

Empowering Community Health in a Time of Crisis

Help. Guide. Thrive.

Pandemic Health Navigator Program

"COVID-19 affected our communities in many different ways. The main thing is the fear of the unknown and not having adequate access to healthcare, education on the disease, testing, and vaccinations. Schools and many employers reverting to remote learning and working placed more of a strain on households on top of job losses and businesses closing. All of this changed the way we function on top of the disparities that were already within the communities when it comes to the quality of life for the citizens."

- Angelia Gower, NAACP Madison Branch



NAACP Branches helped close long-standing health equity gaps across Illinois by participating in the Pandemic Health Navigator Program. The Community Health Workers they hired brought COVID-19 vaccines to medical deserts and served as a reliable source of information about the virus.

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CONCLUSION

Illinois Department of Public Health Regions

The Pandemic Health Navigator Program operated in regions 2 - 9, which included 92 Illinois counties.



SOURCE:

Illinois Department of Public Health"





The COVID-19 Pandemic challenged our health care systems in ways few thought possible. As the severity of this public health crisis began to unfold, our teams jumped into action to assess how we could aid families in Illinois directly affected by the virus. Through funding from the Illinois Department of Public Health, we were able to conduct research, build partnerships, and ultimately deploy a statewide network and program to help Illinois residents across the state.

At the heart of the program were more than 650 Illinoisans who answered our call to serve the communities they live in as Community Health Workers. They fulfilled more than 137,000 resource requests in just over a year. They fed the hungry. They brought medicine to the sick. They provided resources for a safe place to quarantine while protecting loved ones. They brought life-saving vaccines to communities accustomed to disenfranchisement and neglect. And ultimately, they developed relationships and trust with community members that enabled them to dispel misinformation, break down barriers and become a lifeline for residents in need.

The Pandemic Health Navigator Program is a support system that could not have materialized without strong backing from the community-based organizations, federally qualified health centers, our friends at Slalom, and the dedicated professionals at the Department. Any successes we celebrate happened because of their hard work and the professionalism of the Community Health Workers they enabled. On behalf of the Illinois Public Health Association and the Illinois Primary Health Care Association, thank you all for your devotion to making the PHN program possible.

We hope to see an end to this pandemic, but the need to connect Illinoisans with basic human services will remain. Community Health Workers are an evidence-based solution to bridging longstanding health equity gaps that have plagued communities for decades. We can minimize these health inequities, and we look forward to carrying on with this important work.

This report provides a glimpse of the amazing effort and dedication among so many to launch a program that impacted countless residents throughout the state in their time of need. To all those advancing the cause of better community health, we say thank you for your support. Know that you have allies in Illinois who support you.



Ollie Idowa,
President & CEO,
Illinois Primary Health Care
Association



Tom Hughes,
Executive Director,
Illinois Public Health Association



"The representative that helped me was very professional and was so very caring and nice. She helped me more than anything or anyone did."

- Pandemic Health Navigator Program client, Fall 2021

BY THE NUMBERS

The Pandemic Health Navigator Program set out to be adaptive and reach underserved communities throughout Illinois.

Impact of the Program

The Pandemic Health Navigator Program made it possible for federally qualified health centers, community-based organizations, and local public health departments to hire and train Community Health Workers to deliver basic human needs to people impacted by COVID-19.

As part of their work with the Pandemic Health Navigator Program (PHNP), Community Health Workers offered a wide variety of services to connect residents with COVID-19 resources, education, and outreach during the pandemic. Federal dollars were released by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) then disbursed to the Illinois Public Health Association (IPHA) and the Illinois Primary Health Care Association (IPHCA) to administer COVID-19 relief in 92 of the 102 counties in Illinois. The Community Health Workers trained and hired through the program worked with community-based organizations (CBO) and federally qualified health centers (FQHC) chosen by IPHA and IPHCA.

Using their training, provided by IPHA and IPHCA, and knowledge of their service area, Community Health Workers fulfilled requests from residents affected by COVID-19, such as:

- Reliable information about the COVID-19 virus, testing and vaccines
- Food security
- Access to health care and medicine
- Safe shelter for quarantine or isolation
- Assistance applying for public programs, including WIC, TANF, Medicaid and subsidies for rent and utilities payments
- · Access to behavioral health services"

2,000

Educational events and wellness fairs hosted

Partners hosted more than 2,000 educational events and wellness fairs. These events provided opportunities for collaboration and networking among our partners, as well as their counterparts throughout their service regions.

