



MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

“Life is a full circle. The end of one journey is the beginning of the next.”

Welcome to our health justice event, as we celebrate the merger of the St. Louis Regional Health Commission (RHC) and Alive and Well Communities (AWC) and uplift our shared vision of **zero health disparities**.

For more than 20 years, the RHC made its mark on the St. Louis region by ensuring access to health care for individuals in the region who had little to no access to health care coverage. Through the Gateway to Better Health program, we provided coverage for 68,000 individuals who did not have access to other coverage options and provided funding for community health centers to sustain and expand services. The RHC also seeded the development of Alive and Well St. Louis that has blossomed into Alive and Well Communities in partnership with stakeholders in Kansas City. Over the past five years, AWC has changed the way our state has prioritized toxic stress and trauma-informed care as they have championed community conversations to change the question from “What is wrong with you?” to “What has happened to you?”. These conversations have taken place in urban and rural areas of our state, demonstrating we have more in common than we often realize.

The expansion of Medicaid allowed the RHC to envision a new future where people not only have access to coverage, but they also are able to live long prosperous lives regardless of their zip code, race, ethnicity or other demographic factor. The RHC’s new approach led to the bold vision of zero health disparities and opened the door for our new beginning with Alive and Well Communities. Together, we envision a Missouri where rural and urban communities come together to create a healthier future; where those who are most at risk of poor health outcomes are invited to tables with systems leaders to work on real solutions that lead to full, healthy lives for all Missourians; and where we have eliminated the inequities we see today.

The purposeful merger of our two organizations amplifies the deep stakeholder trust and the powerful connections we have established, and it builds on our proven track records of innovative health-and trauma-informed programs and policies that have contributed to real healing and better outcomes. Together, we will co-create a more equitable future with and for impacted communities in Missouri and beyond to achieve our promise of zero health disparities.

Angela Brown