

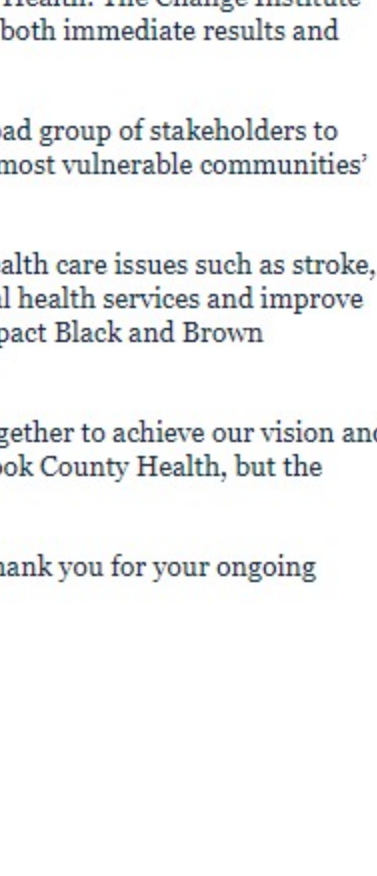
SYSTEM NEWS

April 2022

Letter from the CEO

Dear Cook County Health Friends and Partners,

We all know too well the health inequities that disproportionately impact the communities we serve. In almost every major city there is an affluent community that lives to be in their 90s and a few miles away sits an impoverished community whose life expectancy is in the low 60s. Poverty, low literacy, homelessness, community and domestic violence, racism, language barriers and so many other social risk factors can have a significant impact on a person's health. Lack of care access when coupled with longstanding medical bias against minorities and a history of mistrust, allows us to see why certain neighborhoods must struggle harder to simply live.



It simply isn't enough to just acknowledge these risk factors exist, we have a duty to act.

Change must start with us.

That's why we are launching the Change Institute of Cook County Health. The Change Institute will be a think- and do-tank to identify actionable steps to deliver both immediate results and positive change for current patients and future generations.

We will create new partnerships and collaborations between a broad group of stakeholders to elevate initiatives that will bring about meaningful change in our most vulnerable communities' health status.

At the beginning, we will explore strategies to address pressing health care issues such as stroke, heart disease, diabetes and cancer. We also want to expand mental health services and improve maternal child health outcomes which also disproportionately impact Black and Brown communities.

I hope that you will join our effort. It will take all of us working together to achieve our vision and further the health of the individuals we serve. This is not about Cook County Health, but the health of Cook County.

Visit cicch.org to learn more and to sign up for more updates. Thank you for your ongoing support of our work and your steadfast partnership.

Sincerely,

Israel Rocha, Jr.
CEO

Cook County Health's Stroger Hospital Ranked #1 Most Racially Inclusive Hospital in IL, #5 in US

Cook County Health's John H. Stroger, Jr. Hospital has been named the #1 most racially inclusive hospital in Illinois and #5 most inclusive hospital in the nation by the Lown Institute Hospitals Index.

"Cook County is committed to dismantling the systematic inequities that negatively impact our Black and Brown communities, whether they are in health care, education, or the judicial system," said Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle. "This recognition demonstrates our longstanding efforts to provide high-quality care to all residents of Cook County, regardless of race, immigration status or ability to pay."

