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Innovating for Health Justice

Friends and Colleagues –

Over the past few weeks, so many of you have collaborated with us to innovate for health justice. We are grateful for the things we have learned, the connections we have built, and the plans we have made for the future. Our gatherings have focused on many aspects of public health, including the following:

- School and community providers strategizing around how to collectively support the health and well-being of Chicago students and families experiencing housing instability,
- Public health professionals, healthcare providers, social service professionals, and people directly impacted by incarceration addressing the needs of justice-involved individuals, particularly those living with or at risk for HIV, and
- Youth providers engaging in dialogue about what may or may not work to prevent substance use by young people.

I am proud of the work that PHIMC staff does every day, and am thankful for the chance to share it with you. As you read on, I trust you will find something in our newsletter that captures your interest. It could be Second Chance Month in April or Mental Health Awareness Month in May, our recent or upcoming gatherings, trainings, or job opportunities, a brief resource that breaks down stigma, or a warm welcome to our newest member of Team PHIMC.

Celebrating our 30th anniversary has created conversations among staff and board about what will come next and how we will grow our work, engage new communities, and respond to known and unknown public health crises in a way that promotes both health and health justice. Everyone has lots of thoughts on this, but one thing we all know is that we cannot do our work without your support.

This newsletter is full of ways to get involved in our programs, but I would be a terrible CEO if I didn't take the opportunity to invite you to support us as a [donor](#) or as a [new board member](#). I hope you will consider one or both of these opportunities to strengthen PHIMC and support our work to advance health justice and strengthen public health through innovation and partnerships that align people, strategies, and resources.

Do you have questions or feedback? Please share. If you reach out to info@phimc.org, someone on our team will respond.

Thank you, as always, for your support and partnership.



Sincerely,

Karen A. Reitan
President and Chief Executive Officer

Supporting the Health and Well-Being of New Arrivals and Students and Families Experiencing Housing Instability: Reflections from the March SHAC Meeting

Powered by PHIMC and Healthy Schools Campaign, the School Health Access Collaborative (SHAC) brings together education and health stakeholders to identify ways to enhance student access to comprehensive, coordinated, and sustainable healthcare, improve the health service delivery model for Chicago students, and elevate equity and well-being. SHAC leverages the knowledge and expertise of its members to envision a school health system that provides all students with the health and wellness services they need.

In March, SHAC hosted a panel of experts to discuss supporting the health and well-being of newcomer and housing-unstable students and families and invited Dr. Olusimbo “Simbo” Ige, the new Commissioner for the Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH), to speak on CDPH’s priorities. Our panel speakers were:

- Alyssa Phillips, Education Attorney, Chicago Coalition for the Homeless
- Orlando Rivero, Program Manager of Primary Care Services, Chicago Public Schools
- Marcellus Summers, Citywide Coordinator of Students in Temporary Living Situations, Chicago Public Schools
- Salvador Cerna, Director of Community Impact and Special Projects, La Casa Norte



This conversation is timely and critical as Chicago welcomes an influx of migrant, refugee, and asylum-seeking students and their families. In the last two years, approximately 35,000 newcomers have arrived in Chicago and more than 5,700 newcomer students have enrolled in CPS, according to [NBC News](#). The U.S. Department of Education uses the term newcomers to refer to "any foreign-born students and their families who have recently arrived in the United States," according to their [Newcomer Tool Kit](#) which goes on to say, "Throughout our country's history, people from around the world have immigrated to the United States to start a new life, bringing their customs, religions, and languages with them. The United States is, to a great extent, a nation of immigrants. Newcomers play an important role in weaving our nation's social and economic fabric, and U.S. schools play an important role in helping newcomers adapt and contribute as they integrate into American society."

Incorporating migrant students and their families into school communities takes not only time, but a broad range of resources that include but are not limited to additional funding, translation services, additional teachers, mental health services, and health care. Chicago not only needs expanded funding to ensure the stability of needed services, it also needs to ensure that they are delivered equitably so that students with the most need have access to the most care.

Panelists shared their perspectives and insights on challenges and barriers experienced by families and youth, including navigating complex social service systems and dealing with trauma and its impact on education and learning. "We are in unprecedented waters so to speak right now of what our end-of-year numbers are going to be, so of course that puts a strain on the school, on CPS, finances, resources, things of that nature," said Marcellus Summers.

