



COOK COUNTY  
HEALTH

# SYSTEM NEWS

January 2020

## Letter from the CEO

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Dear Cook County Health Friends and Partners,

This year, Cook County will join communities across the U.S. to take part in the 2020 Census.

By Census Day, which is April 1, 2020, households will be invited to participate in the 2020 Census with multiple options for responding. You can be counted by mail, online or phone. Census workers will also be out in the communities to assist residents.

Ensuring that every citizen is counted by the Census is critically important to the well-being and future of Cook County, particularly in areas on the city's west and south sides that are often underreported.

The data gathered by the Census is used to distribute billions in federal funds to assist local communities for important things like transportation, Medicaid, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and more.

Being counted helps ensure federal money is sent into areas of the city that need investment, bettering the lives of individuals and moving us closer to a more equitable future in Cook County. Without these resources, the challenge is much greater.

Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle speaks about the importance of the 2020 Census in [this video](#). Click on the link to watch it.

Information gathered by the Census will not be shared with immigration or law enforcement agencies, employers, landlords, etc., which means participating does not put residents at risk for potential retribution. The Census will not have a question about immigration status and information is only used for statistical purposes.

For more Census information and news about outreach efforts, visit [CookCountyIL.gov/Census](http://CookCountyIL.gov/Census). We will continue to provide reminders through our social media channels and via this newsletter, but we are counting on everyone to do their part in not only

getting themselves counted but making sure their friends, family and neighbors are counted as well.

Sincerely,



Debra D. Carey  
Interim CEO

## Cook County Health on the Novel Coronavirus

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The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is closely monitoring an outbreak caused by a novel (new) coronavirus first identified in Wuhan, Hubei Province, China. As of early Friday, there have been more than 9,000 confirmed cases, the majority in China. Symptoms for the virus include fever, cough and difficulty breathing.

The CDC announced the first case in Chicago on January 24 and the first confirmed person-to-person transmission of the virus in the U.S. on January 30. The two cases in Illinois involved individuals who live together. In the instance of the first case, the individual had traveled to China.

In response to the virus, CCH has implemented additional screening procedures to protect patients, visitors and staff. If patients have traveled to Wuhan recently and have certain symptoms, they'll be isolated and a specimen will be collected for testing.

CCH is in regular contact with the Illinois Department of Public Health, the Cook County Department of Public Health the Chicago Department of Public Health and the CDC. We will share any updated messages through our [website](#) and social media channels.

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*Dr. Terry Mason, chief operating officer, Cook County Department of Public Health, at a press conference to announce the first Chicago case of the coronavirus.*



*Dr. Sharon Welbel, director of infection control and hospital epidemiology, spoke with several media outlets about the coronavirus and efforts the health system is making to screen patients.*

## Cook County Health Research and Innovation Summit to Tackle Social Needs

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Join Cook County Health for our fourth Research and Innovation Summit: Achieving Health Equity by Addressing Social Needs on Wednesday, February 19, from 1-4:30 p.m. A variety of health care, social justice and community experts committed to understanding and confronting the social determinants of health will gather together for an afternoon of engagement, education and collaboration around health care for the people of Cook County.

The event is being held at the Cook County Health Professional Building, 5<sup>th</sup> floor, 1950 W. Polk St., Chicago.

The summit is pleased to welcome:

- Toni Preckwinkle, President, Cook County Board of Commissioners
- Dr. Dennis Deer, Cook County Board of Commissioners
- Dr. Aletha Maybank, Chief Health Equity Officer, American Medical Association
- Debra Carey, Interim CEO, Cook County Health
- Dr. Layla P. Suleiman Gonzalez, Director of Human Services, Loyola University Chicago
- Experts on food, housing, medical-legal partnership and workforce.

RSVP to [Jacqueline.Kloos@cookcountyhhs.org](mailto:Jacqueline.Kloos@cookcountyhhs.org)

## Virtual Patient Advocate Aims to Improve Infant Mortality and Healthy Pregnancy Rates in At-Risk Populations

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Despite decades of research, health disparities in birth outcomes persist for African American and Latina women. Cook County Health is the first site in Illinois to offer Gabby, an online animated character that acts as a virtual patient advocate to help identify potential health risks in at-risk women who are planning to become pregnant.

Gabby is programmed and designed to screen women for more than 100 general and reproductive health risks and to help them resolve those risks before pregnancy.

Women who are thinking about becoming pregnant or are pregnant have a virtual conversation with Gabby on a tablet. Gabby has the ability to deliver content in a simple, conversational style. Gabby also takes into account a person's health literacy and best tailors the process to the patient. Afterward, the patient's health care team can review the data and make an assessment on what the best plan of care is for the patient.

The program is designed to be engaging, empathetic, culturally competent and knowledgeable in preconception care.

With the implementation of Gabby at the Near South Health Center and Englewood Health Center, CCH continues the work needed to reduce health disparities across Cook County and help women deliver safely.

To learn more about Gabby, contact the Near South Health Center at 312-945-4010, or the Englewood Health Center at 773-483-5011.

## February Fresh Truck Schedule

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Cook County Health and the Greater Chicago Food Depository have provided more than 620,000 pounds of fresh produce through the Fresh Truck distribution days. More than 31,000 individuals, representing more than 100,000 household

members, have been able to take part. Most of the individuals benefitting from the Fresh Truck screened positive for food insecurity at a CCH health center visit.