In addition to COVID-19 vaccination clinics, many of these events presented opportunities to distribute community resources about cancer, chronic diseases, and behavioral health awareness.

Division of Funding

76%
Grant funding to Community-Based Organizations

25%
Grant funding to Federally Qualified Health Centers

By the Numbers

Here are some of the numbers highlighting that impact.

More than



97%

of Client Satisfaction Surveys were submitted, indicating participants were satisfied or very satisfied with the services they received



of resource requests were fulfilled within 48 hours

25 ×××

languages were spoken by the Community Health Workers



137,000+

total Resource Requests fulfilled through PHNP.

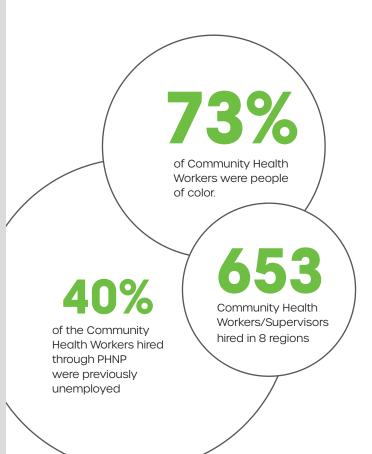
Most Common Resources Listed in a Request

70% Food Assistance

2% Household Item Assistance

Housing Related
Assistance

15% Income Assistance



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- " I feel very fortunate that there are programs like this to assist people in need."
- Pandemic Health Navigator Program client, Fall 2021

OBJECTIVES & GOALS

Health inequity existed long before the pandemic, and public health officials understood a deadly novel virus would amplify the divide for disadvantaged communities.

Objective & Goals

At the onset of the program build, IPHA and IPHCA were tasked with four main objectives:

Address

unmet community needs in coordination with local, regional and state partners

Provide

tion and outreach to communities and impacted populations

Ease

the navigation of care resource coordination for regional COVID-impacted residents

Assist

with contact tracing support to the Illinois Contact Tracing Collaborative

Strategy & Approach

To help bridge the resource gap and adhere to program objectives, IPHA and IPHCA intentionally developed a program that reached ethnic and economically diverse communities hardest hit by the pandemic.

This included careful planning in establishing diverse community partnerships, developing educational materials, and targeted messaging. The approach

included building a resource directory to inform program partners on the suite of services available to residents. It was imperative to identify existing resources as well as gaps in service to build a program that complemented and enhanced the existing

The right partnerships were critical.

IPHA and IPHCA had worked well with

CBOs and FQHCs to deliver community

community health structure.

health services before, but never at the proposed scale under one program. The eventual list of more than 80 partners was strategically selected to meet needs throughout the state and to reach target

communities and populations. Further, these

partnerships were not developed with a fee for service approach so that IPHA and IPHCA could help partners build an infrastructure to support community health work beyond the pandemic. Partnership and endorsement by the Office of the Illinois Governor was also instrumental in partner outreach and the initial program build and launch.

Staff and volunteers with Community Health Care, Inc. offer COVID-19 information at a public health event in Region 2.

Community

Research

In addition to building partnerships, it was important to obtain feedback from community partners and PHNP clients about their needs and experience with the program.

Interviews with community leaders and organizations were conducted in February 2021 to determine what they were experiencing on the ground and how a program like PHNP could expand their ability to help local residents. In another initiative, more than 800 Illinoisans completed an anonymous survey that provided PHNP supervisors a glimpse into the needs and attitudes most prominent during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The two most prominent themes that emerged from this research included a varying approach towards understanding and handling the pandemic in different parts of the state and a significant amount of hesitancy among residents in trusting the data and science. Resident surveys suggested there was a lack of clarity in COVID-19 messaging or simply a high volume of misinformation. This data helped shape program development as well as messaging and communications strategy.



