

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CONTACTS:City Tech Collaborative | Collaborate@CityTech.orgSWITCH | Angela.Barnes@CityTech.org**CITY TECH LAUNCHES NEW ORGANIZATION TO BROADEN HEALTH EQUITY IN CHICAGO***SWITCH Will Leverage Technology-Enabled Solutions to Improve Community Health and Wellness in Historically Underserved Communities*

Chicago – City Tech Collaborative (City Tech) is launching a new organization to leverage technology-enabled solutions and measurably improve community health delivery and wellness outcomes in Chicago’s most underserved communities.

The new organization, SWITCH, which stands for Sustainable Wellness through Innovation, Technology, & Collaborative Health, is a collaboration platform that accelerates, innovates, and scales tech-enabled solutions for healthcare challenges. SWITCH will bring together skilled partners as well as engage residents and healthcare patients to ensure they have an active voice in solution creation. In addition, SWITCH will leverage a robust and proprietary racial equity and inclusion (REI) methodology to address inherent bias in existing solution development processes.

SWITCH builds on City Tech’s solutions and partnerships to create healthy cities such as expanding partnerships and social determinants of health for the [Chicago Health Atlas](#), engaging residents to give feedback on [new local air quality tools](#), and quantifying cities’ [urban heat island reduction efforts](#). To prioritize accountability, equity, and inclusivity throughout solution development, City Tech developed [REI tools](#) that underpin each step of the process. General Counsel and Director of Legal Affairs & Growth Initiatives Angela E.L. Barnes will lead SWITCH, which she says is addressing the inherent inequities in the provision of services throughout Chicago.

“The pandemic has only exacerbated what we already know to be true: systematic disparities and biases create significant barriers to achieving health and wellness for all communities,” said Angela E.L. Barnes, founder of SWITCH. “These growing health disparities are even more evident in Chicago’s BIPOC communities on the South and West sides. With the development of SWITCH, I’m excited to deliver resident- and community-informed solutions that overcome these physical, digital, and socioeconomic barriers to health so that all communities can flourish.”

[Verizon](#), the [University of Illinois Chicago \(UIC\) Innovation Center](#), and [OSF HealthCare](#) join SWITCH as partners. The UIC Innovation Center and OSF will leverage diverse and talented students from the Innovation Center to help grow SWITCH and its solutions. In September, SWITCH joined the 2021 Health Equity Innovation Accelerator Program powered by MATTER and YWCA of Metropolitan Chicago. The eight-week accelerator program is supporting SWITCH and other organizations through mentorship, exclusive resources and interactive curriculum from subject matter experts, and business concept validation to bring solutions to market.

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SWITCH will also carry forward elements of City Tech’s solution development process and will leverage its proven methodology to identify urban issues, develop and implement solutions using technology and collaboration, and scale those solutions to drive broader impact. Using these tools, SWITCH will:

- Enable healthcare systems to deconstruct barriers to equitable healthcare;
- Empower residents with information, tools, technology, and models to successfully address community health inequities; and
- Engage geographically targeted entrepreneurs and established corporate entities to develop community health wellness solutions and processes to be proven within the local community.

The organization’s first solution will focus on solving health inequities and building trust between healthcare providers and residents in historically underserved communities. SWITCH will leverage OSF’s existing CommunityConnect software and expand the program to non-OSF clinics and community-based organizations to serve Medicaid patients as well as integrate SWITCH’s racial equity and inclusion tool into the application’s care plan development. The software is currently in use at 14 OSF hospitals across Illinois; [pandemic healthcare workers](#) have used the software to keep individuals with a low risk of COVID-19 complications out of the hospital and identify appropriate interim teams and interventions.

“SWITCH is well-positioned to develop responsive solutions that address the diverse needs and priorities of community residents,” said Dr. John Vozenilek, Vice President, Chief Medical Officer for Innovation and Digital Health at OSF HealthCare. “We’re proud to be a partner in improving health and wellness for all communities.”

This effort highlights how removing technology barriers can result in more effective and equitable health outcomes. Community-based health workers and volunteers are key links between patients and care providers. Too often, however, these care team members do not readily have access to patients’ electronic health records, and therefore critical information can be missing from care planning, coordination, and management. Tools such as OSF CommunityConnect utilize social determinants of health as a critical component to create better patient care plans, track patient outcomes, and achieve measurable improvements in the health outcomes of communities.

SWITCH is one of several new efforts by City Tech to address industry-specific challenges in the rapidly evolving smart cities arena. City Tech has also announced the launch of [Civic Infrastructure Collaborative](#), an independent nonprofit organization focused on driving public value from core urban infrastructure, and new tools to support and scale City Tech’s [resident engagement program](#).

To learn more about City Tech’s future, please visit www.CityTech.org.

For more information about SWITCH, please email Angela E.L. Barnes at Angela.Barnes@CityTech.org.

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About SWITCH

Sustainable Wellness through Innovation, Technology, & Collaborative Health (SWITCH) a collaboration platform that accelerates, innovates, and scales tech-enabled solutions. Our mission is to increase health equity and measurably improve community health delivery and wellness outcomes in Chicago’s most underserved communities through collaboratively developing solutions; engaging residents and patients to ensure they have an active voice in solution creation; and leveraging a robust racial equity and inclusion (REI) methodology to address inherent bias in existing solution development processes.

About City Tech Collaborative (City Tech)

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.

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