Dr. Ige's remarks to SHAC focused on compassion and how the city can come together collaboratively to work to resolve complicated living situations for students. As she told the [Chicago Defender](#) in February, "My job is to advocate very strongly for the communities that have been at the margins so that they can be put in the center."



SHAC members are committed to continuing this conversation and improving the lives of students who face these challenges.

To learn more about SHAC, please contact [Liz Wilson](#), visit our [website](#), or check out our calendar of upcoming [SHAC meetings](#).

Community Reentry Project News

2024 Illinois Reentry Conference

Public Health Institute of Metropolitan Chicago's Community Reentry Project hosted its free annual *Illinois Reentry Conference: Advancing Criminal, Health, and Social Justice* on Thursday, March 14, 2024. Now in its eighth year, the conference is designed to rediscover, reimagine, and rebuild best practices in criminal, health, and social justice.

This year's conference brought together people who have experienced the criminal justice system from all walks of life, including justice-involved individuals, public health professionals, healthcare providers, social service professionals, and members of the community to build skills around health equity, social justice, and reentry services for current and formerly incarcerated individuals in Illinois. The conference featured presentations by [top leaders](#) in public health and corrections, virtual breakout rooms, the presentation of our Community Reentry Champion Awards, music expression, and more.

Congratulations to our 2024 Community Reentry Champion Awardees, Gregory Chambers, Director of Policy for Illinois Coalition to End Permanent Punishments, and Nicholas Malaki Crayton, Career Readiness and Reentry Manager for Defy Ventures!

Gregory Chambers shared the words of Coretta Scott King as he accepted the award: *"The greatness of a community is most accurately measured by the compassionate actions of its members."*

Nicholas Malaki Crayton reminded us: *"If we are to really live, then we must sincerely help those within our scope of reach. Be more compassionate today than you were yesterday."*

If you were unable to attend, you can view all of the main stage presentations and artistic expressions on our [YouTube channel](#). We also have a playlist of main stage presentations from past virtual Illinois Reentry Conferences that you can view [here](#).

"No way to determine if I'ma live or die today, stuck in seg, pen and paper feel like raging and waters, tears falling because I know my babies miss they father."



"In the middle of the storm, you have to know you are special."

~ Peace Coleman, in his song *Breaking News*,
which opened our 2024 Illinois Reentry Conference

Illinois Reentry Conference: Video Playlist

Corrections Discharge Planning Training Centers Cultural Humility

PHIMC's Corrections Discharge Planning Training supports discharge providers and planning staff who work in correctional facilities, healthcare settings, and within communities to better serve people living with and who are at the highest risk for HIV transition during and after incarceration.

As part of our regular assessment and improvement efforts, the PHIMC reentry team recently added cultural humility as an element of the Corrections Discharge planning training, creating space for attendees' self-exploration and self-critique, offering an opportunity to learn from others, and inviting training participants to be intentional about honoring others' beliefs, customs, and values. We believe that intentional cultural humility fosters an inclusive and human-centered approach to reentry services, which acknowledges the diverse backgrounds, experiences, and identities of individuals returning to society after incarceration. Cultural humility also offers opportunities for ongoing learning to the community of professionals supporting individuals returning to society after incarceration.

We aim to shift the status quo of viewing justice-impacted individuals as detainee numbers, clients, and/or participants and instead humanize and respect each individual's diversity, background, and unique experiences. Centering cultural humility in Reentry services provides the opportunity to challenge stereotypes and biases that may exist within reentry systems, and promote empathy, understanding, and acceptance of differences. Centering the perspectives, experiences, and identities of individuals returning from incarceration allows the community of Reentry professionals a foundation to build supportive relationships that ultimately promote effective reintegration services.

To learn more, please contact [Brittany Spralls](#).