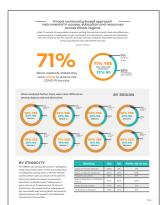


Illinois COVID-19 Regions 2-9









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Training & Technology

IPHA has long supported Community Health Workers (CHW) with training, resources, and development. PHNP presented a unique challenge of onboarding and training hundreds of workers statewide to launch the program and continue training on an on-going basis.

Maintaining this network and knowledge base required the development of robust training modules regarding the program goals, public health guidelines, communication strategies, resources for residents, grant deliverables and more. Additional trainings and educational workshops were also added throughout the life of the program.

While canvassing communities, Community Health Workers tracked and submitted resource requests from the field, in real time, using the Salesforce platform. Local health departments could also submit resource requests to the PHNP directly through Salesforce and a CHW would connect directly with the client.

Regular and timely communication on program updates among all stakeholders was also important. Various digital tools were implemented to facilitate the flow of communication. CBO leaders and Community Health Workers from all regions interacted with each other by giving advice, sharing contacts, and informing others about community events. Daily media digests were utilized to keep CBOs, FQHCs, and other partners up to date on national, regional, and local COVID-19-related news stories.

Bi-weekly newsletters were released and included stories from the field, data on resource requests, and Community Health Worker spotlights.

Pandemic Health
Navigator Program

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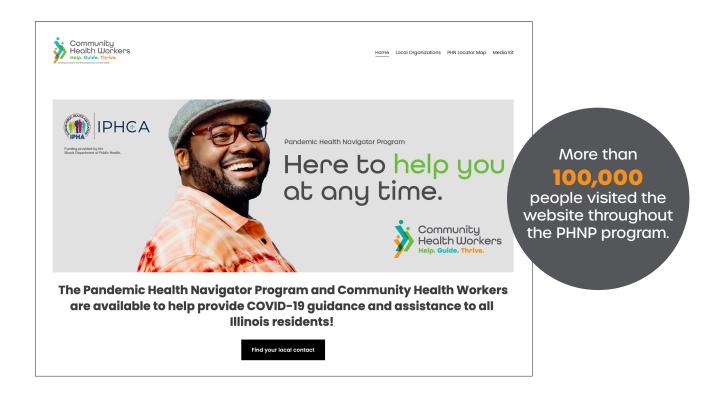
NAVIGATOR NOTES: Region Four C.B.O. shows
family they are not alone

This is Part One of a series highlighting the life changing services performed by Community
Health Workers across Illinois.

A Madison County family of seven, initially hesitant to seek basic human needs, now knows
there is a community that cares about their health, safety, and well-being.

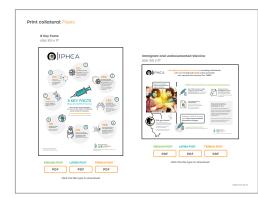
Within two weeks of receiving a referral from a W.I.C. case worker, program supervisors at
Coordinated Youth and Human Services (C.Y.H.S.) in Granite City arranged for the family to
receive groceries on a weekly basis, children's beds and a pack-and-play, clothing, interpretive
services, and even medical examinations for mom and newborn baby. The life-altering changes
came to a family battling their own COVID-19 infections and anxiety about seeking public
health benefits because of their immigration status.

The primary function of the program's website, helpguidethrive.org, was to guide Illinoisans to organizations participating in PHNP and to reliable resources about COVID-19 vaccination.



Appelares the filter plates Progress
Community Health Workers
Digital Media Tologram
Bollist Account to
URDANIE SEA21





Additionally, the site contained a digital toolkit for partners to download various flyers, social media posts and brochures in multiple languages. This website housed an updated directory of CBOs and FQHCs through a locator map and alphabetized list.

A blog series was also added to inform residents as well as partners on public health developments and guidelines during the pandemic.