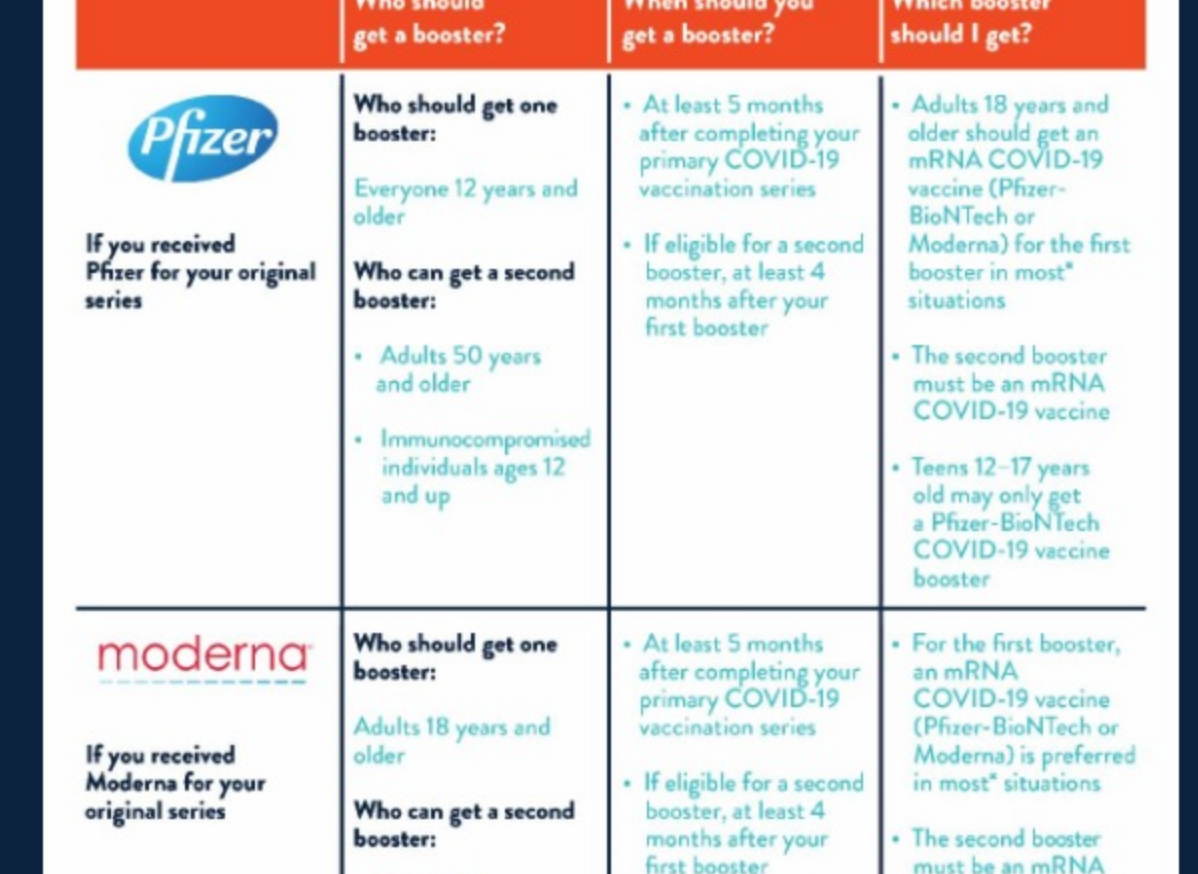
Located on Chicago's west side, Stroger Hospital serves a diverse urban population and is home to one of the country's busiest Level I trauma centers.

"Our health system has a national and international reputation for our cutting edge clinical services, research, and medical education programs, but it is our mission to care for all that truly sets us apart from other health systems. Equity has been at the core of our mission for nearly two centuries. It is an honor to be acknowledged for outstanding racial inclusivity and the strides we are making to ensure equitable access to care for all," said Israel Rocha, CEO, Cook County Health.

The 2022 Lown Institute Hospitals Index racial inclusivity metric measures how well more than 2,800 US hospitals serve people of color in their surrounding community based on Medicare claims and the US Census Bureau's American Community Survey from 2020.

For more information on how the Lown Institute arrived at its rankings, please visit www.lownhospitalsindex.org/inclusivity.

CCH Celebrates New MRI at Provident Hospital



On April 1, Cook County leaders came together to announce the installation of a new MRI at Provident Hospital.

Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle was joined by Cook County Commissioners Dennis Deer and Bill Lowry, and Cook County Health CEO Israel Rocha.

Cook County Health conducts 6,000 MRIs each year. The new MRI will provide Provident patients with the latest technology in medical imaging. It represents a \$2 million investment, supported by grant funding.

