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Chicago Department of Public Health announces hiring of first Chief Racial Equity Officer to drive work in health equity

Sandi Brown joins CDPH with a long history of work at the intersection of organizational development and racial equity

CHICAGO – The Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH) today announced the hiring of its first ever Chief Racial Equity Officer, Sandi Brown, who will work to ensure that health and racial equity inform everything the department does. The hiring of Brown comes after CDPH launched its new five-year health improvement plan, Healthy Chicago 2025, in September, which is dedicated to closing the almost 9-year life expectancy gap between Blacks and whites in Chicago.

“We are so pleased to welcome Sandi Brown into this new role, which is both unprecedented and overdue,” said CDPH Commissioner Allison Arwady, M.D. “This will bolster and drive CDPH’s commitment to dismantling racist systems and addressing health inequities in Chicago, as reflected in our Healthy Chicago 2025 plan.”

Prior to joining CDPH, Brown worked at Elgin Community College, where she was responsible for creating and implementing strategic plans, training programs and organizational process improvements to foster diversity, equity and inclusion across the education system. Brown has also worked as a Diversity and Inclusion Consultant for Bea Young and Associates, Inc., as well as her work in EEO/Labor Compliance for the Illinois Department of Transportation. In that role, she focused on expanding opportunities for minority and women-owned businesses.

“I’m excited and humbled by this new opportunity and the chance to work on issues of racial equity and justice that I’m so passionate about,” said Brown. “Those issues are inextricably linked to health, and when I saw the work CDPH was doing in this area I knew I wanted to join the team here.”

The hiring of Brown is in line with CDPH’s mission to promote and improve health by engaging residents, communities and partners in establishing and implementing policies and services that prioritize Chicagoans and neighborhoods with the greatest need. The department places a major emphasis on collecting, analyzing and disseminating data, and in collaboration with community partners, using that data to inform program, policy and funding decisions.

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