In February, the Fresh Truck's schedule is as follows:

February 6, 10:30 a.m. to noon  
**Austin Health Center**, 4800 W. Chicago Ave., Chicago

February 11, 10:30 a.m. to noon  
**Cottage Grove Health Center**, 1645 S. Cottage Grove Ave.,  
Ford Heights

February 18, 10:30 a.m. to noon  
**Robbins Health Center**, 13450 S. Kedzie Ave., Robbins

February 20, 9 – 10:30 a.m.  
**Englewood Health Center**, 1135 W. 69<sup>th</sup> St., Chicago

February 20, 1 – 2:30 p.m.  
**Near South Health Center**, 3525 S. Michigan Ave., Chicago

February 25, 9-10:30 a.m.  
**North Riverside Health Center**, 1800 S. Harlem Ave., Riverside



## Patricia Hernandez Receives Community Alliance Award



Patricia Hernandez, director of Cook County Health's CareLink program, was presented with the Corazon Award from The Community Alliance for her work to better the lives of people living on Chicago's west side and the western suburbs of Cook County.

The Community Alliance is based out of the Casa Esperanza Community Center in Melrose Park, and it works together with community partners to address social issues such as health care, legal and immigration assistance.

The Corazon Award is presented to someone who supports the mission and vision of The Community Alliance. She was recognized for her advocacy in the community.

*Pictured above: Patricia Hernandez (center), director of CareLink, was presented with the Corazon Award by Liz Figueroa-Serrano, Advocate and Community Partners Coordinator, Sarah's Inn, and Jaime Peña, Community Health Education Worker, AgeOptions.*

## Lead Hazard Reduction Home Improvement Program

Do you know a child under the age of six or a pregnant woman? Do they live in Berwyn, Blue Island, Calumet City, Calumet Park, Cicero, Dolton, Maywood, Riverdale, Robbins, or Summit?

The Cook County Department of Public Health (CCDPH) and the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) are working together to inspect homes and fix lead paint hazards in homes in those areas.

A family must income-qualify for this program to have a free lead inspection.

If lead hazards are found in the home, CCDPH will fix the hazards, at no cost to the family. The home repair work typically offered includes painting, window replacement or other home repairs to remove lead paint.

To find out more, visit [www.cookcountypublichealth.org](http://www.cookcountypublichealth.org).

Physician Bio:

## Terry Mason, MD

### Chief Operating Officer

### Cook County Department of Public Health

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Dr. Mason was appointed the chief operating officer of the Cook County Department of Public Health in 2013 after serving more than three years as the chief medical officer and six months as interim chief executive officer for Cook County Health.

As the COO at the CCDPH, Dr. Mason is responsible for public health programs and services for one of the nation's largest metropolitan health departments, ranging from disease prevention, control and epidemiology; health statistics; health promotion; STD/HIV screening; emergency preparedness; and environmental licensing, inspections and complaints.

Before joining Cook County Health and the Cook County Department of Public Health, he served as the commissioner of Chicago Department of Public Health.

Dr. Mason received his Bachelor of Science in biology from Loyola University Chicago and his medical degree from Abraham Lincoln School of Medicine at the University of Illinois Chicago. He devoted 25 years of his life in private practice as a board-certified urologist. During that period, his focus was on male erectile dysfunction and prostate cancer.

He is a nationally recognized health educator and inspirational speaker who champions holistic approaches to health management. It is Dr. Mason's continued vision to transform health care delivery through the integration of public health and public medicine to create a population-based strategy to manage chronic disease.

He is a member of many professional organizations and serves on multiple boards. Dr. Mason has delivered countless presentations and conducted numerous interviews on a range of public health matters and continues to share his holistic approach to health on his popular radio show on WVON 1690 AM call-in show, "The Doctor in the House" for more than 21 years.





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[Health experts expect rise in pot-related ER visits after legalization](#)



[Top New Year's Resolutions For 2020 And How to Make Them Successful](#)



[O'Hare to begin screening passengers from Wuhan, China, as deadly coronavirus reaches U.S](#)



[Chicago's O'Hare To Begin Testing Travelers From China For Coronavirus](#)



[Coronavirus screenings at O'Hare begin amid China outbreak](#)



[Chicago prepares for possible new viral illness](#)



[Fentanyl Deaths on the Rise](#)



[Signs of Hope Amid Grim Gun Violence Statistics](#)



[Flu activity high in Chicago area; flu season on track to be one of worst in decades, experts warn](#)

## Watch us on CAN TV

Every month, Cook County Health features a guest expert on CAN TV to offer viewers information on various health topics, such as heart disease and breast cancer, and to discuss prevention and treatment strategies. Be sure to tune in to CAN TV on the second Tuesday of each month at 5 p.m. to catch CCH's monthly segment, and call in with your health questions at 312-738-1060. To find archived episodes, visit YouTube and look for the [Community Health Hotline](#). The next show will air on Tuesday, February 11 at 5 p.m.

## Cook County Health in the Community: Upcoming Events

CCH's outreach team participates in a variety of community events throughout Cook County. Whether it is a health fair, festival, job fair or community picnic, CCH's outreach workers make sure that Cook County residents know about the full portfolio of services the system provides. If you would like to know where CCH will be this month, please check our [calendar of events](#).

### Visit our website at [cookcountyhealth.org](http://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](mailto: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](mailto:mgarcia6@cookcountyhhs.org).