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CONTACTS:
City Tech Collaborative | Collaborate@CityTech.org

CHICAGO HEALTH ATLASJOINS UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS CHICAGO
City Tech’s Award-Winning Public Health Data Portal Enhanced with New Platform, Analytics Capabilities

On May 13, the Chicago Health Atlas (www.ChicagoHealthAtlas.org) will move from its current home at City Tech Collaborative to the University of Illinois Chicago (UIC) School of Public Health, which will further extend the Chicago Health Atlas’ reach and impact.

The Chicago Health Atlas – which is managed through a partnership between UIC’s School of Public Health, Metopio, and the Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH) – is a free community health data resource that residents, community organizations, and public health stakeholders can use to easily search, analyze, and download neighborhood-level health data for Chicago’s 77 community areas. For nearly 10 years, the Chicago Health Atlas has created opportunities for learning and action on more than 160 public health indicators and datasets from more than 30 participating healthcare, community, and research partners, including CDPH, MAPSCorps, and the Sinai Urban Health Institute.

To date, Chicago Health Atlas datasets have been accessed by more than 150,000 new users since the website’s launch in 2013.

“Since its creation, the Chicago Health Atlas has empowered individuals and organizations to understand and take action on the many interrelated factors that influence our communities’ health and wellness as well as the health disparities affecting residents,” said Brenna Berman, CEO of City Tech Collaborative. “I am confident that the UIC School of Public Health is the best organization to carry this mission forward and put information directly in the hands of those who need it most.”

“UIC is proud to serve Chicago, its communities and its public health students, researchers, advocates and policymakers by taking on the Atlas and expanding its capabilities and reach,” said Dr. Wayne Giles, dean of the UIC School of Public Health. “Policies that impact public health are only as good as data that informs them, and the Chicago Health Atlas is among our greatest assets in Chicago for understanding the needs of our communities.”

The transition of the Chicago Health Atlas to UIC coincides with its move to a new platform and launch of advanced capabilities that will provide more tools for users. The School of Public Health’s recently launched Population Health Analytics, Metrics, and Evaluation, or PHAME, Center, spearheaded the updates and will oversee the Atlas going forward alongside the CDPH Office of Epidemiology. Updates will include increased community engagement opportunities as well as advanced analytics capabilities and enhanced data visualizations. The new interface, which is powered by Metopio, will make it even easier for anyone to use data to understand health disparities and drive real change regardless of their data science experience.

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The PHAME Center was established in 2020 with an award from the Otho S. A. Sprague Memorial Institute to support the Chicago Health Atlas, CDPH’s Healthy Chicago initiatives, and similar efforts to make health and wellness data useful to all. The PHAME Center is co-led by Sage Kim, UIC associate professor of health policy and administration, and Sanjib Basu, the UIC Paul Levy and Virginia F. Tomasek Professor of Biostatistics. Prior to joining the PHAME Center, the Chicago Health Atlas was initially developed in 2012 by the Smart Chicago Collaborative and the Chicago Department of Public Health with funding from the Otho S. A. Sprague Memorial Institute; following the 2017 merger of Smart Chicago Collaborative and City Digital to create City Tech Collaborative, the Atlas has continued to reach new audiences and expand its abilities.

James Alexander, executive director of The Otho S. A. Sprague Memorial Institute, notes the board’s commitment to public health programs. “Since The Institute’s initial grant to the Chicago Department of Public Health in early 2000, the Chicago Health Atlas has continuously evolved. It has been enriched by each successive manager. In 2012, the Smart Chicago Collaborative provided important new dimensions. Since 2017 their work was enhanced by the City Tech Collaborative team. With the creation of the PHAME Center in 2020 and their stewardship of the Atlas, The Institute is optimistic that the multi-disciplinary skills of campus faculty, students and researchers will make the Atlas an ever-more useful resource.”

The Chicago Health Atlas has grown to include critical health and wellness information such as available affordable housing units, grocery store density, Department of Family and Support Services resources, and air quality data. A key source in understanding complex health issues and how they affect different communities, the Atlas provides information on the opioid epidemic, and, more recently, the latest COVID-19 data including testing locations, data on underlying conditions tied to the virus, and a map of essential businesses by zip code. The Chicago Innovation Awards recognized these efforts in 2020 by naming City Tech Collaborative one of 23 winners out of 272 nominees.

“The Chicago Health Atlas continues to be a key resource to aggregate, understand, and share critical health information for Chicago residents and communities,” said CDPH Commissioner Dr. Allison Arwady. “As we have seen so clearly during the COVID-19 pandemic, open data resources are vital not only for public health officials, but also for the grassroots organizations and individuals responding to immediate and long-term health issues in their communities. With the PHAME Center, we are excited to channel the public’s enthusiasm for data toward broader efforts to improve the city’s health.”

To learn more about the Chicago Health Atlas visit www.ChicagoHealthAtlas.org.

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About City Tech Collaborative
City Tech Collaborative (City Tech) is an urban solutions accelerator that tackles problems too big for any single sector or organization to solve alone. City Tech’s work uses IoT sensing networks, advanced analytics, and urban design to create scalable, market ready solutions. Current initiatives address mobility, healthy cities, connected infrastructure, and emerging growth opportunities. City Tech was born and raised in Chicago, and every city is a potential partner. Visit www.CityTech.org for more information and follow us on Twitter and LinkedIn.

About the Chicago Health Atlas
The Chicago Health Atlas is a community health data resource that residents, community organizations, and public health stakeholders can easily search, analyze, and download neighborhood-level health data for the City of Chicago. A City Tech solution, the Chicago Health Atlas was initially developed in 2012 by the Smart Chicago Collaborative and the Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH) with funding from the Otho S. A. Sprague Memorial Institute. Explore the Chicago Health Atlas by visiting www.ChicagoHealthAtlas.org.

About the University of Illinois Chicago
The University of Illinois Chicago is Chicago’s largest university and only public research institution. Its 16 academic colleges serve more than 33,000 undergraduate, graduate and professional students. UIC is recognized as one of the most ethnically rich and culturally diverse campuses in the nation, a leader in providing access for underrepresented students. With seven health sciences colleges, UIC is the state’s principal educator of health professionals and a major health care provider to underserved communities.

About the Otho S. A. Sprague Memorial Institute
The Otho S. A. Sprague Memorial Institute is a Chicago-based independent grantmaker founded in 1911. Guided by an all-volunteer Board, The Institute seeks innovative ways to respond to public health issues while implementing the founder’s stated mission: the investigation of the cause of disease and the prevention and relief of human suffering in the City of Chicago. Learn more at www.spragueinstitute.org.

About the Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH)
CDPH is the health authority for the City of Chicago, representing nearly 2.7 million residents. The department is nationally recognized for its equity-focused community health improvement plans, including the recently launched Healthy Chicago 2025 plan to close the city’s racial life expectancy gap. Through its Office of Epidemiology, CDPH leads innovative efforts to collect, analyze, and disseminate population health data. In addition to its co-management of the Chicago Health Atlas, CDPH leads the annual Healthy Chicago Survey and Chicago’s COVID Dashboard.

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