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Centers for Independence Appoints Heidi Chada President and CEO

MILWAUKEE, WI, (March 17, 2026)—Centers for Independence (CFI), a leader in supporting people with disabilities and behavioral health needs through innovative, person-centered programs, announced that Heidi Chada has been named President and Chief Executive Officer. Chada steps into the role after successfully steering the organization through a period of evolution as Interim President & CEO, bringing a collaborative leadership style, strong community relationships and a clear commitment to building healthy, hopeful and inclusive communities.

With more than two decades of experience in health care and social services, Chada has a reputation for turning transformative ideas into meaningful results. Her career has centered on expanding access, strengthening partnerships, and elevating person-centered practices. She is known for her strategic approach and her ability to rally teams around CFI's mission of removing barriers and supporting people with disabilities and behavioral health needs.

Since joining CFI in 2008 as Director of Food & Nutrition Services, Chada has helped shape and grow many of CFI's most impactful programs. She has overseen Employment & Training Services, Food & Nutrition Services, Adult Day Services, iLIFE Financial Services, First Person Care Consultants, Home Care, among other programs. Her leadership roles have included Vice President of Employment and Community Services and Chief Programs and Services Officer.

"Heidi's vision, energy and deep understanding of the communities we serve make her the right leader for this moment," said Morgan Tilleman, Chair of the CFI Board of Directors. "She brings people together—staff, partners and community members—in ways that strengthen CFI and position us for continued innovation."

Chada is deeply committed to advancing equity and expanding opportunities for underserved groups, as evidenced by her volunteerism and advocacy work. Colleagues describe her as creative, inclusive and forward-thinking—qualities that have helped reinforce CFI's trauma-informed, person-centered approach during a time of transformation and growth.

Under Chada's leadership, the organization will continue advancing initiatives that strengthen trauma-informed practices, expand self-directed services and remove barriers that stand in the way of total health.

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"I am honored to lead an organization with such a powerful legacy and a clear purpose," said Chada. "For nearly nine decades, CFI has been a trusted partner in building healthier, more hopeful, and more inclusive communities. I look forward to continuing that work and ensuring that every person we serve has the support they need to thrive."

About Centers for Independence

Centers for Independence (CFI) is a Milwaukee based nonprofit dedicated to supporting people with disabilities and behavioral health needs through innovative, person-centered programs. Since 1938, CFI has been a leader trauma-informed care, self-direction and removing barriers to help individuals achieve total health and greater independence. Visit cfihope.org to learn more.

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