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AccessMatters and Longtime Partner CHOICE, Inc. to Merge Merger Expands Reach and Capacity

[PHILADELPHIA, PA: April 15, 2015]: After decades of partnering to increase access to sexual and reproductive health, AccessMatters, formerly Family Planning Council, announced that CHOICE, Inc., a longtime community partner, soon will merge into AccessMatters. The boards of both organizations approved the proposed merger and expect it to be finalized by June 30th. The merger preserves the legacy of CHOICE's programs and enables AccessMatters to expand its ability to address critical health needs of even the hardest-to-reach populations, closing the gap between those with access and those without.

"For decades, CHOICE, which stands for Concern for Health Options, Information, Care and Education, has provided access to comprehensive sexual and reproductive health information and programs," said Kerri Barthel, President of the Board of Directors of CHOICE, Inc. "CHOICE is excited to pursue a merger with AccessMatters, a mission-aligned organization."

AccessMatters has been trailblazing for over 40 years to eliminate barriers to high caliber care for more than 200,000 people annually. Through research, training, delivery of evidenced-based programs, community engagement and advocacy, AccessMatters leads the way in transforming access to sexual and reproductive health.

AccessMatters' breadth of work is expansive including both business-to-business services and direct-to-consumer services. Programs and services include: healthcare provider training, research, quality improvement, program evaluation, grants and program administration, and community-based services.

"CHOICE was looking for a like-minded partner," said Melissa Weiler Gerber, President and CEO of AccessMatters. "Given our long-standing partnership with CHOICE, and AccessMatters' strategic interest in expanding our capacity for community outreach and quality improvement initiatives, it was a perfect fit."

"CHOICE has a proud history of providing high-quality health education, and has a stellar reputation as a trusted referral resource," Weiler Gerber added. "We are honored to preserve this legacy."

Since 1972, CHOICE has served the Pennsylvania region with education and information on human sexuality, pregnancy options, contraception, and health care through education programs for the general public and through a counseling service for individual women and couples. CHOICE offers community education, training, and outreach programs; maintains a referral database of over 714 agencies throughout the Pennsylvania region; and operates free and confidential hotlines. CHOICE hotlines are staffed by trained professionals who offer individualized support, referrals and short-term counseling to women, men, and teens.

For over 25 years, CHOICE has been a part of AccessMatters' Network, participating in AccessMatters' Title X Family Planning and CDC funded I MATTER Teen Pregnancy Prevention Programs by operating its hotline, producing health information publications, and providing quality assurance services aimed at improving service delivery in the AccessMatters' Network. CHOICE also is a partner in AccessMatters' school-based Health Resource Center Program, staffing adolescent sexual health programs in South Philadelphia and Frankford High Schools.

"Our purpose has always been to meet the unique needs of individuals by connecting them to resources and empowering them to make informed decisions," said Barthel. "We are confident that this new relationship will serve as a catalyst to strengthen services and broaden our reach in providing access to health options for all."



"We complement each other in mission, and there is a clear alignment in our strategic plans," said Weiler Gerber. "With our common commitment to community education, community engagement and quality improvement, this is a unique opportunity for AccessMatters to add another layer of depth to our programs while preserving invaluable services that CHOICE has provided throughout the years."

The two organizations will begin working toward integration of services, with the merger officially taking effect on July 1, 2015, at which point all operations will be housed at AccessMatters' offices at 1700 Market Street in Philadelphia, PA.

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[AccessMatters](http://www.AccessMatters.org) is the catalyst for providing access to sexual and reproductive health care for teens and adults in need reaching over 200,000 individuals annually. For more information about AccessMatters programs, visit www.AccessMatters.org, [@AccessMatters4U](https://twitter.com/AccessMatters4U) on Twitter, and on [Facebook](#).

[CHOICE](http://www.choice-phila.org) works to ensure all individuals can access comprehensive sexual and reproductive health information, care, and education, without bias or stigma. For more information about CHOICE programs, visit www.choice-phila.org, [@CHOICE_philly](https://twitter.com/CHOICE_philly) on Twitter, and on [Facebook](#).