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Mayor Lightfoot and the Chicago Department of Public Health Announce \$8 Million Annual Investment to Expand Access to Trauma-Informed Mental Health Services with a Focus on Chicago's South and West Sides

Grants will support 32 publicly funded organizations to provide mental healthcare to anyone who needs it regardless of ability to pay

CHICAGO – Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot and Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH) Commissioner Allison Arwady, M.D., announced today the awarding of \$8 million in annual grant funding to 32 community-based organizations to provide trauma-informed mental healthcare in the city's areas of highest need. These 32 centers of care will work with the existing CDPH mental health clinics in comprising a mental health safety net system where all persons can receive care regardless of ability to pay, health insurance status or immigration status.

"The Framework for Mental Health Equity is a clear commitment to creating an effective, accessible and inclusive mental health system that cares for and heals the whole person," said Mayor Lightfoot. "This unprecedented \$8 million investment will do just that and move this framework forward by providing tens of thousands of additional Chicagoans in our under-resourced communities with the care they need—regardless of their ability to pay, health insurance status or immigration status. I am grateful to CDPH and every center of care that has partnered with us on this investment and look forward to continuing to work with them as we close the mental healthcare gap once and for all."

This investment is the centerpiece of the Framework for Mental Health Equity that was announced by Mayor Lightfoot and CDPH last year to transform mental healthcare with a focus on equity. Under this Framework, CDPH has doubled its mental health budget from 2019 and prioritized investment on Chicago's South and West Sides, which is consistent with the City's focus on equity and neighborhood re-investment.

"For too long, the people most in need of mental healthcare have not been able to access it when and where they need it, and the consequences of this can be tragic," said Dr. Arwady. "That's why we were so deliberate in making sure these



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investments are going to communities where they are needed most and to publicly-funded organizations who are the experts doing this work on the ground.”

Of the 32 funded proposals, 30 will also expand mental health services for children, adolescents, and young adults, and all 32 will expand services into community areas of highest need. Grantees include Community Mental Health Centers (CMHCs), Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs), and other community-based organizations, with single organizations funded at \$240,000 and partnership proposals funded at \$350,000 per year through 2022.

“Access to mental healthcare should not be dependent on how much you make or where you live,” said Dr. Rashad Saafir, CEO of Bobby E. Wright Comprehensive Behavioral Health and Co-Founder of Westside Community Triage and Wellness Center. “By investing in the mental health safety net, Chicago is demonstrating a commitment to ensuring that all of its residents have access to the healthcare they deserve.”

This investment will bolster the current safety net system with resources that can be used to hire more staff, expand existing services, fund new programs in communities of high need and promote collaborations that integrate mental healthcare with primary care. The result will be tens of thousands more patients served, better access to care for the underserved and integrated care for the whole person.

“Ensuring the availability of trauma-informed mental healthcare is critical to closing the healthcare gap and bringing first-rate care to our communities,” said Esther Corpuz, CEO of Alivio Medical Center. “I am proud to stand with Mayor Lightfoot and support this important investment in our essential mental health safety net.”

CDPH also announced today a \$1.6 million annual investment to integrate holistic healthcare services for people experiencing homelessness. Through this program, Heartland Alliance Health and Lawndale Christian Health Center will provide mental health services to people at homeless shelters and encampments. This will bring critical mental health and primary care services outside the walls of clinics to persons experiencing homelessness who are also living with serious mental illness, substance use disorders and other chronic health conditions.

“We know that when we address people’s healthcare needs in the community, we improve patient outcomes and reduce unnecessary contact with first responders and crisis systems,” said Matthew Richards, Deputy Commissioner for Behavioral Health at CDPH.



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In addition to the investments in a publicly-funded system of mental healthcare, CDPH is also launching the city's first public mental health awareness campaign in partnership with the communications firm Edelman. This campaign will seek to improve awareness of publicly-funded mental health services available to all Chicago residents, combat mental health stigma, and build awareness of mental health as a critical public health issue.

"This investment is a key step to reversing the impact that years of neglect have had on the healthcare needs of our communities of color," said Roderick Sawyer, 6th Ward Alderman and Chairman of the Committee on Health and Human Relations. "The Framework for Mental Health Equity will ensure that residents throughout our city have access to the critical supports that they need."

"For many Chicagoans, access to mental healthcare can be life-saving," said Susan Sadlowski-Garza, 10th Ward Alderwoman. "I am thrilled that residents in my ward and throughout the city will now have greater access to the healthcare supports they need, regardless of their immigration or health insurance status."

Organizations Funded to Provide Trauma-Informed Mental Healthcare:

Access Community Health Network
Advocate Illinois Masonic
Alivio Medical Center
Alternatives, Inc.
Apna Ghar, Inc.
Asian Human Services, Inc.
Bobby E. Wright Comprehensive Behavioral Health
BUILD, Inc.
Community Counseling Centers of Chicago (C4)
Catholic Charities
Chicago Family Health Center
Christian Community Health Center
Enlace Chicago
Erie Family Health Center
Erie Neighborhood House
Esperanza Health Centers
Habilitative Systems, Inc.
Healthcare Alternative Systems, Inc.
Heartland Alliance
Howard Brown Health
Lakeview Pantry
Lawndale Christian Health Center



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Lutheran Social Services Illinois
Midwest Asian Health Association
PCC Community Wellness
Prime Care Health
Sinai Health System
St. Bernard Hospital
TCA Health
Trilogy Behavioral Healthcare
UIC Mile Square Health Center
YWCA Metropolitan Chicago