PHIMC
Public Health Institute of Metropolitan Chicago

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From Allyship to Action: PHIMC Celebrates Transgender Awareness Week with New Community-Informed Toolkit and Recognition of State Leader

CHICAGO — During Transgender Awareness Week, the Public Health Institute of Metropolitan Chicago (PHIMC) sends a simple but powerful message: meaningful inclusion requires action.

On November 13, the official start of Transgender Awareness Week, PHIMC will launch **From Allyship to Action: A Toolkit for Building Inclusive Spaces Online and in the Real World**, a free resource created to help individuals, organizations, employers, and community groups foster safer, more affirming environments for transgender and gender-diverse (TGD) people.

Developed through the Illinois Department of Human Services' and PHIMC's TGD Wellness and Equity Program with guidance from an advisory group of community members from across Illinois, the toolkit draws upon lived experience and community expertise. Advisory group members provided input on language, imagery, representation, and content to help ensure the resource reflects the diversity of TGD communities.

Available in English and Spanish, the toolkit is designed for individuals and organizations at any stage of their inclusion journey. Resources include:

- Practical guidance for everyday allyship, including affirming language, pronoun use, and strategies for confronting harmful assumptions.
- Information on inclusion and belonging as public health priorities, highlighting the role of affirming communication in reducing stigma and fostering trust.
- Ready-to-use social media content organizations can adapt to recognize LGBTQIA+ awareness dates and demonstrate support.
- Strategies for creating safer online environments, including responding to misinformation and moderating harmful comments.
- Inclusive photography and representation guidelines to support authentic and respectful visual storytelling.

"This toolkit is going to help anyone wanting to show up as a more informed, intentional ally for trans and gender diverse people," says Dr. Len Meyer, DHA, MHSA, Director of Clinical Services, Central Illinois FRIENDS,

a community partner in the TGD Program. “When we create safe conditions, people can live their true, authentic lives."

PHIMC's celebration of Transgender Awareness Week continues on November 19 with ***All in for Public Health***, the organization's annual Fall Reception. The event brings together nonprofit leaders, healthcare professionals, public servants, advocates, and community members who share a commitment to building healthier, more equitable communities.

This year, PHIMC is proud to present an award to Dulce M. Quintero (they/them), Secretary of the Illinois Department of Human Services, in recognition of their extraordinary advocacy on behalf of transgender, gender-diverse, and LGBTQIA+ communities.

As the leader of Illinois' largest state agency, Secretary Quintero has championed equity, accessibility, dignity, and inclusion across Illinois' human services system. Their career has spanned health and human services, nonprofit leadership, and LGBTQIA+ advocacy, bringing both lived experience and visionary leadership to public service.

"Secretary Quintero has demonstrated what inclusive leadership looks like in practice," said Karen A. Reitan, President and CEO of PHIMC. "Their commitment to transgender, gender-diverse, and LGBTQIA+ communities reflects a belief we share at PHIMC: that health equity is built through partnership, courage, and sustained investment in people. As we launch this new toolkit and gather for *All in for Public Health*, we are celebrating both our progress, and the collective work still ahead."

Funds raised through the Fall Reception support PHIMC's work in HIV prevention and care, behavioral health, school and community wellness, gender-affirming services, support for justice-impacted individuals, and affirming spaces for LGBTQ+ youth.

To access the TGD Allyship Toolkit, visit: Transgender Allyship Toolkit | PHIMC

To learn more about *All in for Public Health*, visit: All in for Public Health | PHIMC

Interviews, photographs, and additional media materials are available upon request.

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