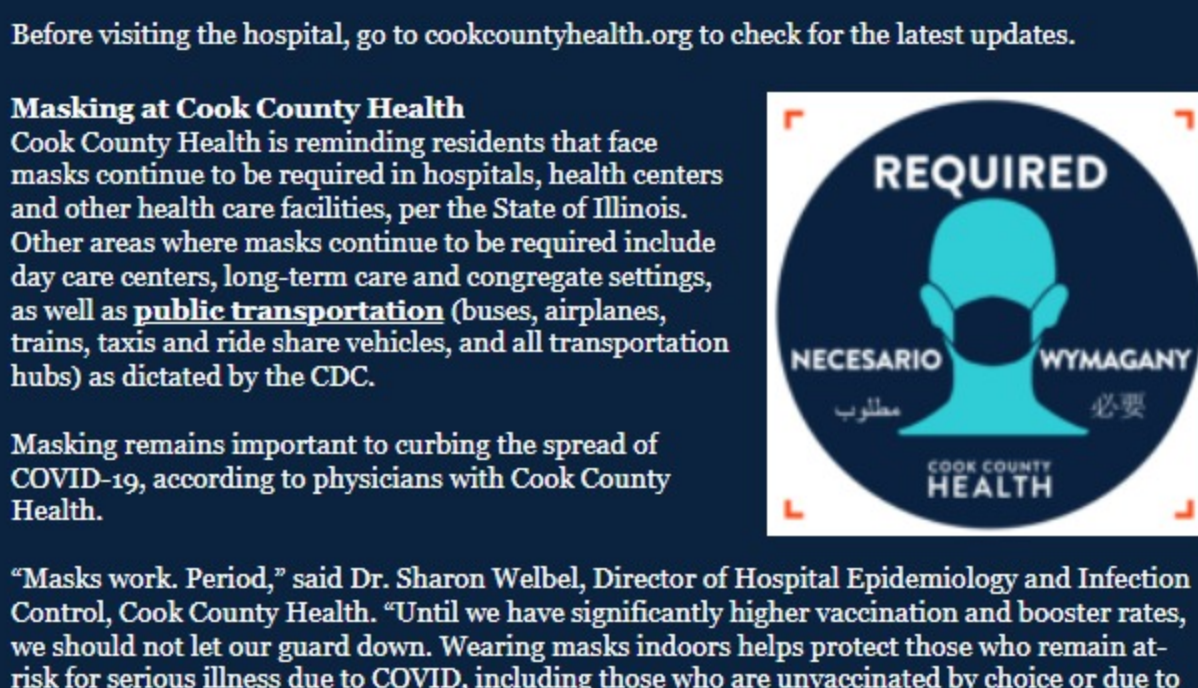
"Provident Hospital has a long and storied history serving this community, and we are thrilled to be highlighting one of the many investments we are making on the Provident campus," said President Preckwinkle. "We have made improvements to the Provident Emergency Department and the inpatient area. Last summer we opened the new Provident Dialysis Center, and now we have a new MRI machine."

Using a magnetic field and radio waves, an MRI produces no radiation, making it one of the safest ways to scan the body. MRIs are used to assess and diagnose a variety of medical conditions, from back or joint pain, to heart, lung, and brain conditions, to cancer.

"This new machine means will be able to perform even more MRI scans at a higher quality resolution, in a setting that is more comfortable for our patients, and get results rapidly. This is what forward progress looks like," said Rocha.

Click here to read the article about the new Provident Hospital MRI in the [Chicago Sun Times](#).

COVID-19 Update with Cook County Health



Latest on COVID-19 Boosters

Last month, the CDC and the FDA updated their guidance on COVID-19 boosters. As with vaccines for other diseases, people are best protected from COVID-19 when they stay up to date with their vaccination schedule.

COVID-19 vaccines continue to protect people from getting seriously ill, being hospitalized, and even dying—especially people who have received a booster.

CDC recommends everyone ages 12 years and older receive a COVID-19 vaccine booster after completing their primary COVID-19 vaccination series. Individuals over 50 and the immunocompromised can receive a second booster.

Cook County Health community sites are administering first and second doses and boosters. For more information, visit myshotcookcounty.com. Bring your vaccine card to your appointment or when you walk into a site.

