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Western Governors University and Illinois Primary Health Care Association Renew Partnership to Expand Workforce Development

Renewed agreement continues to support education pathways for more than 10,000 Illinois community health center employees

Springfield, IL (July 2, 2025) — Western Governors University (WGU), a nonprofit, fully online university, and the Illinois Primary Health Care Association (IPHCA) have renewed their collaborative partnership to strengthen Illinois' healthcare workforce through access to flexible, affordable, and competency-based degree programs. The renewed Memorandum of Understanding reinforces both organizations' commitment to developing and retaining healthcare professionals across the state.

Through the extended partnership, employees of IPHCA's 56 member organizations—comprising more than 11,500 staff members—will maintain access to WGU's extensive suite of online undergraduate and graduate programs in healthcare, business, IT, and education. Scholarship opportunities, including WGU's [Community Outreach Partner Scholarship](#) and [Online Access Scholarship](#), will remain available to qualifying IPHCA staff to reduce financial and digital barriers to education.

"IPHCA is proud to continue partnering 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 health center," said Ashley Colwell, Vice President of Clinical Services and Workforce Development for IPHCA. "WGU offers self-paced learning, which allows students to take 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 the more than 1.5 million patients they serve annually.

WGU's model allows students to complete coursework on their own schedules, progressing as soon as they demonstrate mastery—an especially critical option for working adults in high-demand fields like nursing and health administration.

"Renewing our partnership with IPHCA is deeply meaningful for us at WGU," said Dr. Terrance Hopson, Regional Vice President of Western Governors University. "We recognize the vital role IPHCA and its member organizations play in serving communities across Illinois, often on the front lines of care. By continuing this collaboration, we're not just providing access to education—we're investing in the people who make healthcare work. Together, we're helping to empower a more skilled, resilient, and mission-driven workforce that reflects the needs and values of the communities it serves."

For more information about the partnership or to explore scholarship options, visit www.wgu.edu or www.iphca.org.

About IPHCA

The Illinois Primary Health Care Association (IPHCA) is a nonprofit trade association that serves as the voice of and champion for Illinois' 56 community health centers, which serve more than 1.5 million patients annually across more than 430 service sites in medically underserved rural, urban, and suburban areas. Learn more at IPHCA.ORG.

About WGU

Western Governors University, the nation's leading nonprofit, online university, is transforming higher education to be more student-centric, affordable, accessible to all and relevant to the workforce. Established in 1997 by 19 visionary U.S. governors, WGU creates life-changing pathways to opportunity for those underserved by traditional institutions — working adults, historically underrepresented communities and a diverse, growing number of learners looking for a flexible, online model that better suits their life circumstances. WGU's competency-based education model allows students to demonstrate mastery as they progress through programs at their own pace.

Accredited by the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities, WGU operates in all 50 states and offers more than 80 programs in health, education, technology and business. WGU serves more than 175,000 students nationwide, with more than 340,000 alumni, and has awarded more than 380,000 degrees. Learn more at wgu.edu. Follow WGU on X at [@wgu](https://twitter.com/wgu) and on [LinkedIn](https://www.linkedin.com/company/wgu).

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