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The Brand

While the official name was the Pandemic Health Navigator Regional Coordinators program, IPHA and IPHCA wanted to focus attention on the most essential part of the effort - the Community Health Worker



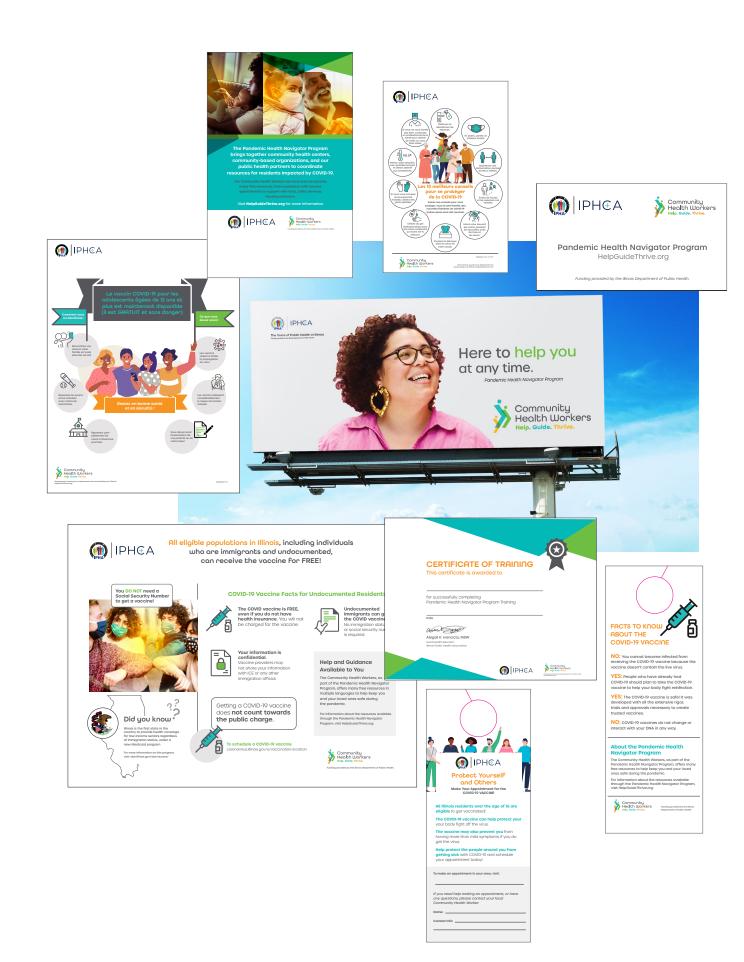




Spanish version of logo

Thus, the official logo and brand featured Community Health Workers with a color scheme and tagline to emphasize their purpose: **Help** residents in need; **Guide** residents to resources and away from misinformation, and facilitate a path to help residents **Thrive**. These three words were essential to the program's objective and were not only incorporated into the brand but also became the website URL – helpguidethrive.org.

The development of the brand gave way to the creation of a complete marketing campaign including logo placements, educational materials, social media, advertising, a new website, branded video and more.



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"I can't express enough how appreciative I am of the employee of [the PHN organization]...he was so kind and helpful in my time of need. Thank you to [him] and everyone who is involved in this organization."

- Pandemic Health Navigator Program client, Fall 2021

EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS

The communications strategy for PHNP included the development of dozens of materials for Community Health Workers to distribute while engaging with their communities. The materials educated communities on how COVID-19 is spread, its effects, and what they should know about the vaccine.

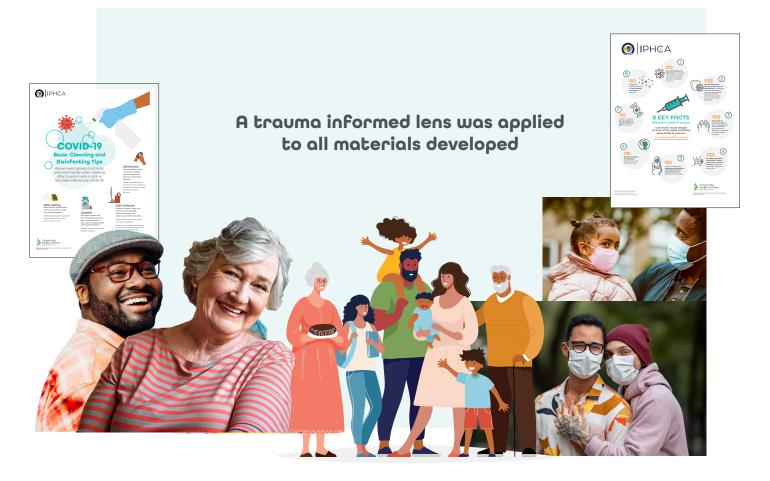
Educational Materials

Fact sheets, door hangers, posters, video clips, and social media posts each played a vital role in sharing the message.