Regional Substance Use Prevention Integration Center (RSUPIC) - Chicago

Attention Chicago Youth Providers:

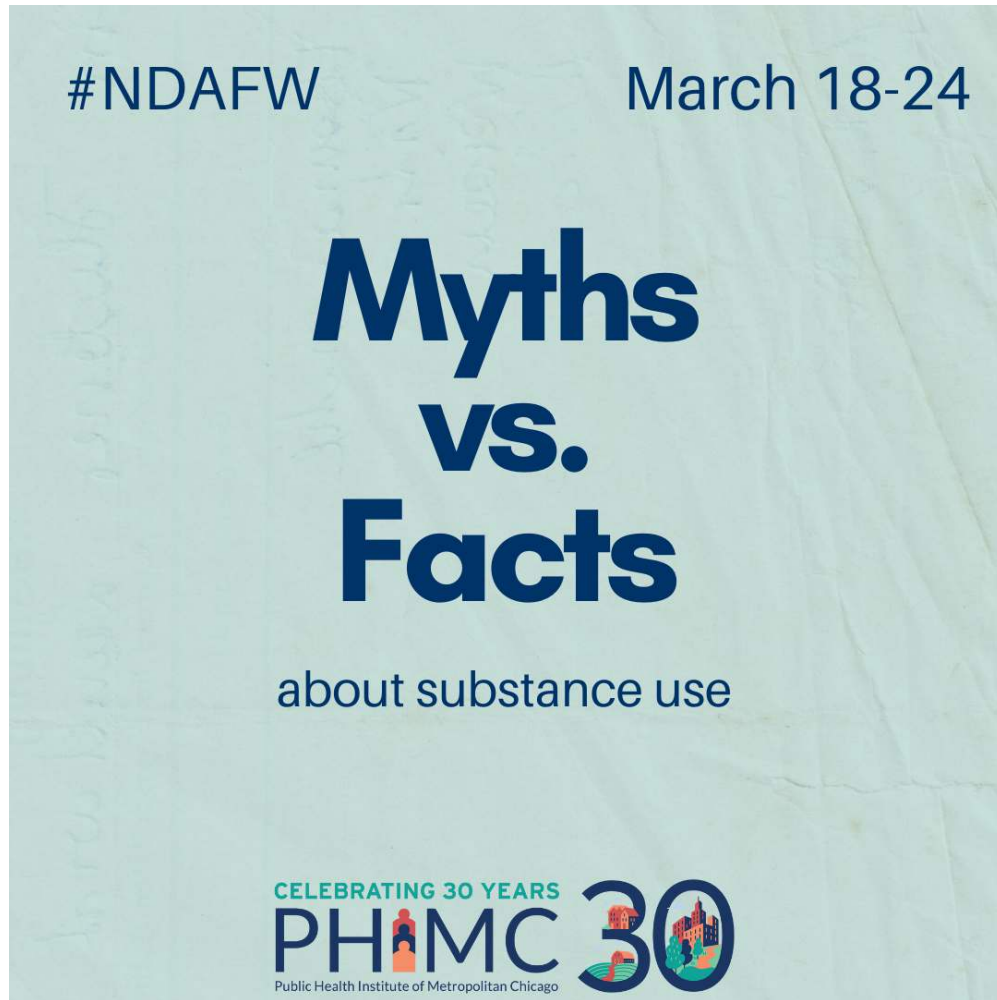
PHIMC is excited to lead the Chicago region of Illinois' new Regional Substance Use Prevention Integration Centers (RSUPICs) program that educates youth, parents, friends, and the community-at-large about substance use prevention and misuse. PHIMC is committed to collaborating with

other youth-serving organizations to integrate programs and services that support the well-being of young people in our community. By working together, we can create a network of support that empowers youth to make positive choices and lead healthy, drug-free lives.

On March 29, PHIMC gathered community partners to lay out and discuss our Theory of Change for this work. [UCAN Chicago](#) graciously provided their space to hold the meeting, where we gained feedback and insight from different youth-serving agencies on substance use prevention for youth in Chicago. The information shared by these partners has already given us a greater understanding of how to support agencies with youth substance use prevention, integrate with community organizations, and provide resources that serve community partners.

PHIMC would like to thank all the organizations who came in support of this new program, [UCAN Chicago](#), [Lutheran Social Services of Illinois](#), [CPASS Foundation](#), [Center on Halsted](#), [Praxis](#), and [Lurie Children's Hospital's Connect 4 Youth Program](#).

To learn more, visit our [RSUPIC-Chicago webpage](#) or contact [Lara Nidea](#).




National Drug and Alcohol Facts Week

March 18-24 was National Drug and Alcohol Facts Week, so we compiled a list of myths commonly associated with substance use and created social media graphics to dispel these myths. Examples follow.

#NDAFW March 18-24


Myth:

"Vaping isn't bad for you when it's just flavoring."