Booster Guidance

	Who should get a booster?	When should you get a booster?	Which booster should I get?
Pfizer If you received Pfizer for your original series	Who should get one booster: Everyone 12 years and older Who can get a second booster: • Adults 50 years and older • Immunocompromised individuals ages 12 and up	• At least 5 months after completing your primary COVID-19 vaccination series • If eligible for a second booster, at least 4 months after your first booster	• Adults 18 years and older should get an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine (Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna) for the first booster in most situations • The second booster must be an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine • Teens 12-17 years old may only get a Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine booster
Moderna If you received Moderna for your original series	Who should get one booster: Adults 18 years and older Who can get a second booster: • Adults 50 years and older • Adults 18 years and older who are immunocompromised	• At least 5 months after completing your primary COVID-19 vaccination series • If eligible for a second booster, at least 4 months after your first booster	• For the first booster, an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine (Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna) is preferred in most situations • The second booster must be an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine
J&J If you received Johnson and Johnson for your original series	Who should get one booster: Adults 18 years and older Who can get a second booster: • Anyone who received a J&J/Janssen COVID-19 vaccine for both their primary dose and booster • Adults 50 years and older who first received a J&J/Janssen COVID-19 vaccine, regardless of what type of booster they received	• At least 2 months after completing your primary COVID-19 vaccination • If eligible for a second booster, at least 4 months after your first booster	• For the first booster, an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine (Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna) is preferred in most situations • The second booster must be an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine

*Although mRNA vaccines are preferred for the first booster, J&J/Janssen COVID-19 vaccine may be considered in some situations.

FAQs about BA.2 – a New COVID-19 Subvariant

What is BA.2?
BA.2 is a BA.1 subvariant of omicron (BA.1). It has been referred to as "stealth" omicron because its genetic mutations make it harder to distinguish from the delta variant.

BA.2 is the cause of a current wave of COVID in Europe and has been detected in the U.S., including Illinois.

Is BA.2 worse than the original omicron?
Experts are still studying the new variant to understand it. But Danish scientists believe it's 1.5 times more contagious than the original variant. Experts do not think it's more severe than the original strain, but it's important to note, that while omicron was considered milder than the original strain, hospitalizations and deaths – particularly among the unvaccinated increased – and numbers tend to lag after original infection.

Are vaccinations working against BA.2?
Like BA.1 (original omicron), vaccines are proving to be effective at preventing severe illness and death. Reinfection after omicron is still possible.

What can I do to protect myself and my loved ones?
Vaccinations remain key. It's not too late to get vaccinated. Cook County Health's community health centers offer vaccination hours. Visit myshotcookcounty.com.

If you aren't feeling well or come into contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID, it's important to stay home, test and isolate. If you have questions, call your doctor.

Get 4 Free COVID-19 Tests Mailed to You
Every home in the U.S. is eligible to order 2 sets of 4 free at-home tests. If you already ordered your first set, order a second today.

Click on the link to order your tests. If someone needs help placing an order, they can call 1-800-232-0233 (TTY 1-888-720-7489).

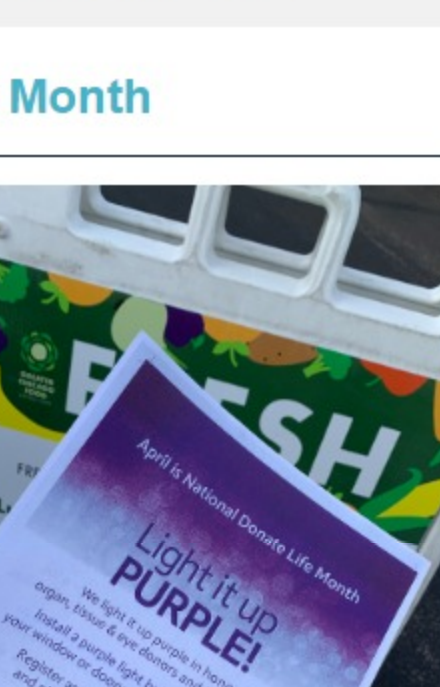
Visitor Policy

As of March 22, Cook County Health has no COVID-19 restrictions for its visitor policy. The health system may change that based on case numbers and positivity rate.

Before visiting the hospital, go to cookcountyhealth.org to check for the latest updates.

Masking at Cook County Health

Cook County Health is reminding residents that face masks continue to be required in hospitals, health centers and other health care facilities, per the State of Illinois. Other areas where masks continue to be required include day care centers, long-term care and congregate settings, as well as public transportation (buses, airplanes, trains, taxis and ride share vehicles, and all transportation hubs) as dictated by the CDC.



Masking remains important to curbing the spread of COVID-19, according to physicians with Cook County Health.