All educational materials provided guidance on services available through PHNP and how to connect with those resources. General guidance on masking and vaccine availability was also included in the educational materials, as well as how to safely quarantine and isolate after exposure or infection. The materials also showed how to prepare shared spaces to limit the virus' transmission rates and how to prepare shared spaces to limit the virus' transmission rates.

Collateral was also made available in Spanish and French to minimize non-English speaking language barriers.

When possible, materials were sourced to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) or IDPH and prepared for broad consumption. Many of the materials were shipped directly to participating CBOs and FQHCs. The materials were also available online through a publicly accessible media kit. Community Health Workers distributed these materials during home visits or at community health events in





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Public Launch & Media Strategy

POLITICO

THE STATEWIDES

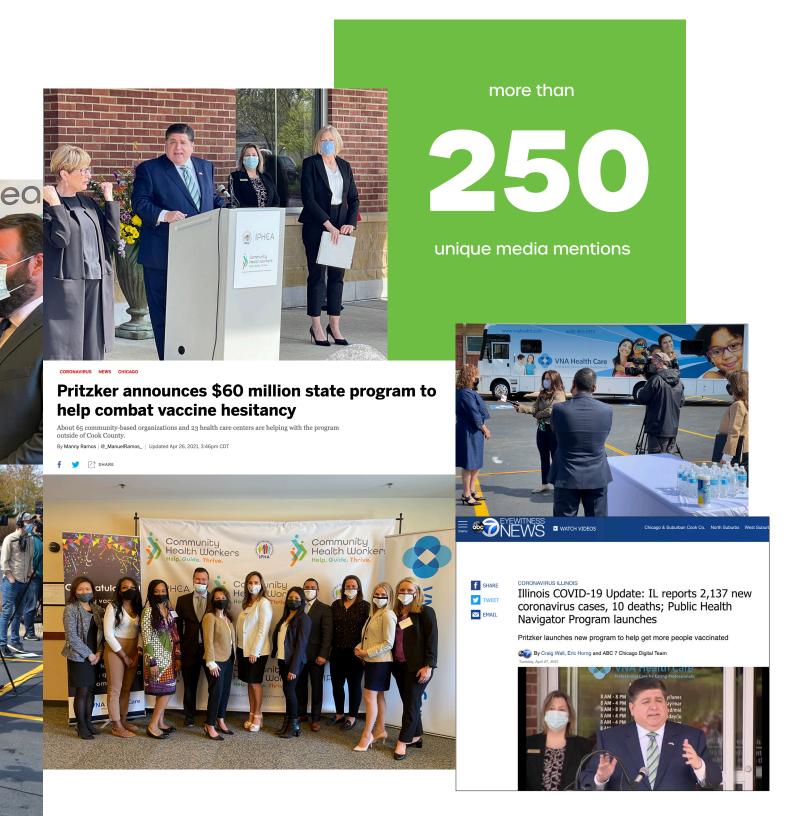
- NEW STATE PROGRAM offers access to vaccines, support services through community organizations: "The Covid-19 Pandemic Health Navigator Program serves areas of the state outside of Chicago and Cook County, and is funded by \$60 million in grants from the Illinois Department of Public Health to regional organizations," by Capitol News' Sarah Mansur.

Illinois Playbook

Community
Health Workers
Help. Guide. Thrive.

In April 2021, leaders from IPHA, IPHCA, partnering health organizations, local elected officials and Illinois Governor JB Pritzker gathered outside VNA Health Care in Aurora, IL to formally announce the program's beginning. Media coverage of the event and subsequent announcement was widespread

throughout Illinois, and many of those stories were syndicated into the national press resulting in more than 250 unique media mentions over the course of several days.



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The announcement came just over one year after the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a global pandemic and most of the country was in a state of "shelter-in-place" order, as public health officials around the world struggled to mitigate the virus' spread. As state health departments began disbursing billions of federal relief dollars to initiatives like PHNP, administrators went to work on spreading the news about their services.

