

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

February 2, 2022

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## **IPHCA STATEMENT ON THE STATE OF THE STATE AND FY23 BUDGET ADDRESS**

SPRINGFIELD – Today, we joined Illinoisans across the state to listen to Governor Pritzker’s joint state of the state and budget address. We applaud the Governor and his Administration for endeavoring to prioritize equity, strengthen investment in the safety net, and fortify the healthcare workforce while stabilizing our state fiscally.

In spite of the difficult, uncertain circumstances that we continue to navigate, over the past year, Illinois has emerged as a leader in the health care space. We launched health care transformation projects, piloting innovative, community-based regional partnerships to strengthen investment in historically underserved areas. We became the first state in the country to expand postpartum Medicaid coverage from 60 days to a full year – an important step toward eliminating maternal mortality disparities. And we expanded health coverage to low-income immigrants ages 55-64, building on a pioneering program which established coverage for undocumented seniors ages 65 and up. These are significant steps forward in the pursuit of health equity and we are excited to build on this momentum as the legislative session and budget development process begin to take shape.

Despite the progress we have made, many of the challenges that have long plagued our communities, such as the fragility of funding for safety net programs and health care workforce shortages, have only worsened as a result of the COVID-19 crisis. As our nation reckons with racial injustices, both past and present, the urgent need to strengthen diversity in our health care workforce while also addressing severe workforce shortages in medically underserved areas is clear. We appreciate the Governor’s commitment and proposed multi-prong approach for restoring and growing Illinois’ health care workforce. The Pipeline for the Advancement of Health Care Workforce (PATH) and increases to nurse student loan repayment are aligned with the [Equity and Representation in Health Care Act](#), which IPHCA is championing with Cook County Health. IPHCA looks forward to working with the Governor’s Administration and lawmakers on efforts to improve providers’ ability to recruit, retain, and develop health care workers.

Additionally, to ensure that community health centers are equipped to continue caring for their communities, we invite policymakers to join us in prioritizing protections for the 340B prescription drug discount program. The 340B program has recently come under threat at the state and federal level. [HB4595/SB3729](#) aims to safeguard this vital program which is essential to health centers’ ability to continue to provide affordable medication and access to high-quality, comprehensive care.

“Community health centers are foundational to Illinois’ public health infrastructure and have been instrumental in the fight against COVID-19. We are heartened by the Governor’s vision for improving Illinois’ fiscal position so that we are poised to make the investment necessary to strengthen our health care system and bolster underserved communities,” said Ollie Idowu, President + CEO of IPHCA. “On behalf of our member health centers, we thank Governor Pritzker, Illinois Department of Public Health Director Dr. Ngozi Ezike, Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services Director Theresa Eagleson, and other leaders within the

Administration for their partnership throughout the public health emergency; and we welcome the opportunity to continue working together in support of keeping Illinoisans safe and healthy.”

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*The Illinois Primary Health Care Association is a nonprofit trade association that represents community health centers throughout the state. Illinois’ 53 community health centers provide comprehensive, integrated primary care including medical, behavioral, and oral health care to nearly 1.5 million patients annually across nearly 400 service sites in underserved rural, urban, and suburban communities.*