



For Immediate Release

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Hospitals launch new training program to advance entry-level employees into high-demand clinical positions

One Million Degrees will provide wraparound support services to program participants

Chicago, IL (December 11, 2018)--In recent months, four area hospitals have joined forces with workforce leaders creating a new healthcare pathway program to help existing employees in entry-level and majority non-clinical roles transition to medical assistant roles. The four hospitals, Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago, NorthShore University HealthSystem, Rush University Medical Center and the University of Chicago Medicine, see this innovative collaboration as a vehicle to fill high-demand jobs and increase retention among current employees as well as advance front-line employees. "Medical assistants are critical in the growth of ambulatory; and these dedicated and high-performing employees will become the new face of that growth," said Bob Hanley, UChicago Medicine's chief human resources officer. "UChicago Medicine is delighted to be investing in our employees with this inaugural program."

The hospitals, all members of the employer-led Chicagoland Healthcare Workforce Collaborative, worked with partners, including Malcolm X College, West Side United, Civic Consulting Alliance, World Business Chicago and The Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership (The Partnership) to create a structure that provides incumbent worker training to employees at no cost while mitigating risk for the employers. "Our region's hospitals are in grave need of skilled staff across a number of roles. Through the creation of this initiative The Partnership is helping people obtain training in careers that were once out of reach at their existing employer," said Karin M. Norington-Reaves, CEO of The Partnership. "We hope this strategic collaboration will serve as a national blueprint for workforce engagement, and send a powerful signal about the value of public-private partnerships in meeting the labor demands of the healthcare sector and beyond."

The Medical Assistant Pathway Program (MAPP) offers a unique opportunity for current full-time healthcare employees to complete a Medical Assistant (MA) certification program at Malcolm X College on Chicago's West Side over the span of 18 months. Over 300 applicants applied for 25 available spots. Due to demand, the cohort size was increased to 29 in all. Janeth Munoz, MAPP participant and Clinic Coordinator at Rush, said "The MA Pathway Program is allowing me to have a greater opportunity to be successful in life; I am very excited for my future." Another MAPP participant, Miriam Barcenas, Food Service Aide at Lurie Children's Hospital, commented "In the food service department, I can make a

difference, at least for a moment, by making our guests feel welcome...however, I have always wanted to work in patient care and I am grateful for this amazing opportunity."

MAPP launched at Erie House in early September with students taking the introductory biology class and receiving college readiness supports. Students will enroll at Malcolm X College in January 2019 and receive 30+ credits over an 18-month period, through Spring 2020, while maintaining employment with their existing employers. Members of the cohort will also participate in a 160-hour externship to provide

additional training and experience. “This collaboration between Erie House, Malcolm X College and participating hospitals will allow us to better support individuals seeking to advance their careers, equipping them with the tools, resources and confidence they need to reach their potential,” said Kirstin Chernawsky, Executive Director at Erie House. “We are working alongside students to lay a foundation, upon which they can build greater well-being for themselves and their families.”

One Million Degrees (OMD), a local non-profit that accelerates community college students’ progress on career pathways to economic mobility, will provide wraparound supports to program participants to help students excel in their college experience and prepare for the next chapter of their careers. Paige Ponder, OMD’s Chief Executive Officer, remarked “The Medical Assistant Pathway Program is a really exciting example of employers joining forces to invest in their current employees and grow the skills they need from within their own hospitals. OMD is proud to partner with the Chicagoland Healthcare Workforce Collaborative and Malcolm X College to support these hard-working students as they chart their new path and advance their careers in the healthcare sector.” The Pathways program was designed with holistic support for the individual in mind. In addition to fully-funded tuition support, cohort members will receive support from a program coordinator to aid in logistics, scheduling, and program navigation. Participants will also receive transportation support and subsidy as well as internal and external mentoring and informal career coaching. Upon completion of the program, participants will also receive post-program placement support (e.g., resume review, interview guidance) to assist in their development and progress.

“From the West Side to the South Side, hospitals are doing their part to not only save lives but improve the workforce in the neighborhoods they serve,” stated Bernita Johnson-Gabriel, Executive Vice President for Neighborhood and Strategic Initiatives at World Business Chicago.

Since the program’s launch last month, there has been increasing demand for participation in future cohorts. The collaborative is currently assessing the overall effectiveness of the existing program and curriculum before announcing future cohorts and pathway options. Financial support for this initial cohort is made possible by the Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership, the Chicagoland Workforce Funder Alliance and hospital tuition assistance programs.

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About West Side United

West Side United seeks to improve neighborhood health by addressing inequality in healthcare, education, economic vitality and the physical environment using a cross-sector, place-based strategy. Partners include healthcare providers including Rush University Medical Center, Presence Health, Cook County Health & Hospitals System, Ann & Robert Lurie Children’s Hospital of Chicago, Sinai Health System and UI Health, community organizations, residents, the faith-based community, business, government and others working together to coordinate investments and share outcomes.

About the Chicagoland Healthcare Workforce Collaborative

Employer-Led Solutions for a Strong Local Healthcare Workforce

The Chicagoland Healthcare Workforce Collaborative (CHWC) unites healthcare employers and industry partners to develop innovative workforce solutions and respond to the emerging employment needs of the healthcare industry in Chicagoland. CHWC works together to find ways to eliminate employment barriers, support a strong and qualified workforce, and hire directly from the communities where we work and live. By focusing on action-oriented solutions, CHWC aims to support a more inclusive healthcare workforce in Chicagoland.