, a community-driven coalition advancing food justice and economic equity in Proviso Township.

Jacey brought tremendous capacity to PP4H in its efforts to promote Food Justice regionally in the western suburbs of Cook County and locally in Maywood, Illinois. Jacey's role with NHC Chicago and PP4H included farming support at PP4H's Maywood-based urban farm, and collaborating with local organizations to co-design and implement community agriculture programs promoting healthy nutrition. She played a central role supporting [VeggieRx](#), a produce prescription initiative implemented in partnership between Chicago Botanic Garden Windy City Harvest and PP4H to alleviate food insecurity.

Jacey's contributions to NHC Chicago and PP4H have been critical to Maywood residents whose food access is severely limited due to COVID-19. Within two weeks, VeggieRx expanded its program to reach five times as many families as it had before COVID-19. Jacey demonstrated strong leadership and adaptability by quickly designing an effective outreach and registration process to ensure community residents were -- and still are -- connected with the program. Each week, Jacey also made hundreds of outreach calls, developed and led VeggieRx volunteer training sessions, and delivered bags of food to doorsteps.

After reflecting on her experience with NHC Chicago and PP4H, Jacey shared:

"I feel lucky to be so passionate about the field I've ended up in, and to be surrounded by people within PP4H who feel the same passion I do. I couldn't have asked for a more meaningful service year."

Please join us in thanking and congratulating Jacey for the wonderful service and dedication she brought to NHC Chicago, PP4H, and its community partners!

National Health Corps Chicago, a program of NHC, is administered by Health Federation of Philadelphia (HFP) and implemented by Public Health Institute of Metropolitan Chicago (PHIMC).

PHIMC Welcomes New Staff

PHIMC is excited to have welcomed many new team members in the past few months.



Vivian Funches (*she/her*), Vice President of Finance, maintains responsibility for the fiscal integrity of all financial reporting and operations.

Bryan Gooding (*he/him*), the new Prevention Coordinator, supports HIV prevention services and handles outreach for the Illinois Helpline for Opioids and Other Substances.





Cynthia Li (*she/her*), as Project Associate, provides support for Substance Use Disorder Services and Medication Assisted Treatment and Community Reentry Support Services programs at PHIMC.

Deirdre McGovern (*she/her*), Special Projects Associate, provides support to new projects and initiatives through research, planning, survey and evaluation support, meeting and programmatic logistics, and grants and contracts support.



Visit our [website](#) to learn more about our new staff.

PHIMC Welcomes VISTA Volunteers



William Collier (*he/him*) is the new Youth Leadership and Organizing VISTA for Illinois Safe Schools Alliance (the Alliance), helping to make schools across the state safer and more inclusive for queer youth. He also lends a hand to the Alliance Youth Committee to help them in their endeavors to better their communities on a local scale. He volunteered for the Alliance's sleepaway Action Camp for three years and loved the work of the program, which led him to apply to become a VISTA for the organization.

Mariam Hassan (*she/her*) serves as PHIMC's Policy and Advocacy VISTA for Illinois Safe Schools Alliance. She holds a Bachelors of Science in Neuroscience from University of Illinois at Chicago and a Masters of Science in Health Administration from Rosalind Franklin University. "I am looking forward to meeting new people who have various backgrounds and experiences which have led them to working for a collective good in a public health organization," she says about her decision to become an AmeriCorps VISTA. "I am also looking forward to learning how to effectively advocate for LGBTQ+ youth."



A Note on COVID-19

PHIMC is committed to community health and well-being. To do our part in containing the spread of COVID-19, PHIMC staff continues to work remotely, even as Illinois has begun to re-open. All PHIMC hosted meetings are being conducted remotely via phone and video conference. We are available by email and phone during regular business hours, and staff are checking email and voicemail as always.

Throughout the COVID-19 crisis, we are also sharing resources and tools on a regular basis to support public health capacity and enhance healthcare systems. You can find these curated COVID-19 resources [here](#).

These are difficult times for everyone, and we salute all of our partners for their tremendous service. We also thank state and city leadership for their unwavering management of the COVID-19 crisis and for putting the needs of people first.

While the environment in which we work may be different and unfamiliar, PHIMC's mission remains the same. We are here to build capacity and provide support for our partners so they can do their best work right now. Our efforts ensure that our partners are successful in providing medical care and health education services, substance use disorder prevention and care, food access, HIV prevention and care, and ongoing affirmation and support for their clients. We are all in this together.

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