



Tiffany Wynn, 414.225.1638

tiffany.wynn@arcw.org

Saint Louis Effort for AIDS and the AIDS Resource Center Announce Merger

The merger enhances and expands programs and services for people at risk and living with HIV in St. Louis

September 27, 2018—Today the AIDS Resource Center announced a merger with Saint Louis Effort for AIDS (EFA). The merger will enhance and expand programs and services for people at risk and living with HIV in St. Louis by bringing the HIV Medical Home to the area. The HIV Medical Home is an integrated model of health and social services that helps people living with HIV live long, healthy and full lives while reducing costs.

“EFA has a long-standing history in St. Louis of providing strong HIV prevention programs and services for people living with HIV,” said Michael J. Gifford, president and CEO of the AIDS Resource Center. “We are excited to join forces with them to expand services to the people of St. Louis. In January 2019 we will offer primary and HIV medical care, a mental health program, pharmacy, and critical social services that will work hand-in-hand with people living with HIV in and around St. Louis.”

In recent years, EFA has seen an increase in the demand for its programs and services as a record number of people are living with HIV. In St. Louis, there are 6145 people living with HIV; however, only 50 percent are regularly engaged in care according to the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services (DHSS), Bureau of Reportable Disease Informatics.

“This merger will allow us to offer a new model of care to people living with HIV in St. Louis while also helping us better prevent new HIV infections, reduce AIDS-related deaths, stigma and other barriers to testing, care and treatment,” said Tawnya Brown, the new vice president of operations for the AIDS Resource Center who has 20 years of experience in HIV healthcare. “Additionally, through our partnership with Washington University and other organizations, we will make sure more people with HIV in St. Louis have access to all the HIV care and treatment they need to achieve viral suppression and optimal health.”

The merged organizations also announced their success in securing a \$1.7 million grant from the Missouri Foundation for Health. The grant funds will aid in the success of the merger and help in the development and operation of the HIV Medical Home in St. Louis.

“This merger is exciting news for the City of St. Louis and we look forward to working with the AIDS Resource Center to help improve the health of our neighbors living with and at-risk for HIV,” said Mayor Lyda Krewson. “Their model of providing quality healthcare, pharmacy access, social services and prevention will be a great addition to the outstanding network of organizations currently providing care.”



AIDS RESOURCE CENTER OF WISCONSIN

Excellence in HIV Health Care

The merger marks the twelfth location—between three states, Wisconsin, Colorado and now Missouri—for the AIDS Resource Center and was effective September 1. Gifford will continue to serve as president and CEO of the merged organization that will continue to operate in St. Louis under the name Effort for AIDS.

“Mike Gifford and I made dozens of presentations to key stakeholders on the benefits that an HIV Medical Home will mean for people living with HIV in the St. Louis metropolitan region. Each interaction helped forge genuine trust and respect for the work we look forward to doing as one organization,” said Cheryl Oliver, retired EFA Executive Director. “The clear message of optimism for enhanced services, a valuable spirit of collaboration, and dedication to delivering the best possible outcomes for people living with or at risk of being infected with HIV make this merger a clear win for our community.”

Patients, clients and others seeking information on the merger should visit stlefa.org.

AIDS RESOURCE CENTER OF WISCONSIN

The AIDS Resource Center of Wisconsin (ARCW) is a nationally-recognized and respected leader in the fight against AIDS. The organization is known for its high-quality patient outcomes for people living with HIV. ARCW operates the only HIV Medical Home in America recognized by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid. The ARCW HIV Medical Home offers integrated health and social services, including medical, dental, mental health and pharmaceutical services, along with case management and social support provided by a team of professionals dedicated to patient care. ARCW is also a leading provider of innovative and aggressive prevention services that help at-risk individuals remain HIV negative. The organization operates in three states, including Wisconsin, Colorado and Missouri, and has 12 locations. To learn more about ARCW, please visit arcw.org, and the organization’s [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) pages.

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Additional Quotes Regarding STLEFA & AIDS Resource Center of Wisconsin Merger

“We know with ongoing new HIV infections and the worsening twin epidemics of sexually-transmitted diseases and opioid abuse, we are far from the end of AIDS,” said Michael Gifford, president and chief executive officer of AIDS Resource Center. “The significant expansion of services resulting from this merger are a critical step to respond to these challenges.”

“We look forward to our partnership with EFA and the AIDS Resource Center to improve the health and wellness of people living with HIV,” said Nicole Massey, administrator of the Section for Disease Prevention for Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services. “The innovative model of care that will come to St. Louis as a result of this merger has the promise to lead to better outcomes for patients, improve public health and reduce costs – truly a win for everyone.”

“Change has a way of making you feel uncomfortable. It’s the unknown that leaves you feeling a little uneasy about what is about to take place. Having met with the powers that be from St. Louis Effort for AIDS, and the AIDS Resource Center, I can say with all confidence that this merger, and the changes that will come with it, will prove to be beneficial to the St Louis region, and to the clients in the community,” said, Erise Williams, Jr., MPH, president/CEO of Williams and Associates, Inc.

“For several years the EFA board explored ways to expand and evolve as an organization that better serves people living with and at risk for HIV,” said Arvan Chan, a former EFA member of the board of directors, and a current member of the AIDS Resource Center Board of Directors. “We had been looking to strengthen our position as a leader in the fight against HIV, and to make sure we are here for the people we serve today and into the future. After conducting a lot of research and exploring lots of options, we identified the AIDS Resource Center whose innovative model of care has outstanding patient outcomes. It is a great fit for St. Louis and the people we serve.”