



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Action Wellness Executive Director Kevin Burns Retires After 34 Years of Service

Health Care Leader Evelyn Torres Appointed New Executive Director of Action Wellness

PHILADELPHIA, Pennsylvania — Kevin Burns, Executive Director of Action Wellness, is retiring June 30, 2023, after 34 years. He will be succeeded by Evelyn Torres, Advisor to the Director of the Division of HIV Health at the Philadelphia Department of Public Health.

“A Beacon of Hope” for Greater Philadelphia for More Than Three Decades

Mr. Burns joined Action Wellness (then ActionAIDS) in 1986 as a Volunteer Buddy and has held a number of positions of increasing responsibility throughout his career. He was promoted to his current position as Executive Director of Action Wellness in 2005 and leaves a legacy of person-centered leadership that has transformed the health and well-being of hundreds of thousands of people living in Greater Philadelphia.

Under Mr. Burns’ direction, Action Wellness grew boldly, guided by its mission to serve those most in need in the region. The organization doubled its annual budget, increased its number of clients by nearly 40 percent, incorporated pharmacy services through the 340B program, and expanded services to incarcerated individuals, HIV-positive pregnant women and people living with chronic illnesses. Mr. Burns led the rebranding of the organization from ActionAIDS to Action Wellness to reflect the progress made in the care and treatment of people living with HIV and to increase the organization’s reach to include those experiencing a variety of chronic illnesses. Mr. Burns also led Action Wellness’ expansion into West Philadelphia, Chester, Pennsylvania, and the Kensington neighborhood of Philadelphia, and increased the number of full-time staff to 108.

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Locations

Center City | 1216 Arch St, 6th Floor | Philadelphia, PA 19107 | 215.981.0088

North/Casa Nueva Vida | 2641 North 6th St | Philadelphia, PA 19133 | 215.291.9700

West - Filbert Street (39th & Filbert Sts) | 3901 Market St, Box 1934 | Philadelphia, PA 19104 | 215.243.2800

West - Market Street | 3600 Market St, Suite 601 | Philadelphia, PA 19104 | 215.586.7600

Chester | 2302 Edgmont Ave | Chester, PA 19013 | 267.428.3510

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“It has been a privilege working with a team that is so dedicated to serving Greater Philadelphia,” says Mr. Burns. “Together, we created an organization that offers lifesaving and life-changing services to people wrestling with chronic illness, substance use disorder, housing insecurity and other challenges. I am grateful to have had the opportunity to be a part of this important work,” he says.

Says Action Wellness Board President Whitney Strickland, “Throughout his years of dedicated service, Kevin has been a beacon of hope for the community. We are forever indebted to his passion and leadership. ‘Thank you’ will never sufficiently express our gratitude. We wish Kevin an abundance of happiness in his next chapter.”

Evelyn Torres Takes the Reins as Executive Director of Action Wellness

Ms. Torres has more than 20 years of experience working in the HIV field at the Philadelphia Department of Public Health. She most recently served as Advisor to the Director at the Division of HIV Health (DHH), which is part of the Philadelphia Department of Public Health. In this position, Ms. Torres addressed DHH’s strategic planning needs regarding the maintenance and implementation of integrated HIV prevention and care services, with the goal of ending the HIV epidemic.

Previously, Ms. Torres served as DHH’s Program Implementation Administrator, where she oversaw several units, including HIV Surveillance and Program Services. In that role, she directed: the implementation of federal, state and local program policies and directives; the monitoring and evaluation of funded subrecipients and the management of budgets and contracts; the preparation and submission of reports and applications to federal, state and local funders; and the ending the HIV epidemic planning process.

Ms. Torres begin her career at Action Wellness as a social work intern. She was hired as a case manager and also worked as the trainer for the Case Management Coordination Project.

Says Ms. Torres, “Action Wellness is a premier organization that plays a vital role in sustaining the health and well-being of persons with HIV and other chronic conditions, especially those in marginalized communities. I credit working at Action Wellness for inspiring me to dedicate my life to this important work. It’s gratifying to return to this incredible organization to help lead this exciting, new chapter.”

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According to Jeffrey Alexander, long-time Action Wellness Board member and part of the search committee, “Ms. Torres embodies the past, present and future of Action Wellness. As a former employee, she understands who we are, what we have done, and why we do it. As she built her career and worked in roles of increasing responsibility at other organizations, she remained deeply committed to her roots at Action Wellness. She understands how our mission, vision and values have evolved and she is making it her goal to bring them to life as we step into a new era.”

Ms. Torres earned a Bachelor of Arts in Social Work from Rutgers University and an MBA, with a concentration in Health Administration, from Eastern University. She lives in Philadelphia and is supported by a network of friends and family. Her interests include cooking, politics, reading, Salsa music, sports and spending time with her support network.

About Action Wellness:

[Action Wellness](#) is one of Pennsylvania’s largest AIDS service organizations. It is committed to helping people living with HIV/AIDS and other chronic illnesses. Services include medical case management, treatment as prevention, supportive housing, and volunteer services. Services are provided at six Action Wellness locations and at more than 30 host sites throughout the city of Philadelphia and Delaware County. Action Wellness currently serves more than 4,000 clients annually through the efforts of 400 dedicated volunteers and more than 100 professional staff working together to sustain and enhance the quality of life for the diverse communities they serve.

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