The program media strategy included:

- Identifying key stakeholders and media contacts with a special interest in COVID-19 and public health programming;
- Establishing milestones and corresponding editorial calendar;
- Developing a media kit with b-roll footage, media statements, and fact sheets that could be seamlessly incorporated into news coverage;
- Setting up media partnerships to combat misinformation and disinformation about the COVID-19 virus and vaccine;
- Seeking opportunities to inject PHNP services and subject matter experts into news cycles;
- Proactively engaging in news and editorial content pitching

In all, earned media accounted for

MORE THAN

300 350

MEDIA PLACEMENTS
(2021)

350
MILLION
MEDIA IMPRESSIONS
(2021)

Content for media distribution was prepared by a team of communications strategists under the oversight of administrators and clinicians at IPHA and IPHCA. The team worked closely with IDPH to coordinate messaging, verify the materials' accuracy, balance, and completeness.

Successful media placements included PHNP campaign included:

- Coverage of the Program's launch by major media outlets, such as the Chicago Tribune, the Chicago Sun-Times, WBEZ, WGN Radio, the Daily Herald of Arlington Heights, and syndicated content in the Gannett-USA Today network, Lee Enterprises, and the Associated Press;
- A 1,200-word feature story by Kaiser Health News, which was syndicated by 26 regional and national media outlets;
- Recurring 10-minute live segments on WMAY
 Radio in Springfield in which program clinicians
 addressed common misconceptions about
 COVID-19 and the COVID-19 vaccines;
- A feature story in the State Journal-Register focused on Community Health Workers and their efforts to educate and deliver COVID-19 vaccinations in neighborhoods with low vaccination rates.
- A guest editorial by Dr. Tracey Smith, Director of Community Health and Programs at the Illinois Public Health Association, in the Chicago Sun-Times;
- Media interviews with local news teams in regions experiencing elevated infection rates, such as Region 5 during a case surge in September 2021 that consumed every ICU hospital bed for two weeks;







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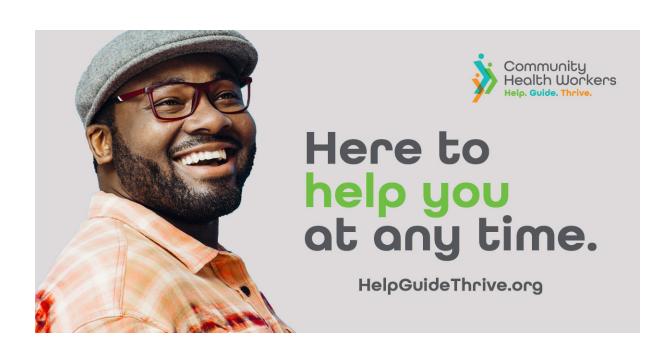
Paid Media

Shortly following the launch of PHNP in April 2021, the first of two advertising campaigns were put into market. Running from June to August 2021, the first campaign aimed to build brand awareness and leveraged many traditional media platforms including television and radio, billboards and some social media.

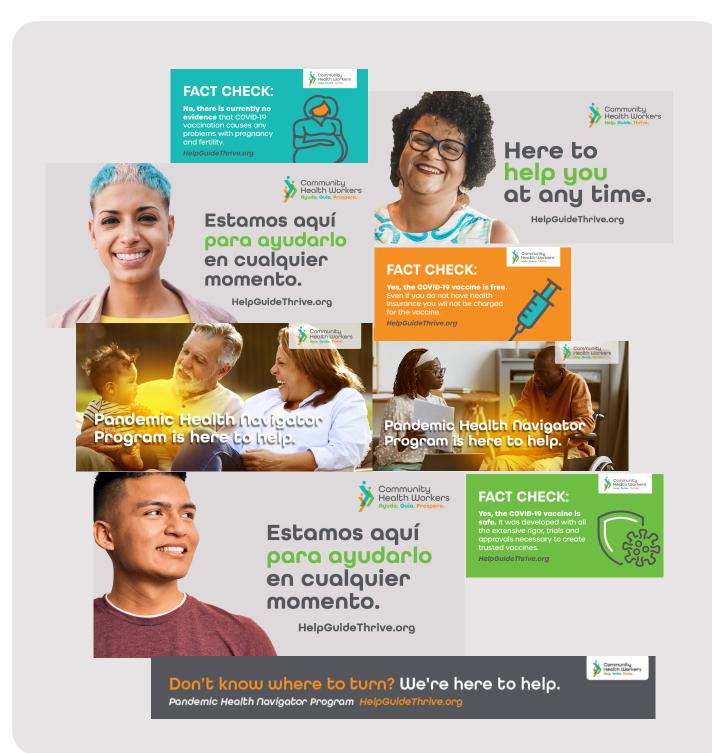
PHASE ONE: Summer advertising campaign: 'Here to help you at anytime'

