



PHL Neighborhood Growth Project:
Safe and Healthy Neighborhoods

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Committee on Commerce and Economic Development

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Before I begin my testimony, I'd like to thank Chair Jones, Vice Chair Parker and members of the Commerce & Economic Development Committee for this opportunity to speak with you all today. My name is Alonzo South. I work at the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia. I serve as the Senior Director of Community Engagement.

CHOP is very pleased that the Chamber's PHL Neighborhood Growth Project addresses Safe & Healthy Neighborhoods. Since 1855, CHOP has provided quality healthcare for Philadelphia's children. However, health is not limited to the hospital or a primary care site. Health starts in the home, in our schools, and in our neighborhoods and communities. The Chamber's PHL Neighborhood Growth Project strategy recognizes this reality and we at CHOP are happy to join forces with the Chamber on this effort.

In fact, this year CHOP launched a program called Healthier Together to significantly increase our commitment to making the neighborhoods around the hospital safer and healthier. Healthier Together is a 5-year, \$25 million program to improve the health of children in West and Southwest Philadelphia. Our areas of focus -- housing, trauma, hunger, and poverty -- reflect the prioritized health needs identified by the community. Our vision is to give every child a fair chance at a healthy future.

As part of Healthier Together's housing initiative, CHOP is investing in home repairs to improve child asthma outcomes. We know the child asthma rate in West Philadelphia, at ~25%, is nearly triple the national rate. CHOP's Community Asthma Prevention Program (CAPP) has made significant progress in improving child asthma outcomes over the past 20 years. However, asthma triggers in a child's home -- such as moisture, mold, dust, and pests -- limit the impact. As a result, too many asthmatic children come to CHOP for disruptive and avoidable emergency department visits and inpatient hospitalizations. In response, CHOP is partnering with the Philadelphia Housing Development Corporation (PHDC) because this organization has the unique skills and relationships to address these asthma triggers. PHDC will remediate asthma triggers in the home, such as moisture and mold caused by plumbing leaks, carpet removal and pest infestations to improve air quality. This work is already underway. CHOP aims to repair 100 homes and we are actively exploring opportunities to expand the program further.

Next year CHOP will begin rolling out new services to address the remaining Healthier Together focus areas. For trauma, we want to reduce the impact and incidence of traumatic events. For hunger, our aim is to decrease the number of food insecure families and lessen the severity of food insecurity. Finally, as

one of the largest employers in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, CHOP will address poverty by facilitating economic mobility and inclusion for families and businesses. For example, the goal for the CAPP+ Home Repairs program is to use 100% local, minority and women-owned business enterprises. CHOP's commitment to supporting local, diverse entrepreneurs will have a tangible impact on growing local businesses who often hire locally.

Ultimately, making Philadelphia neighborhoods safer and healthier will require a team effort. CHOP's Healthier Together program and the Chamber's PHL Neighborhood Growth Project are both joint efforts that involve residents, businesses, nonprofits, and government. This collaboration is critical to improving our community's well-being. Thank you for your time and attention.