"Masks work. Period," said Dr. Sharon Welbel, Director of Hospital Epidemiology and Infection Control, Cook County Health. "Until we have significantly higher vaccination and booster rates, we should not let our guard down. Wearing masks indoors helps protect those who remain at-risk for serious illness due to COVID, including those who are unvaccinated by choice or due to their age, or underlying health conditions."

Individuals can pick up high-quality KN95 masks or receive a COVID-19 vaccine at any Cook County Health community health center during business hours. For more information, visit myshotcookcounty.com/locations/.

Awards and Recognitions

Israel Rocha and Dr. Claudia Fegan: Crain's Chicago Business Notable Executives of Color in Healthcare

Israel Rocha, Cook County Health CEO, and Dr. Claudia Fegan, Chief Medical Officer, were among 34 executives of color named to Crain's notable list.



Mr. Rocha was recognized for his work in leading Cook County's community vaccination campaign, including the launch of multiple mass vaccination sites. Under his leadership, Cook County Health has opened new community health centers in Belmont Cragin and Blue Island and increased services at Provident Hospital.

Dr. Fegan was lauded for her work in setting up the mass vaccination sites, her commitment to diversity and inclusion at Cook County Health and her work to ensure access to care for all who need it in Cook County.

Caryn Stancik: Agency in Motion's 2022 Women of Impact Award

Caryn Stancik, Chief Marketing and Communications Officer, was named as Agency in Motion's 2022 Women of Impact Award winner. The organization noted Ms. Stancik's "impact on her organization, community and peers but also her commitment to diversity and inclusion."

In her role at CCH, Ms. Stancik brings authenticity, creativity and commitment to every project – whether working with colleagues to initiate new services, executing marketing strategies for the system's Medicaid health plan, leading the health system's brand never forgetting its 180+ year legacy; or most recently the development of a multi-million-dollar COVID marketing and public awareness campaign hyper-focused on communities of color.

In addition to the campaign featuring black and brown physicians and community members, she challenged the team to increase minority and women owned business participation achieving a nearly 85% campaign spend going to local minority- or women-owned businesses.

Dr. Ashlea Winfield: Cook County Health Doctor of the Year

Dr. Ashlea Winfield has been named as Cook County Health's Doctor of the Year for 2022! Dr. Winfield received the most nominations for this recognition from her colleagues across the health system.

Dr. Winfield is an emergency medicine physician and Assistant Program Director of the CCH Simulation Center. In this role, she educates not only emergency medicine residents in the simulation center but also residents, fellows, and faculty from all departments across CCH. She created and leads the Department of Emergency Medicine's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee, spearheading meaningful developments to make CCH a more inclusive and welcoming environment for both patients and staff. She also serves as a mentor for students of all ages, from high school through residency. As one nominator wrote, "Dr. Winfield is the personification of the Cook County Health mission."

Dr. Winfield graduated from Tulane University and earned her medical degree from Louisiana State University Health Sciences Center at New Orleans. She completed her residency at CCH and a simulation fellowship at CCH and Rush University.

Other Updates

Health Benefits for Immigrant Adults Now Open

In December 2020, Illinois expanded Medicaid to provide health coverage to immigrant adults ages 65 and older. Now, another Health Benefits for Immigrant Adults expansion offers health care benefits to low-income immigrants ages 55 to 64.

Enrollment for healthcare coverage for people ages 55+, regardless of immigration status, is now open. Learn more and apply at abe.illinois.gov/abe/.

Cook County Health continues to advocate for this program to be expanded to all non-citizen adults. Click here to read a Chicago Tribune story about CCH patient who gained health coverage through this program.