The campaign slogan, 'Here to help you at anytime' focused on building brand awareness and informing Illinois residents that resources were available to those in need. The campaign imagery focused on people who represented diverse community health workers with warm and welcoming expressions.

Advertising was strategically placed in all parts of the state which also aligned with grant requirements to provide outreach and education to all nine regions assigned to PHNP. In total, the summer advertising campaign generated more than 10 million impressions.



The Pandemic Health Navigator Program is here to help with your community health needs. *HelpGuideThrive.org*



The summer advertising campaign generated more than



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PHASE TWO: "Let's get vaccinated," Let's wear masks," and "Let's work together"

Building on the summer branding effort, the fall advertising campaign sought to drive traffic to the HelpGuideThrive.org website and increase resource requests throughout the state. The Fall campaign, running October – December 2021 included a completely digital approach featuring search and display ads and social media. The multi message campaign focused on vaccinations, masks and working together in anticipation of cold month surges.

"Let's get vaccinated," "Let's wear masks," and "Let's work together," all played into a theme of doing our part to stay healthy during the holiday season. The digital campaign allowed the website to be a click away from

any mobile, tablet or desktop device and traffic to the website increased significantly. With total impressions exceeding 7 million, nearly 30,000 visits to the website were recorded during the campaign run. For comparison, the six months prior to the fall campaign launch, included total website visits at just over 6,000. While many factors contributed to an increase in demand for resources in the fall of 2021, total resource requests nearly doubled during the time the ad campaign was in market.





MILLION IMPRESSIONS

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PHASE THREE: "Don't know where to turn? We're here to help," "Need help getting through this? We're here to help," "Let's get well together," and "Let's get through this together"

Following a winter of infection and hospitalization surges, a new social media and digital search and display ad campaign was developed and launched to run March - May 2022. The campaign sought to achieve the same goal of driving Illinois residents in need to HelpGuideThrive.org, putting them a few clicks away from support and resources. With public sentiment beginning to fatigue around the ongoing pressures and stress of navigating the pandemic, the Spring '22 ad campaign sought to connect with residents on an emotional level with messages of support and encouragement. With an underlying statement of 'We're here to help,' residents were asked if they 'didn't know where to turn' or needed

'help getting through this,' as many residents were again being adversely impacted by COVID-19. The campaign also included messages of resilience by encouraging all to 'get well together,' and that we can 'get through this together.' Hoping to match impressions and web traffic from the Fall '21 campaign, the new marketing effort significantly increased impact as impressions more than doubled to 15 million and website visits grew from 30,000 to 50,000 during a similar three-month span. Social media engagements reached more than 270,000 and YouTube ad views neared 360,000.







We're here to help. Pandemic Health Navigator Program







Community Health Workers

get well We're here

to help. Pandemic Health Navigator Program

HelpGuldeThrlve.org

Let's get through this together. together. We're here to help.

Pandemic Health Navigator Program

HelpGuldeThrive.org



Community Health Workers

eed help getting through this? We're here to help. Pandemic Health Navigator Program

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SUMMARY & 2022 EXTENSION

The program was scheduled to end on October 31, 2021. The success of the program and ongoing community need prompted the Illinois Department of Public Health to extend service through June 30, 2022.

Launched in April 2021, the Pandemic Health Navigator Program provided more than 80 community-based organizations and federally qualified health centers the resources they needed to hire and train Community Health Workers. Community Health Workers responded to nearly 48,000 resource requests received through the State of Illinois' contact tracing efforts and another 80,500 requests from the community. More than 98 percent of all resource requests were addressed within 48 hours of their receipt. Funding for the program was made possible by Federal COVID-19 relief dollars disbursed by the Illinois Department of Public Health. A total of \$54.5 million was allocated to setup and maintain PHNP in regions 2 – 9.

