

JANUARY 2018



Cook County Health & Hospitals System



COOK COUNTY HEALTH
& HOSPITALS SYSTEM
CCHHS

SYSTEM NEWS

Community Edition

Letter from the CEO

Reflecting back on 2017, it is clear that it has been a very busy and also tumultuous year: local budget challenges, a reorganization of the state Medicaid program, and an administration intent on unraveling federal health care reform. Despite the turmoil and ambiguity of 2017, I am proud to say the Cook County Health and Hospitals System has achieved numerous accomplishments that we are proud of, including:



- Expanding mental health and mental health services throughout the County
 - Increasing Medication Assisted Treatment and naloxone distribution to our patients in the Cook County Jail.
 - Assuming operations of city behavioral health services in the Roseland area
 - Establishing mental health screening in bond court
- Earning a new contract with the State of Illinois to serve Medicaid members in 2018 and growing the CountyCare health plan (see story below).
- Fostering improved patient experience and safety through system-wide training programs
- Successful accreditation surveys by The Joint Commission for Provident Hospital and CCHHS community health centers, and by the National Committee on Quality Assurance for CountyCare.
- Continuing important capital projects, such as the Central Campus Health Center, renovations inside Stroger Hospital and identifying sites for three replacement health centers.
- Increasing revenues from contracts with managed care organizations and growing volumes in surgery, deliveries and mammograms.
- Establishing novel analyses and adaptive solutions to address pressing public health crises, such as gun violence and community stress, and opioid use disorder.
- Developing and expanding programs to address social determinants of health, particularly food and housing insecurity. This includes bringing in more than \$4 million in grant funding to address social determinants and behavioral health care.

We have much to be grateful for in 2017, especially the support of our patients, staff and community partners. Still, there is much left to accomplish for those whom we serve. I am looking forward to furthering our mission-driven efforts and

commitment to care in 2018.



Dr. Jay Shannon, CEO, CCHHS

Influenza Season Ramping Up Early with Growing Number of Cases in Cook County



The Cook County Health & Hospitals System has seen a significant increase in the number of confirmed influenza cases in its health care facilities and influenza-like illnesses reported to the Cook County Department of Public Health in suburban Cook County, an earlier spike than in past influenza seasons.

"As a lung specialist and critical care physician, I know how serious influenza can be, especially among vulnerable patients. For those who are very young or very old, pregnant, or have a chronic health condition the flu can be fatal. An average of 3,500 people die each year in Illinois due to influenza and pneumonia and this influenza season is shaping up to be a very serious one," said Dr. Jay Shannon, CEO, CCHHS.

CCHHS, which is comprised of Stroger and Provident Hospitals, more than one dozen community health centers and the health care facility at the Cook County Jail, has seen 149 confirmed cases of influenza since October 21, 2017. During the entire 2016-17 season, CCHHS saw 210 cases.

"We have seen high flu activity over the past five weeks," said Dr. Kiran Joshi, Attending Physician, Cook County Department of Public Health (CCDPH), noting that the peak of the season is unpredictable. "Influenza-like illness activity typically remains above baseline for about 13 weeks, so we expect this to continue

There were more than 1,500 confirmed cases of influenza in the Chicagoland area in the last week of December 2017 alone, based on voluntary reports by local laboratories to CCDPH.

Officials encourage people to practice good hygiene to prevent disease transmission and to call their doctor if they have influenza symptoms. Unlike a cold, influenza symptoms can include a fever, body aches and headache. Because influenza is a virus, antibiotics are not effective against the flu. Your doctor may prescribe antiviral medication to combat illness.

"It is not too late to get the influenza vaccine" said Dr. Sharon Welbel, Director of Hospital Epidemiology and Infection Control, CCHHS. "People who have been vaccinated are more likely to experience milder symptoms if they do get the flu and have a reduced risk of severe complications. Research has shown that children who receive the influenza vaccination are significantly less likely to die due to influenza complications."

CCHHS is screening all patients and visitors for influenza-like illness and visitor restrictions for individuals exhibiting symptoms of influenza and children under the age of 12 take effect today at Stroger and Provident Hospitals. [Click here for details.](#)

CCDPH provides weekly updates on influenza activity in the Chicagoland area. An interactive website with data is available here:

ccdphcd.shinyapps.io/weekly_influenza_surveillance_beta/ and PDF reports are available here under influenza: cookcountypublichealth.org/data-reports/communicable-diseases

Watch Out for Frostbite As Chicago Area's Temperature Drops



An unwelcome visitor has come to the Chicago area: bone-chillingly cold weather. With that, comes an increased chance of getting frostbite, even if you're just outside for a few minutes.

