



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CMHA Media Contact: Mike Nowlin
Nowlin@gudmarketing.com
Cell: 989-450-0855

HCGC Media Contact: Heidi Christman
heidi@hcg.org
Cell: 614-364-3662

Columbus Metropolitan Housing Authority wins prestigious national award for service excellence

New partnership with Healthcare Collaborative of Greater Columbus recognized for providing more than 14,000 Franklin County households with improved access to healthcare and social service programs as well as promoting greater efficiency of taxpayer resources

Columbus, OH – An innovative collaboration launched last year between the Columbus Metropolitan Housing Authority (CMHA) and the Healthcare Collaborative of Greater Columbus (HCGC) is among only four organizations in the United States to receive 2021 NMA Housing Awards, regarded as one of the affordable housing industry’s premiere achievements that recognize the outstanding service excellence of individual agencies.

CMHA and HCGC were honored with the NMA Large Agency Resident Service Award, named after the founder and president of California-based Nan McKay and Associates (NMA). The award is given annually to leaders in the affordable housing industry nationally with more than 2,500 units in their agency portfolio and whose community outreach efforts improve the future of the residents and families they serve.

“This year’s service award recipients exemplify the best of the best at helping their communities’ most vulnerable citizens resolve unmet needs for transportation, food, education, job training, healthcare, housing and more,” NMA CEO John McKay said during a virtual celebration announcing the winners on Friday, Sept. 17.

“In a year when so many faced extraordinary challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic, public housing authorities like CMHA and their affiliated partners such as HCGC stepped up to develop new ideas and build new partnerships while continuing to work toward the goals of providing safe, high quality and affordable housing for low-wage-earning households, people with disabilities and the elderly,” McKay said.

CMHA joined with nonprofit HCGC last year to help broaden support for the Central Ohio Pathways HUB (the HUB) that HCGC has managed since 2019 and to date serves approximately 600 individuals per month. HCGC’s HUB is a nationally certified program dedicated to supporting the emotional, economic, behavioral, social, learning and health outcomes of vulnerable populations in Franklin and surrounding counties.

Over the past year, the new CMHA-HCGC partnership contributed to the delivery of nearly 30,000 meals to the hungry, connected 650-plus youth with out-of-school programs, distributed over 1,600 COVID-19 wellness kits and provided almost \$114,000 in emergency rental and utility assistance. The community health workers (CHWs) in the HUB aim to understand the root of why an individual needs assistance and provides them with the tools to address their challenges. CHWs then guide clients on a path to success, through improvement of their physical, mental and economic well-being. With over 75% of connections to care and services successfully completed in the program, CMHA residents are experiencing the lasting impact of participating in the HUB.

As a model, Community Pathways HUBs across Ohio and the country have demonstrated success in maximizing grant and/or public funding by **reducing duplication** in care coordination, **reducing variation** in resources among individuals regardless of language, ethnicity, race or socio-economic challenges, and **reducing other costly consequences** for clients with multiple barriers, such as the cost of eviction and rehousing, or the cost of



an Emergency Department visit when a primary care visit was more appropriate. Additional information on the HUB model return on investment can be found at www.pchi-hub.com.

CMHA provides affordable housing for over 14,000 households and 33,000 residents in central Ohio. Because CMHA's housing subsidies are provided to families and individuals whose annual income is at or below 30-80% of the Area Median Income, CMHA residents are often eligible for other benefits and services that can support them on their journey to self-sufficiency. However, many CMHA residents are not aware of the array of services that are available to them, let alone how to qualify for and coordinate them.

CMHA teamed with HCGC to reduce those barriers and help low-income families assisted through CMHA programs progress toward achieving self-sufficiency, said CMHA Resident Initiatives Vice President Sonja Nelson, who spearheaded the effort for CMHA along with the agency's Resident Initiatives Assistant Vice President Alex Romstedt.

"To improve their economic conditions, many families need a holistic service plan that addresses needs related to education, employment, life skills, financial literacy, childcare and transportation," Nelson said. "Together with HCGC, we are successfully helping them navigate the confusing world of government benefits and local community resources."

In addition to CMHA, the HCGC HUB currently has 10 care coordination agencies in central Ohio including: Columbus Urban League, Ethiopian Tewahedo Social Services, Franklin County Public Health, Heart of Ohio Family Health Centers, PrimaryOne Health, Physicians CareConnection, The Breathing Association, Urban Strategies, Inc., Union County Public Health, and Wellness First.

"By connecting all 14,000 CMHA households to service coordination through the Central Ohio Pathways HUB, CMHA honors our commitment to providing quality, culturally sensitive, and trauma-informed supportive services to all of their residents," said HCGC President and CEO Carrie Baker.

"Offering supportive services in a culturally sensitive and trauma-informed way ensures residents' engagement with service coordination is an empowering process that promotes stability and self-sufficiency," said Baker. "Most importantly, our partnership with CMHA is helping to empower CMHA residents in all areas of their lives and begins to address health disparities and inequities, which in turn, leads to thriving, resilient communities."

Also honored with NMA awards Friday were: **East Baton Rouge Housing Authority** in Louisiana for the Resident Service Small Agency category, **The Glendower Group** in New Haven, CN, for the Development Large Agency category, and **Trinity Financials' Worcester, MA Courthouse Lofts** project in the Development Small Agency category. For more information about the NMA awards, visit [NMA Housing Awards](#).

About NMA Housing Awards: First launched in 2007, the [NMA Housing Awards](#) were created to recognize individual agency performance and honor excellence in the affordable housing industry. The awards are open to housing authorities and associations throughout the United States in two categories: The Development Award and The Resident Service Award. Nominations may be submitted in either category as a small or large housing authority. Recipients of the Development Award include new construction, green initiatives, property improvements, and out-of-the-box financing, while the Resident Service Award honors leaders in community outreach and efforts to improve the future of families.

About CMHA: CMHA helps people access affordable housing through collaborative partnerships, promote neighborhood revitalization and assist residents in accessing needed social services. CMHA has more than doubled its portfolio of housing over the last five years, including over \$200 million in investment in 2020. We own over 4,000 units of affordable housing and through our Housing Choice Voucher and Project Based Rental Assistance Programs provide rental assistance to more than 250,000 Ohio and Washington, D.C., residents. Half of the authority's apartments are set aside as workforce housing for families earning 80% of the area median income. For more information, visit www.cmhanet.com.

About HCGC: As one of over 30 Regional Health Improvement Collaboratives (RHICs) across the country, the Healthcare Collaborative of Greater Columbus provides a neutral, safe space that brings together providers, hospitals, social service agencies, public and private



insurance, employers, government, public health, patients, and consumers to improve the quality, delivery, and value of healthcare and the overall health for all people in the Columbus region. For more information, visit www.hcgc.org.

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