"Thousands of Illinoisans are alive today and serving their communities because of Community Health Workers. Some day, the COVID-19 pandemic will end. The value Community Health Workers bring to our health care infrastructure will not." - Dr. Tracey Smith

About the Illinois Public Health Association

The Illinois Public Health Association (IPHA) is the oldest and largest public health association in the state of Illinois and is one of the largest affiliates of the American Public Health Association. IPHA is widely recognized as a leader in the field of public health advocacy, health education, and promotion.

About the Illinois Primary Health Care Association

IPHCA provides training and technical assistance to existing and potential Health Center Program award recipients and look-alikes. A leading area of focus for these trainings and technical assistance is improving clinical quality of care and health outcomes, which includes preventive health services and screenings.

Organizations Participating in the Pandemic Health Navigator Program

Organization	Region
ACES4Youth	4
Agape Missions	7
Association for Individual Development	2,8,9
Aunt Martha's Health & Wellness	6,7,8,9
Aurora African American Health Coalition	8
Aurora African American Men of Unity	8
Cass County Health Clinic	3
Central Counties Health Center Inc.	3
Central Illinois Friends	2
Changing Children's Worlds Foundation	8
Chestnut Health Systems Inc.	4
Chicago Workers' Collaborative	8.9
Christopher Greater Area Rural Health Planning Corporation	5.6
Community Action Partnership of Lake County	9
Community Coordinated Child Care	9
Community Health & Emergency Services	5
Community Health Partnership of IL	2,6,7,8,9
Community Healthcare Inc	2
Community Wellness Project	4
Coordinated Youth and Human Services	4
Dupage Health Coalition	8
Eagle View Community Health System	2,3
Egyptian AAA	5
Emmanuel Temple Church of God in Christ	3
Family Focus Inc.	8
Family Health Partnership	9
Federación de Clubes Michoacanos en Illinois	4,5,6,8
Fifth Street Renaissance	3,4,5
Gail Borden Public Library District Foundation	8
Greater Family Health	8,9
Hamdard Health Center	8
Harvey Brooks Foundation	7
Hispanic Women of Springfield	2,3,6
ICNA Relief	8
Illinois Alliance of Boys and Girls Clubs	2,4,7,8
Illinois Migrant Council	2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9
Immigrant Services of Champaign-Urbana	6
Immigrant Solidarity DuPage/CASA DuPage Workers Center	8
Jolt Foundation	2
Lake County Health Department & Community Health Center	9
Legacy Medical Care Inc	8
Macoupin County Public Health Department	3
Mano-a-Mano Family Resource Center	9
Mercer County Better Together	2
NAACP Bloomington -Normal	2

Organization	Region
NAACP Carbondale	5
NAACP Danville	6
NAACP DuPage	8
NAACP Kankakee	7
NAACP Lake	9
NAACP Madison	4
NAACP McDonough	2
NAACP O'Fallon Metro-East	4
NAACP Peoria	2
NAACP Springfield	3
National Hookup of Black Women Inc.	7
National Kidney Foundation of Illinois Inc.	4,5,9
One in a Million	3
Phoenix Center	2,3
Pillars Community Health	8
Preferred Family Healthcare	3
Promise Healthcare	2,6
Quad County Urban League	2,7,8
Roberti Community House	9
Rural Health Inc	5
Shawnee Health Service	4,5
SIHF Healthcare	4,6
Sista Girls and Friends Inc.	6
Sisters and Brothers Helping Each Other	2,7
SIU Center for Family Medicine	3
Southeastern IL Community Foundation/Effingham Public Library	6
Southwest Suburban Immigrant Project	7,8
Spanish Community Center	7
Syrian Community Network	8
Teen Parent Connection	8
The Project of the Quad Cities	2
Tri-County Urban League Inc.	2
United African Organization	2,7
VNA Healthcare	2,7,8
Wabash Area Development Inc.	5
Warehouse Workers for Justice	7
Waukegan Public Library Foundation	9
Western Illinois Dreamers	2,3
World Relief Chicagoland	8
YWCA Elgin	8
YWCA Metropolitan Chicago	8

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