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**New Chicago Public Schools Health Officer will Focus
On Developing Comprehensive Healthy Schools Program**

Dr. Stephanie Whyte to join District; work with City's Health Department to heighten focus on student health to help boost academic success

CHICAGO -- Dr. Stephanie Whyte has accepted the position of Chief Health Officer for Chicago Public Schools (CPS), a new position that will both oversee critical student health programs within CPS and collaborate with the Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH) on the "Healthy Schools" component of the citywide "Healthy Chicago" initiatives. Her appointment will be presented to the Chicago Board of Education for final approval at its regular meeting on January 25th.

"I am excited to have Dr. Whyte as part of the CPS team. We know through research that the overall health and well-being of our students is critical to ensuring their attendance, attentiveness and classroom achievement," said CPS CEO Jean-Claude Brizard. "Her appointment as Chief Health Officer will fulfill a key element of CPS's efforts to promote wellness and academic student achievement."

Dr. Whyte boasts an educational background as both a Medical Doctor with a focus on pediatrics and a Masters of Business Administration (MBA) with extensive experience working in diverse CPS communities. The position of Chief Health Officer will have a dual-reporting relationship to both the CPS Chief Education Office and to CDPH. The mission of the Chief Health Officer is centered on improving the health of the district's children by promoting public health initiatives, implementing health policy in the school system and institutionalizing a relationship with CDPH.

The Healthy Chicago initiative, announced by Mayor Emanuel last Fall, defines citywide health and wellness priorities such as obesity prevention, HIV prevention, tobacco use, chronic disease management, healthy homes and adolescent health. Dr. Whyte will be spearheading the Healthy Schools component of the initiative, focusing on areas such as asthma, teen pregnancy and motherhood, school bullying, and sexually transmitted infection and disease prevention.

"I am honored to serve in a capacity that will focus on and promote the indisputable link between healthy students and schools and academic achievement," Dr. Whyte said. "I look forward to working with the leadership team to positively impact student health and increase achievement in the classroom."

Among other directives, the Healthy Chicago initiative calls on CPS to approve a wellness policy that includes extending existing agreements between CDPH and CPS to allow for continued STI and immunization services.

"This appointment shows the commitment we have made to improving the health of adolescents in our city, and another step towards implementing the goals in Healthy Chicago, our public health agenda. We are so pleased to begin working with Dr. Whyte," said Dr. Bechara Choucair, Commissioner for the Chicago Department of Public Health.

Research shows the health of students is a key factor in attendance, engagement and academic performance. While asthma, diabetes, obesity and other chronic conditions often impact 20 to 30 percent of children and adolescents in the United States, studies show that asthma is the leading cause of school absence and accounts for three times more lost school days than any other condition. Students who require more frequent and intricate medical services will often experience a higher incidence of school absences which can translate, over time, to a decrease in educational outcomes.

Dr. Whyte is a CPS alumna (she attended Paul Revere School) and earned her bachelor's degree from Illinois Wesleyan University in 1991 and her degree as a medical doctor from Fitch University of Health Science/The Chicago Medical School in 1996. She completed a residency in pediatrics at Louisiana State University Medical Center in 1999 and earned her MBA from St. Xavier University in 2009. She is a board-certified pediatric physician and fellow of the American Academy of Pediatrics.

She was most recently the Medical Director for the Mobile CARE Foundation. The Foundation operates mobile medical units, the Asthma Vans that bring needed asthma care and education to hundreds of students each year at dozens of schools and Head Start sites across the city. By bringing treatment directly to patients, Mobile CARE is able to overcome the barriers to access faced in hard-to-reach communities.

Prior to joining Mobile CARE Foundation in 2001, she practiced community pediatrics in some of Chicago's most underserved areas, such as of Austin, Cabrini Green and various South Side neighborhoods. Dr. Whyte has spent the last decade caring for children with asthma in the Chicago Public School system via the CARE Asthma Vans.

Dr. Whyte has been an outspoken thought and opinion leader; a medical expert; a marketer; and a strategic planner. She is a published author and lectures on health care issues, and has served on local, regional and national advisory boards.

In addition, she has served as a spokesperson for the Respiratory Health Association of Metropolitan Chicago's Asthma Education Campaign targeting African-American communities. Her passion and love of her work is evident in her efforts to educate and empower patients, families, colleagues and communities.

Dr. Whyte is a member of the Chicago Asthma Consortium and American College of Physician Executives. Her MBA is in Public and Nonprofit Management. She is married with two children. If approved by the Board, Dr. Whyte is expected to begin her new assignment in mid-February.

The Chicago Public Schools serves approximately 405,000 students in more than 675 schools. It is the nation's third-largest school system.