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#NDAFW March 18-24



Fact:


The flavors in a vape could contain nicotine without you even knowing it. They can also contain harmful compounds and chemical flavorings, like propylene glycol, which has unknown health effects.

Source: National Institute on Drug Abuse

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#NDAFW March 18-24

Myth:



Prescription drugs are safer than illegal drugs.

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Fact:

When used as directed by a healthcare professional, prescription drugs can be safe and effective. However, misuse or abuse of prescription drugs can be just as dangerous, if not more so, than using illegal drugs.

Source: National Institute on Drug Abuse

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Resource Spotlight

Stigma:

"A set of negative and often unfair beliefs that a society or group of people have about something" —Merriam-Webster

These unfair beliefs can shape self-perception, social interactions, and institutional policies and practices. Stigma can act as a mark of shame that is often viewed negatively.

Bias:

"An inclination of temperament or outlook" —Merriam-Webster

Both conscious and unconscious biases can influence the way we interact with people in our care, as well as the treatments we offer to them.



Stigmas Create Health Inequities



Affirming care bridges the gap between the person in care and the care team, allowing the free flow of information through trusting relationships. This trust, however, is easily broken by stigmas held at the individual and organizational level. It is imperative that providers are aware of our own stigmas and biases in order to nurture relationships and provide people with the best care possible.

Download [Understanding How Stigma and Bias Impact Health Outcomes](#) and learn more about PHIMC's Affirming Care and Routine HIV Screening initiatives [here](#).

[Other resources to support health equity can be found on our website.](#)

Events & Opportunities

Second Chance Month April 2024

Second Chance Month aims to inform and highlight the opportunities for social service providers from community-based organizations who work with justice-involved individuals and to build meaningful second chances for returning community members. At PHIMC, we acknowledge the barriers that justice-involved individuals face post-incarceration and believe that everyone deserves a second chance.

Action Camp April 1-30: Applications are Open

Our largest annual youth leadership convening, Action Camp is a 5-day sleepaway

Mental Health Awareness Month May 2024

May marks Mental Health Awareness Month, founded in 1949 by [Mental Health America](#). This year's theme is *Where to Start: Mental Health in a Changing World*.

To learn about peer organizations supporting mental health in Illinois and beyond, check out [WeHealUS](#), a grassroots initiative highlighting efforts nationwide to build resilience and healing through trauma-informed and healing-centered policies. PHIMC is a proud partner in this initiative.

Illinois Reentry Statewide Meeting Wednesday, May 15, 2024 10 - 11 a.m.

camp that brings together leaders from GSAs across the state to learn from one another and shape the safer schools movement.

Action Camp 2024 will run from July 28 through August 2, 2024. Applications to participate as a camper or a counselor opened on April 1, 2024, and will remain open until April 30, 2024.

[Apply as a Camper](#)

[Apply as a Counselor](#)

[Donate to Action Camp](#)

AmeriCorps Opportunity: National Health Corps Chicago

National Health Corps (NHC) Chicago members join unique public health teams by serving at federally qualified health centers, in hospital systems, at community-based clinics, and with other important organizations.

Become a Host Site: PHIMC seeks applications from organizations interested in hosting AmeriCorps members for 2024-2025 as part of the National Health Corps Chicago program. Read the full Request for Applications and consider applying [here](#).

Become a Member: NHC Chicago members serve an average of 40 hours per week, and available positions are listed [here](#). This is a great learning and professional growth opportunity for someone who wants a gap year with real-world experience before starting college, grad school, or a new career in non-profits, public health, human services, or the medical field. Applications are accepted on a rolling basis.

Opioid-Impacted Family Support Program Opportunities

The Opioid-Impacted Family Support Program seeks to bring care and relief to neighborhoods that are most affected by opioid use disorder in Chicago.

[Learn more here](#) about opportunities for individuals and organizations.

Join the PHIMC Board

PHIMC is recruiting new board members.

The Statewide Meeting offers a collaborative environment for participants to share resources, information, and services around incarceration, community reentry, and public health issues. Service providers can come to this space to share and hear updates from state and community agencies around the state of Illinois. To learn more, please contact [Brittany Spralls](#).

Chicago Reentry Taskforce Meeting Wednesday, May 15, 2024 11 a.m. - 12 p.m.

