



## NEWS RELEASE

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### **Illinois Department of Public Health Welcomes Health Equity Champion and Nursing Leader as New Assistant Director**

**CHICAGO** – The Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) announced today Governor JB Pritzker’s appointment of Janice Phillips, Ph.D., RN, CENP, FAAN as its new Assistant Director. A result-oriented health professional with experience as a clinician, researcher, educator, nurse regulator, author and public policy advocate, Phillips most recently served as the Director of Nursing Research and Health Equity at Rush University Medical Center and Associate Professor in the Department of Community Systems and Mental Health Nursing at Rush College of Nursing.

“I am so pleased by Governor Pritzker’s appointment of Dr. Phillips to serve as the Assistant Director of the Illinois Department of Public Health,” said IDPH Director Sameer Vohra.

“Janice brings her passion for public health and community partnerships to our department. She will help guide the agency, as we develop strategies to promote health equity throughout Illinois. I look forward to seeing the impact her leadership has on the work of IDPH.”

In her new role, Phillips will focus on the elimination of health disparities and inequities through the establishment of new and strengthening of existing collaborations between IDPH and external community partners across the state, including the 97 certified local health departments throughout Illinois.

In addition to numerous academic and clinical positions in the Chicagoland area, Phillips served as a Robert Wood Johnson Health Policy Fellow in the United States Senate, where she focused on implementing the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (known as Obamacare), and worked with House and Senate staff in support of Senate Bill 507, the “Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act of 2011.”

“I am honored to serve in this capacity and work alongside IDPH staff and communities who share a passion for achieving health equity throughout our state,” said Phillips. “I consider it a gift to be able to use my experience and expertise for the betterment of Illinoisians.”

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A prolific writer, Phillips has authored more than 150 publications and five edited textbooks. She has written numerous Op-ed pieces on health equity and health policy for publications including *Scientific American*, *The Hill*, and *U.S. News & World Report*. A recipient of the University of Illinois College of Nursing SAGE Award and the National Black Nurses' Association Lifetime Achievement Award, Phillips was inducted into the American Academy of Nursing for her distinguished contribution to addressing breast cancer disparities nationally and internationally. She holds a BS in Nursing from North Park College, an MS in Community Health from St. Xavier University, and a Ph.D. in Nursing from the University of Illinois, College of Nursing.

Phillips, whose appointment is subject to Senate confirmation, will begin with IDPH on July 10, 2023, filling a vacancy created by the impending retirement of Amaal V.E. Tokars, Ed.D. "We are immensely grateful to Assistant Director Tokars for the leadership and service she has given to IDPH and the people of Illinois. We are a better state because of her advocacy and commitment to our health and well-being, and we wish her the very best in the next chapter of her life's journey," said Director Vohra.

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**About IDPH:** The Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH), first organized in 1877, is one of the state's oldest agencies. With headquarters in Springfield and Chicago, it also has seven regional offices located around the state, three laboratories and 1,200 employees. IDPH is organized into 12 offices that operate 200 different public health programs that work with local partner agencies to benefit each state resident and visitor. Underlying all these efforts is a firm commitment to a public health system that prioritizes health equity and addressing health disparities. This system forms a frontline defense against infectious disease, chronic disease, cancer and mental health/substance abuse. The department also focuses on promoting maternal and child health, environmental health and food safety and regulates hospitals, nursing homes and the state's Emergency Medical Services systems.