



WGU

IPHCA

ILLINOIS PRIMARY HEALTH CARE ASSOCIATION

Immediate Release

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Western Governors University and Illinois Primary Health Care Association Announce Partnership

Collaboration will connect members of IPHCA and 390 health centers across Illinois to WGU's flexible, affordable, high-quality online programs and scholarship offerings

Springfield, Ill. (Feb. 26, 2021) Western Governors University (WGU) and the Illinois Primary Health Care Association (IPHCA) today announced they have entered into a partnership agreement that will provide members of IPHCA and its 390 community health center locations across Illinois with an affordable option to earning their degrees. Under the terms of the agreement, members who enroll in any of the online, nonprofit university's 60-plus undergraduate or graduate degree programs will be eligible for scholarships offered through [WGU's Healthcare Partners Fund](#).

The scholarships are designed for members of WGU's partner hospitals and healthcare organizations who wish to advance their education to become educators, managers and leaders in vital healthcare fields. They are valued at up to \$2,500 each and are applied to WGU's flat-rate tuition of about \$3,500 per six-month term. Recipients of the scholarship will receive a \$625 tuition credit each term, renewable for up to four terms based on academic performance.

"IPHCA is proud to partner with WGU to assist staff at community health centers with an affordable option for advancing their education and helping them position themselves for new or expanded roles within their center," said Ashley Colwell, Vice President of Clinical Services and Workforce Development for IPHCA. "By offering self-paced learning, students can take the courses on a schedule that fits with their personal and professional lives. We know that building a strong workforce is key to the success of community health centers. While pipeline development is important, we know retention of current staff is critical. Our partnership with WGU will allow health centers to encourage existing staff to expand their education and upskill them for new roles within their health center."

IPHCA is a nonprofit trade association that serves as the voice of and champion for Illinois' community health centers. The association delivers tools, training and support to community health centers around the state so they can provide whole-person, exceptional care to their patients.

WGU offers IPHCA members more than 60 undergraduate and graduate degree programs in the high workforce-need areas of health professions, business, IT and education. The university's competency-based approach to learning allows students to take advantage of their knowledge and previous experience to quickly move through material they already know so they can focus on what they still need to learn. Students complete their programs by studying on schedules that fit their lives,

advancing as soon as they demonstrate they have mastered subject matter. WGU faculty members work one-on-one with students as mentors, offering guidance, support and individualized instruction. While WGU's degree programs are rigorous and challenging, competency-based learning makes it possible for students to accelerate their progress and graduate faster, saving both time and money.

“WGU is proud to partner with the Illinois Primary Health Care Association and provide their members with an affordable pathway to furthering their education,” said Dr. Angie Besendorfer, Regional Vice President of Western Governors University. “IPHCA, through its network of community health centers, works to empower and educate communities throughout Illinois, with dedicated healthcare staff working tirelessly to provide vital healthcare services to ensure all residents have access to quality care. IPHCA's partnership with WGU will support that mission.”

Besendorfer adds that, as an online, competency-based university designed to expand access to high-quality education to meet the needs of working adults, WGU is the perfect fit for healthcare workers and other employees who are interested in earning their degrees but have previously been unable to fit traditional schooling into their busy lives.

For more information about WGU and its partnership with IPHCA, visit wgu.edu/IPHCA. For more information about IPHCA, visit iphca.org.

About WGU

Established in 1997 by 19 U.S. governors with a mission to expand access to high-quality, affordable higher education, online, nonprofit WGU now serves more than 129,000 students nationwide and has more than 214,000 graduates in all 50 states. Driving innovation as the nation's leading competency-based university, WGU has been recognized by the White House, state leaders, employers, and students as a model that works in postsecondary education. In just 22 years, the university has become a leading influence in changing the lives of individuals and families and preparing the workforce needed in today's rapidly evolving economy. WGU is accredited by the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities, has been named one of Fast Company's Most Innovative Companies, and has been featured on NPR, NBC Nightly News, CNN, and in The New York Times. Learn more at www.wgu.edu.

About IPHCA

IPHCA is committed to fulfilling its mission of positioning community health centers to be the providers of choice within the communities they serve through advocacy, education, and technical assistance emphasizing the high quality, accessible and integrated health center model of care. IPHCA fosters communication to resolve mutual problems and share successes; provides education and training to enhance the operation of health care services; provides fiscal and management technical assistance to promote efficiency of CHC operations; assists in the recruitment and retention of professional clinical staff; develops and maintains information systems; and promotes linkages between CHCs and related organizations and agencies.