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Center for Closing the Health Gap Announces Leadership Transition **Founder, President & CEO Dwight Tillery set to step down, Board of Directors Names Renee Mahaffey Harris New CEO**

CINCINNATI, OH – NOVEMBER 5, 2018 – The Center for Closing the Health Gap, a community-based grassroots organization working to eliminate racial and ethnic health disparities in Greater Cincinnati, announced today a transition in its leadership. Dwight Tillery, the Founder, President and CEO of the Health Gap, will leave the organization effective January 1, 2019 to pursue other interests including Black Communities: A Conference for Collaboration-UNC Collaboration Project, Cobb Institute/ National Medical Association and The Black Agenda Cincinnati. The Health Gap's Board of Directors has tapped Chief Operating Officer Renee Mahaffey Harris to replace Tillery as the organization's new President and CEO.

Impact

Tillery founded the Health Gap in 2004, building a team to actively engage local hospitals, social advocates and health care leaders to combat higher rates of obesity, diabetes, heart disease and cancer occurring in black, Hispanic and Appalachian communities. Nearly 15 years later, the Health Gap continues to be unprecedented and one of the Nation's most important agents for positive change, rallying community advocates and elevating the local discourse on a full range of health and economic issues impacting the neighborhoods of Greater Cincinnati and Cincinnati surrounding municipalities.

During Tillery's tenure, the Health Gap secured several prestigious grants from Aetna Foundation, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, Center for Disease Control, American Heart Association and many more. While raising \$21,855,000, \$5,850,000 of those dollars were reinvested, through services and contracts, in predominately minority businesses. The Center has empowered 364,632 people to eat, move and live right through the Do Right! Campaigns. The Health Gap has hosted the Annual Health Expos that have provided more than 31,208 free health screenings to the 110,000 attendees. The establishment of the Tillery Health Disparities Fellowship in the University of Cincinnati's College of Medicine's Department of Environmental Health in 2016 benefits students interested in addressing health disparities in Greater Cincinnati.

"Dwight Tillery has been a passionate advocate for racial equality and community activism in Cincinnati for more than 45 years," said Jun Ying, Ph.D., Director of the Public Health Program the University of Cincinnati College of Medicine and Chair of the Health Gap's Board of Directors. "Along the way, he has spent time visiting sick constituents at their homes as Mayor, to meeting with world leaders like President Bill Clinton and Desmond Tutu and changing the way our community thinks about our most vulnerable neighbors. His impact has been remarkable and his legacy will live on in a myriad of ways."

The organization has proven to be a monumental authority in addressing health disparities in the region; presenting at various conferences, including American Public Health Association (APHA), Centers for Disease Control, American Cancer Society and RWJF National Childhood Obesity Team. As a result of Tillery's work he has received various awards and honors, including the Molina Healthcare of Ohio's 2009 Community Champion Award, the University of Cincinnati's Georgia E. Beasley Legacy Award, Cincinnati Children's Community Health Advocate Award and the National Society of Phi Delta Kappa's Health and Wellness Award. In 2010, he was named a Purpose Prize Fellow due to his work in health disparities, as well as being appointed by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation to serve on the national County Ranking and Roadmaps Advisory Board. Former Secretary of Health and Human Services, Kathleen Sebelius, commended Dwight Tillery and the Health Gap on their excellent work. In 2015, he was recognized as one of the Top 20 People to Know in Health Care by Cincinnati Business Courier and received their Second Act Award.

"I'm so grateful for having the opportunity to make a real difference in Cincinnati, afforded by The Health Gap" said Tillery. "We are a trusted voice for underserved populations. We are a catalyst for policy changes to address social determinants of health. We are an innovator in the creation of community driven preventative health strategies. And it's been a true community collaboration, from the City of Cincinnati and Hamilton County to UC Health, Cincinnati Children's and the other local health organizations who have funded our work and understood its value. The issue of health disparities is one of the most critical civil rights issues of our time. I'm a product of the civil rights movement of the 1960s, so this work has been near and dear to my heart for as long as I can remember."

Transition to Experienced Leadership

Effective January 1, Renee Mahaffey Harris CHES, will take over as the new President and CEO of the Health Gap. She joined the organization in 2008 and currently serves as Chief Operating Officer, overseeing day-to-day strategic planning and implementation of all community engagement initiatives. Mahaffey Harris leads a staff of community health professionals, marketing and outreach coordinators, and community volunteers who work to eliminate health and ethnic disparities by helping residents take control of their own health. She is Co-Chair of the City of Cincinnati Healthy Living Taskforce.

Mahaffey Harris has served as Vice President of Community Development for PNC Bank and worked in a variety of public service roles with local government, including working in the offices of Congressman Charles Luken, Mayor David Mann and Ohio Secretary of State Sherrod Brown. In 2000, she established the Local Initiatives Support Corporation for Greater Cincinnati. She has held membership on the Hamilton County Oral Health Coalition, the UC College of Medicine MPH Advisory Board and as the President of the Ohio African American Coalition on Health Disparities. Mahaffey Harris was also named one of Ebony Magazine's 50 Leaders of The Future.

"When Dwight shared his plans with us and we needed to find his replacement, we knew we had the ideal candidate right here" said Dr. Ying. "Renee has been an extraordinary leader, advocate and collaborator. She is a nationally recognized expert on public health and grassroots community engagement, and she is uniquely positioned to continue and expand the important work of the Health Gap."

Added Mahaffey Harris: "Dwight has been an amazing role model and a passionate advocate for our most underserved neighbors. He's built a team that truly understands how to fulfill our mission and I'm honored to continue that legacy of hope and impact. We have helped so many people across Greater

Cincinnati realize – What they can do for their own health.’ We are a grass roots community-based health organization equipping, empowering and meeting our communities where they are!”