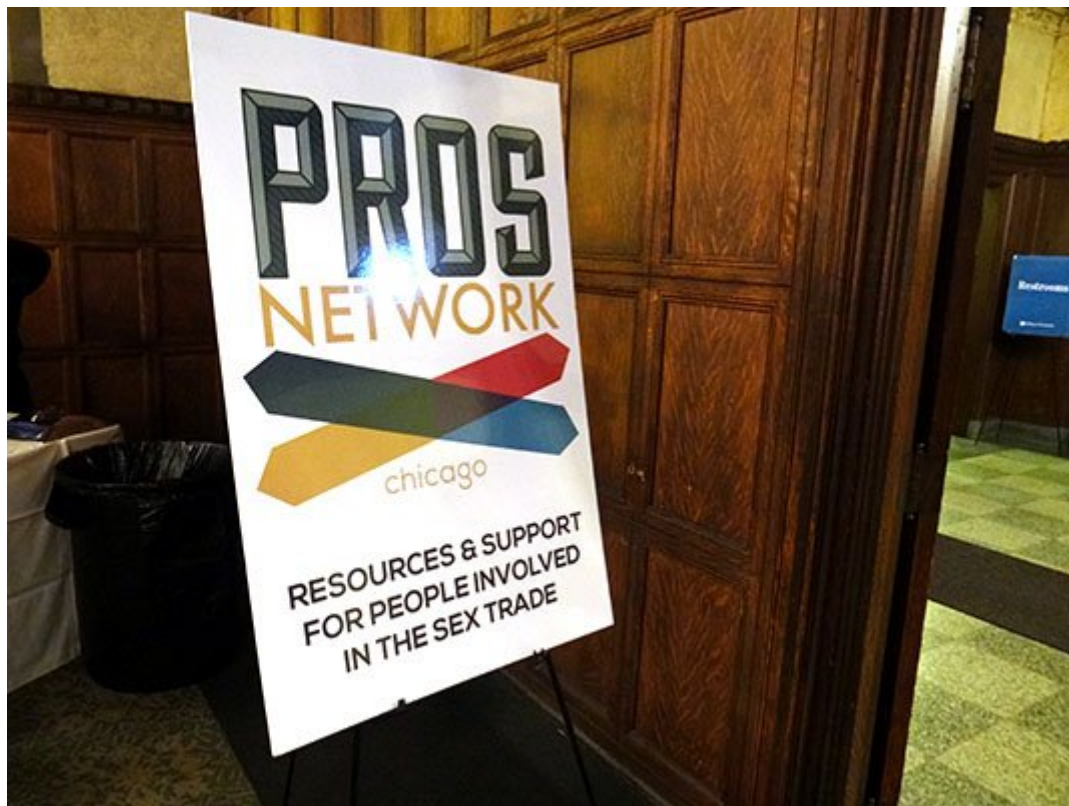


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Lindsey Peterson/Medill

The PROS Network is a hub of professional resources for Chicago sex workers.

## New resource network assists Chicago sex workers to find care

by [Lindsey Peterson](#)

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For women and men in the sex industry, the pursuit to find quality healthcare can be daunting. A new coalition of Chicago providers hopes to ease the uneasiness of finding help that is not only safe, but also provided without judgment.

Supporters, professionals and advocates celebrated Wednesday night the launch of the Professionals and Resources Offering Services to sex workers Network, commonly referred to as PROS Network, at DePaul University.

The Network was created by the Sex Workers Outreach Project of Chicago, and was inspired by the first PROS Network in New York City. The coalition is made up of medical, mental health and legal professionals who have signed an agreement to offer client-centered care to those in the sex trade.

Corina Mattson is the director of programs and administration and a licensed couple and family therapist at Live Oak in Chicago. Live Oak is a member of the PROS Network of providers.

"It's a place where an individual can come, who's worked in the sex trade, and can know they won't be judged for that experience," Mattson said. "As a therapist, we're working on what the client wants, not imposing some value about their history."

Mattson said there wasn't a "desert" of specialized care in Chicago, but the PROS Network "let's the rest of us know we're not the only ones providing these services in this way."

"As a longtime sex worker in Chicago, I just saw that there were so many needs," said Serpent Libertine, a board member of SWOP-Chicago.

"A lot of people need a lawyer, need a therapist that is sex worker-friendly, need to know where to get tested or a doctor that they can be open with about being a sex worker and not feeling that they are being judged or that they need to be rescued," Libertine said.

Site director for the Young Women's Empowerment Project, Dominique McKinney, said the new network gives her a more comprehensive toolbox

to better help with her work.

"When I'm doing crisis intervention with young girls, or if a young girl is having issues and needs some sort of resources, now I have somewhere to point her, as far as a safe space for her to be in the sex trade," McKinney said.

Currently 35 providers are members of the PROS Network, and organizers said they hope to continue to add to that list.

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