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St. Louis Regional Health Commission Announces New Chief Executive Officer and Executive Board Chair

St. Louis, MO. (June 5, 2024) – The St. Louis Regional Health Commission (RHC) Board of Commissioners unanimously voted on May 22, 2024, that effective immediately Riisa Rawlins has been named as the permanent Chief Executive Officer. Rawlins was selected after serving as Interim CEO of the organization beginning November 1, 2023.

RHC was founded in 2001 in response to the closure of St. Louis Regional Medical Center, the region's last remaining public hospital in the St. Louis Region. In February of 2023, the RHC and organization previously known as Alive and Well Communities (AWC) announced an affiliation to advance health equity across the State of Missouri and beyond. The combined efforts of RHC and AWC are dedicated to improving healthcare access, experience and outcomes for residents across Missouri, with a focus on equity-centered trauma-informed care.

The vote confirming Rawlins' leadership position comes three months after Dr. Sheila Grigsby, Associate Professor at the University of Missouri—St. Louis College of Nursing, stepped into her role as Board Chair of the RHC Board of Commissioners. Grigsby has been a public health professional, researcher and nurse educator for over twenty years.

“I believe wholeheartedly in the vision of the RHC to provide health care for the underserved,” said Grigsby. “As the new Board Chair, I look forward to continuing the legacy of the great work that the RHC has shepherded over the past 20 years.”

Grigsby affirmed the decision of the Board of Commissioners in selecting Rawlins as CEO of the organization, stating “the RHC is in the right hands under her leadership.”

With over 20 years of professional experience in healthcare and mental health environments, Rawlins holds a bachelor's degree in political science from Loyola University and master's degree in social work from the Brown School at WUSTL where she was a Bettie Schroth Johnson Women in Leadership scholar. She is currently pursuing her PhD in Political Science at the University of Missouri – St. Louis. Rawlins joined the RHC in June of 2020 and most recently served as the Chief Operations and Strategy Officer, where she fostered community and health system partnerships, developed and institutionalized power-sharing frameworks,

coordinated the day-to-day management of operations, managed staff and associated contractors, and supported the work of volunteer stakeholder bodies.

“I can think of no greater vocation than to advance an equity centered, trauma informed approach into a community and systems partnership framework dedicated to achieving zero health disparities,” said Rawlins. “I am extremely grateful for the numerous partnerships across systems and in community that have inspired me to embrace collaboration over duplication or competition. Alongside our new Board Chair, Dr. Sheila Grigsby, a longtime champion of community voice in healthcare, I look forward to deepening collaboration with our current and future systems and community partners in St. Louis, the Bootheel, Kansas City and beyond.”

The RHC recently adopted a new strategic plan that integrates the efforts of Alive & Well Communities. This plan aims to facilitate systems-level change, guided by community members who are experiencing unjust health outcomes.

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About RHC

The St. Louis Regional Health Commission is a collaborative effort of St. Louis City, St. Louis County, the state of Missouri, health providers, and community members to improve the health of uninsured and underinsured citizens in St. Louis City and County.