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Erika Schmidt Elected First Female Director of the Chicago Institute for Psychoanalysis

CHICAGO – Effective October 1, 2013, Erika Schmidt, MSW, assumed the position of director of the [Chicago Institute for Psychoanalysis](#), for a three-year term. The change in leadership was the result of an election held this past September between the prior Institute Director Phil S. Lebovitz, MD, and Ms. Schmidt. Ms. Schmidt is the first female director in the 81-year history of the Institute, as well as the first child psychoanalyst, the only non-medical doctor, and the first social worker elected to this position. As an avid historical researcher, Ms. Schmidt brings to this position in-depth knowledge on the history of psychoanalysis in Chicago – and in particular, the rich history of the 81-year-old Institute.

“The Institute faces many challenges and exciting opportunities in our current mental health landscape. I look forward to working with a talented team of board members, faculty, and staff to reinvigorate the Institute from within. One of my top priorities is to increase outreach efforts and program development to link the Institute, and more globally – psychoanalysis – to the world around us. I will also work to infuse the Institute with robust, ongoing revenue streams to sustain and expand programming. Fundraising and public outreach efforts will leverage the Institute’s long history of training psychotherapists who go out and deliver reduced cost or no-cost therapeutic services to underserved communities,” said Ms. Schmidt.

Ms. Schmidt served as the first director of the [Center for Child and Adolescent Psychotherapy](#) upon its establishment at the Institute in 2008. She stepped down from this role after accepting the director position last month. Ms. Schmidt is a graduate of both the Adult and Child and Adolescent Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy Training Programs at the Institute, with certificates earned in 2008 and 2010, respectively. She graduated from the Institute’s Child and Adolescent Psychotherapy Training Program in 1984. In addition to teaching courses at the Institute, Ms. Schmidt has served on the faculty of the Institute for Clinical Social Work since 1987.

Ms. Schmidt has been in private practice in Chicago since 1984, providing psychotherapy to adults, adolescents, children and couples. One of her areas of expertise is high-risk children and she has been instrumental in that arena, guiding several programs in the Chicago area over the last four decades. Among these are director (2002-2009) of the Chicago Chapter of A Home Within, a national organization that provides pro-bono psychotherapy to children in foster care, with the guiding principle, “One child, One therapist, As long as it takes.”

From 1990-2008, at the Student Counseling and Resource Service at the University of Chicago, Ms. Schmidt provided therapeutic services to graduate and undergraduate students, and supervised graduate social work interns. From 1975-1987, she provided her expertise at the Juvenile Protective Association. Among her positions at the agency was co-director of the Infant Development Project, where she designed and implemented specialized programming targeted at providing therapeutic services to high-risk young children.

In May of this year, Ms. Schmidt testified at the *Parents United for Responsible Education Press Conference* about the psychological impacts of the Chicago Public School closings on at-risk children. Under the auspices of the Center for Child and Adolescent Psychotherapy, the Englewood Project provides pro-bono group therapy services at elementary schools to children who have been exposed to violence. Ms. Schmidt has been involved in this highly successful Institute program since its inception in 2007-2008.

In addition to presenting at symposiums and conferences worldwide, Ms. Schmidt is a published author in several peer-reviewed publications, including *Annual of Psychoanalysis*, *Clinical Social Work Journal*, *The American Psychoanalyst*, *Infant Mental Health Journal*, and the *Child and Adolescent Social Work Journal*,

where she also served as associate editor from 1997-2004. Effective January 2014, she will assume an editorial role at the *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association*.

A native of Norwalk, Conn., Ms. Schmidt received a Master of Arts in the Humanities from the University of Chicago in 2001, a Master of Science in Social Work from the Simmons College School of Social Work in 1975, and a Bachelor of Arts in Sociology from Northwestern University in 1971.

The Chicago Institute for Psychoanalysis is a not-for-profit organization founded in 1932. Its mission is to provide continuing education and training to mental health professionals in the theory and practice of psychoanalysis and psychoanalytic psychotherapy. Based on these principles, the Institute offers innovative sliding-scale and pro-bono therapeutic services in a variety of clinic and community settings. From its adult and child/adolescent clinics – to underserved populations in Chicago’s most vulnerable neighborhoods, the Institute embraces the philosophy that everyone should have access to therapeutic services.

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