The Chicago Reentry Taskforce focuses primarily on issues related to Chicago and Cook County for current and formerly incarcerated individuals. The taskforce prioritizes training and discussion around barriers to reentry and changes that are relevant in Chicago, Cook County, and high-prevalence areas statewide in order to provide a public health response to mass incarceration. To learn more, please contact [Brittany Spralls](#).

Time to THRIVE Saturday, May 18, 2024 Minneapolis, MN

Time to THRIVE was founded with the goal of building a strong network of supportive adults to ensure LGBTQ+ youth don't simply survive, but THRIVE. The summit is a convening to build awareness and cultural competency, learn current and emerging best practices, gather resources from leading experts and organizations in the field, and connect adult allies on the ground with a regional approach. PHIMC is proud to be a community partner for this convening, which is hosted by Human Rights Campaign. Learn more and register [here](#).

Chicago's School Health Access Collaborative Meeting Thursday, May 23, 2024 10:00 am - 11:30 am via Zoom

Chicago's School Health Access Collaborative (SHAC) brings together education and health stakeholders to identify ways to enhance student access to comprehensive, coordinated, and sustainable healthcare, improve the health service delivery model for Chicago students, and elevate equity and well-being. Co-managed by Healthy Schools Campaign (HSC) and PHIMC, SHAC leverages

[Learn more here.](#)



the knowledge and expertise of its members to envision a school health system that provides all students with the health and wellness services they need.

To learn more about SHAC, please [visit our website](#). To participate in this meeting, please contact [Liz Wilson](#).

Corrections Discharge Planning Training Wednesday, June 5, 2024

Join PHIMC and other thought leaders for a free one-day training designed to educate and inform providers in both community-based and healthcare settings, on medical and non-medical discharge planning for formerly incarcerated individuals. To learn more, please contact [Brittany Spralls](#).

PHIMC Welcomes New Staff

Please join us in welcoming the newest member of the PHIMC team.

Brittany Spralls (*she/her*) joined the team in February as PHIMC's Program Manager for the Community Reentry Project, a multi-stakeholder project that coordinates efforts to ensure that people living with and at the highest risk for HIV transition smoothly from incarceration to communities. Brittany has dedicated nearly two decades to working in communities addressing and fighting to improve and eradicate social determinants of health, specifically inequity in the criminal justice and education systems. Brittany is passionate about working to create sustainable change in communities that need it most.



Brittany earned a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science from Valparaiso University and a Master of Science in Public Service Management with a focus in Urban Planning from DePaul University.

In addition, Brittany is known and recognized as an expert in Restorative Justice. She has spearheaded various restorative justice initiatives and served as the lead planner to develop restorative justice entities that support and have positive impacts on individuals and communities.

PHIMC is Hiring

**SEEKING
JOB APPLICANTS**

**Program Coordinator
HIV Prevention and Gender-Affirming Care**
PHIMC seeks a Program Coordinator to support the planning and implementation of routine HIV screening and gender-affirming care in Illinois.

Learn more at bit.ly/PHIMCwork



Program Coordinator – HIV Prevention and Gender-Affirming Care

[Download Job Description](#)

**SEEKING
JOB APPLICANTS**

Accounting Manager - Financial Reporting
PHIMC seeks a full-time and energetic individual to prepare financial statements for emerging not-for-profits sponsored by PHIMC and to process PHIMC and subcontractor vouchers and invoices for The State of Illinois and for multiple foundation grants.

Learn more at bit.ly/PHIMCwork



Accounting Manager – Financial Reporting

[Download Job Description](#)

**SEEKING
JOB APPLICANTS**

**Outreach and Prevention Specialist
Regional Substance Use Prevention Integration Centers (RSUPIC) Program**
PHIMC seeks two Outreach and Prevention Specialists to support the RSUPIC Program, which aims to increase the capacity of institutions, organizations, and providers to address substance use and misuse among adolescents.

Learn more at bit.ly/PHIMCwork



Outreach and Prevention Specialist – Regional Substance Use Prevention Integration Centers (RSUPIC) Program

[Download Job Description](#)

Join the Team

[Learn more about PHIMC Employment Opportunities here.](#)

Invest in Public Health

Do you like what you see? Your support ensures we can maximize our impact and expand our reach to improve health.

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Public Health Institute of Metropolitan Chicago (PHIMC) advances health justice and strengthens public health through innovation and partnerships that align people, strategies, and resources.

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