

**JB Pritzker, Governor**  
**Theresa Eagleson, Director**

201 South Grand Avenue East  
Springfield, Illinois 62763-0002

**Telephone:** (217) 782-1200  
**TTY:** (800) 526-5812

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**CONTACT**

**April 20, 2021**

Jamie.Munks@illinois.gov

## **Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services announces partnership with Chicago Public Schools to Promote Health Resources for Medicaid-Eligible Students**

*Joint Initiative Increases Awareness of Health Resources Available for CPS Students and Families*

*Chicago* – The Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services (HFS), the Chicago Public Schools’ (CPS) Office of Student Health and Wellness (OSHW), and HealthChoice Illinois today announced a new joint initiative to raise awareness of the free public health resources that exist for CPS students and families that are enrolled in the Medicaid program.

The ‘Every Superhero Needs a Sidekick’ campaign, named after the wonderful CPS parents, will raise awareness about the full spectrum of healthcare and social services available to the more than 240,000 CPS students and families enrolled in Medicaid, and those who are eligible but not yet enrolled.

“We’re honored to team up with CPS to give students and their families the support they deserve when it comes to reaching the healthcare services they need,” **said Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services Director Theresa Eagleson.** “Many healthcare services exist for Medicaid-eligible Illinoisans, but we know that sometimes families could use some

assistance to determine what services are available and how best to access them. Our health plans are doing great work, as evidenced by this partnership.”

Illinois Medicaid managed care organizations (MCOs) played an integral role in the development of this initiative and will be working closely with CPS to connect eligible families to the services they need. The services include COVID-19 testing, health risk screenings, vaccinations, wellness check doctor visits, prescriptions, therapy, transportation to and from a doctor and much more.

The CPS Office of Student Health and Wellness is committed to ensuring every child has a medical home, and that families have access to the health care services they need. Through the new initiative with HFS, which administers Illinois’ Medicaid program and serves to more than 3 million residents across the state, critical support will be available to CPS families who are currently enrolled in Medicaid and the estimated more than 37,000 students who are eligible but not yet enrolled.

“Equitable access to adequate healthcare is a fundamental human right that enables us at CPS to serve the whole student, a key pillar of our vision as a district,” **said CPS CEO Dr. Janice K. Jackson**. “I want to thank the Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services and HealthChoice Illinois for their partnership in this initiative to get all of our families access to important health services.”

“Healthy students are better learners. Health insurance is critical for access to a medical home which is a powerful force for building a culture of health,” **said CPS’ Chief Health Officer, Dr. Ken Fox**. “Every child deserves equitable access to resources and opportunities necessary to lead a healthy life in all the places they learn, live and play.”

The campaign is rolling out throughout Chicago, with a focus on areas where there is under-enrollment, including on the West and South sides, with promotion in schools, advertising on CTA, social media and broadcast platforms. The aim is to both promote enrollment for those who are eligible, and to drive engagement between current Medicaid-enrolled families and health care providers, so they can utilize the full range of benefits available to them.

For more information, visit [www.cps.edu/cfbu](http://www.cps.edu/cfbu). Illinois residents who would like to explore their Medicaid eligibility and apply for available programs are encouraged to visit <https://abe.illinois.gov/abe/access/>.