ANNOUNCEMENT
HEALTHCARE COVERAGE ENROLLMENT OPEN FOR PEOPLE AGE 55+
ANY IMMIGRATION STATUS

Apply at <https://abe.illinois.gov/abe/access/>

YOU MAY QUALIFY FOR HEALTHCARE COVERAGE IF YOU...
 Live in Illinois
 Are 55 years or older
 Make under 138% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines (approximately \$1,565/monthly)
 Do not qualify for Federal Medicaid because of your immigration status

To apply, visit <https://abe.illinois.gov/> or call (800) 843-6154

NOTICIA
INSCRIPCIÓN DE COBERTURA DE ATENCIÓN MÉDICA ABIERTA PARA PERSONAS MAYORES DE 55 AÑOS
CUALQUIER ESTATUS MIGRATORIO

Aplicar en <https://abe.illinois.gov/abe/access/>

PUEDEN QUE TU CALIFICAS PARA LA COBERTURA DE ATENCIÓN MÉDICA SI...
 Vives en Illinois
 Tienes 55 años o más
 Ganas menos del 138% de las Niveles Federales de Pobreza (aproximadamente \$1,565 mensuales)
 No calificas para Medicaid Federal debido a su estatus migratorio

Para aplicar, visita <https://abe.illinois.gov/> o llama al (800) 843-6154

Applications Due for Cook County Gun Violence Prevention and Reduction Grants

Earlier this month, the Cook County Justice Advisory Council (JAC) released the formal application for the 2022 Gun Violence Prevention & Reduction Grant opportunity. The grant program is designed as a robust response to the high levels of gun violence experienced in certain community areas of Cook County, coinciding with the pandemic.

The Cook County Gun Violence Prevention & Reduction Grants are funded through the federal COVID-19 recovery initiative, the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). In preparation for the historic level of funding coming from the federal government, Cook County has engaged with partners at the City of Chicago and State of Illinois to plan for effective and coordinated distribution of Violence Prevention funding.

"Addressing the gun violence crisis we are experiencing in Cook County is one of our highest priorities," said Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle. "This is why we have prioritized the Gun Violence Prevention and Reduction Grant Program as one of the first ARPA-funded initiatives the county is implementing. This investment will result in long-term, community-driven solutions to gun violence. When we stabilize and support our communities struggling with crime and violence, we honor our commitment to equity and we increase safety for all residents."

The Justice Advisory Council has developed this grant opportunity to be accessible for both large and small programs that prevent or reduce instances of gun violence. The Cook County Gun Violence Prevention & Reduction Grants will fund a variety of violence prevention strategies including mental health and employment services, street outreach and case management as well as other services which support residents at-risk of being involved in community violence. Up to \$65 million in grant funds may be awarded during this grant cycle.

"The Gun Violence Prevention and Reduction Grants represent a new chapter for our county," said Avik Das, Executive Director of the Justice Advisory Council. "This level of funding will help us build a sustainable infrastructure of programs and services that support at-risk residents and lead to safer communities. We are honored to be stewarding this vital and historic funding for Cook County. In the coming months, we hope to receive many compelling applications that leverage creative community-driven solutions and evidence informed violence prevention strategies. Through partnering with organizations working on-the-ground, we seek to support and uplift our communities most impacted by gun violence."

Due Dates:
April 11, 2022 - Applications due for proposals over \$1.5 million
May 9, 2022 - Applications due for proposals \$1.5 million and under

For more information and application materials, visit cookcountyl.gov/JACGrants

Celebrating National Donate Life Month

In recognition of April as National Donate Life Month, Gift of Hope provided reusable bags and informational material about the organ donor registry to be given out at CCH health centers.

In Illinois, more than 4,000 people are waiting for a life-saving organ transplant. To learn more about how you can register to be an organ donor, [click here](#).

Cook County Health in the News

AP: [Doctors finding hurdles to using pills to treat COVID-19](#)

WBBM Radio: [As masks fall, cold-like illnesses are on the rise](#)

Daily Herald: [Masks on trains and planes, still? TSA policy decision coming soon](#)

Crain's Chicago Business: [CRAIN'S 2022 NOTABLE EXECUTIVES OF COLOR IN HEALTH CARE](#)

NBC 5 Chicago: [What Experts Are Watching for Amid 'Heightened Alert' Over BA.2](#)

Chicago Tribune: [Letters: Vaccinating children against COVID-19 is paramount for their protection](#)

Becker's Hospital Review: [Cook County Health chief medical officer encourages healthcare leaders to be staunch patient advocates](#)

Visit our website at cookcountyhealth.org

If you would like to invite a representative from CCH to attend a community event, please send an email to events@cookcountyhhs.org.

To provide feedback on CCH Community News, update your contact information, or unsubscribe, please email Marcelino Garcia, Director of Community Affairs, at mgarcia6@cookcountyhhs.org.