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Health Care Council of Illinois partners with MATCCH Foundation, joins Collaborative to Reverse Health Inequities

Community-based, patient-centered approach aims to eliminate barriers to quality care, improve health outcomes in Chicago's Black community

CHICAGO, Ill – The [Health Care Council of Illinois](#) (HCCI) has announced a strategic partnership with the [MATCCH Foundation](#) (Minority Access to Comprehensive and Coordinated Healthcare) as part of its Collaborative to Reverse Health Inequities (CRHI), a network of community-based organizations focused on eliminating systemic barriers to health care in Chicago's Black community to improve health outcomes.

HCCI will serve as the skilled nursing and long-term care partner for CRHI, which takes a patient-centered approach to find residents on Chicago's South and West sides more effective care plans and connect them with social services that ensure enhanced treatment outcomes by removing barriers such as access to transportation, healthy nutrition, or job or childcare demands.

The CRHI intends to address the mortality metrics that are drastically different from one community to another in the Chicago area. A 2019 [study](#) found a 30-year life expectancy gap between residents of Streeterville and those who live 9 miles away in the Englewood neighborhood. An equally alarming [study](#) published by the American Medical Association, revealed that Black Chicagoans experience 3,800 excess deaths a year.

"Your zip code shouldn't determine your life expectancy, but for too many Chicagoans, that's the case. COVID-19 only brought that reality into sharper focus, with its disproportionate impact on Black families in the city's underserved communities," said Matt Pickering, executive director of HCCI. "We're excited to join this collaborative because our members are already in these communities as longtime providers, but with this

innovative approach with wraparound services, we're confident we can help MATCCH accomplish its mission of improving health outcomes for our patients and their families."

At the center of CRHI's integrated care model is the "concierge nurse," who has access to all the patient's information, consults with the patient and all his or her providers, as well as the patient's family and community services to identify the best care plan. HCCI's role in the collaborative will be to connect its members providing skilled nursing care on Chicago's South and West sides with patients who need post-acute or long-term care. HCCI will work with CRHI's concierge nurses, along with participating in CRHI's health fairs designed to connect community members with basic preventive medicine, educational workshops, technology support to address the digital divide in these communities, and medical screening. HCCI will also facilitate enlisting additional community-based organizations in the collaborative.

Led by Isaac Palmer, Jr., a longtime healthcare executive, MATCCH wants to reimagine access to care in historically neglected areas by emphasizing the need for not only preventative care for underlying contributors to health disparities, but also long-term care for individuals already afflicted. "Unfortunately, underserved patients are simply not able to access the care they need because of challenges their providers simply aren't aware of – which can include something as seemingly mundane as a ride to the appointment. As a collaborative, CRHI is ready to step up and fill in the gaps, and HCCI has been a willing partner in trying to help bridge the existing divide," said Palmer. "Our collaborative model seeks to put the nurse at the command center for our patients so all their needs are being met and any barriers to them making their appointment or accessing the right treatment are eliminated. We believe this comprehensive approach is the solution to closing the health disparity and wealth gaps on Chicago's South and West sides.

Palmer is also joined in the collaborative venture by Founder Dr. Michael A. McGee, CEO and President of Premier Health Network (the only All-Black owned comprehensive Urgent Care & Occ-Health Center in Chicago) located on Chicago's South Side. "We're facing a growing crisis and COVID-19 has simply exacerbated long-standing inequities in access to quality care in our community," McGee said. "Whether it be violence prevention or medical resources, some of our safety nets haven't been able to provide our communities with much of a net, and people have fallen through the cracks. But, I'm confident that the CRHI collaboration can turn the tide."

About MATCCH

MATCCH is an acronym for Minority Access to Comprehensive and Coordinated Healthcare. As a nonprofit headquartered in Chicago, our team of community leaders and health advocates ensure that minorities throughout high risk areas on the South and West Sides of Chicago have access to equitable health outcomes and without increased financial burden. Our goal is to help support household incomes to boost wealth creation. For more information, visit www.matcchfoundation.org.

About the Health Care Council of Illinois

The Health Care Council of Illinois (HCCI) strives to bridge the divide between policymakers and skilled nursing facilities across the state. As a nonprofit member association, we represent over 300 licensed skilled nursing facilities with over 55,000 residents and 100,000 employees in Illinois. Through education and advocacy, we work collaboratively with administrators, lawmakers and other stakeholders to find creative, practical solutions to complex public policy issues impacting our residents and neighbors. For more information, visit www.hccil.org.

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