Frostbite is an injury- almost like a burn-that can potentially damage skin, tissues, muscle and bones. But it can be prevented.

"As much as possible, you should limit your time outside when the wind chill is low like this," said Dr. Stathis Poulakidas, Chair of Burn Surgery at Cook County Health and Hospitals System's John H. Stroger Jr. Hospital. "The [National Weather Service](#) has warned that this week's low wind chills could bring frostbite to exposed skin in less than 30 minutes."

To keep safe, Dr. Poulakidas also recommends the following tips:

- Wear a warm hat, and keep feet and hands warm and dry
- Cover as much of your face as possible while outside, breathe through a scarf to warm air before it enters your lungs
- Wear several layers of lightweight clothing, rather than one or two layers of heavy garments. The air between the garments acts as insulation to keep the body warmer
- Seek medical attention immediately if you have these symptoms: gray, white or yellow skin discoloration, numbness, waxy feeling skin
- Drink warm, caffeine-free, non-alcoholic beverages to stay warm and hydrated

Take precautions when heating your home and install smoke and carbon monoxide alarms on every floor. Never leave space heaters, stoves or flames unattended or going overnight. Elderly individuals are particularly vulnerable to extreme weather conditions. Don't forget to check on family, friends and neighbors during cold snaps.

CountyCare to Grow in 2018

"I wouldn't be alive if it wasn't for CountyCare," said Linda Hooker, a patient at Cook County Health & Hospitals System's (CCHHS) Stroger Hospital and CountyCare member. "For eight years I was homeless. CountyCare introduced me to a social

worker. My social worker helped me find housing. Not only did CountyCare give me medication and doctors, but they found me a home."



"I've learned to take care of myself way better than I used to. From a scale of 1 to 10, I started at a 2 and I'm at a 10 and a half now," said Ms. Hooker. "I have asthma and COPD, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, and I had it in the worst way. I had to gasp for air." Thanks to respiratory therapy, Ms. Hooker expects to ditch her oxygen tank in the New Year. She sees a doctor regularly for a sore knee and is working with a dietician on healthy eating habits. "From head to toe, CountyCare is my life."

"CountyCare's main goal is to keep our members healthy," said Dr. Jay Shannon, CEO, CCHHS. "As the owners of CountyCare, a not-for-profit, provider-led, managed care health plan, our focus is on patients. We have invested in sophisticated care management services and other innovative programs to best serve our members and improve individual outcomes and the health of our community."

This focus is reflected in CountyCare's recent accreditation for member protection and quality improvement by the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA).

CountyCare will continue to put members first as the plan grows. Last month, CountyCare welcomed 160,000 new members from Family Health Network, resulting in a total plan membership of 295,000 members. In January 2018, approximately 115,000 members from Aetna Better Health of Illinois will join CountyCare.

"As a provider-led plan, CountyCare is uniquely positioned to serve Medicaid beneficiaries in Cook County. This is a population our health system has long and proudly cared for and we understand their health needs," said Dr. Shannon. "In addition to providing quality coverage and person-centered service to more individuals, growth will allow us to leverage economies of scale to the benefit of our members, offset fixed costs and provide a platform that will allow innovations that ultimately drive improvements in public health."



Stroger Hospital High Performing in Heart Failure Care: U.S. News and World Report

Lucina Hernandez was expecting her second child when she began experiencing severe pain in her chest. She had developed acute heart failure related to lupus, a chronic autoimmune disease, and needed an emergency C-section.

"We take care of some of the sickest heart failure patients and Lucina's condition was particularly serious. As a doctor and mother myself, I knew I needed to do everything in my power to help her," said Dr. Nataliya Pyslar, cardiologist and Director of Cardiology Consultation Services at the Cook County Health & Hospitals System's John H. Stroger Jr. Hospital. "Caring for patients is so much more than running a test and writing a prescription. You have to hold their hand, share their emotions and empower them. Watching a patient recover and resume their life is the most rewarding experience."

"You feel good when you have a doctor to advocate for you. You know you're going to be OK," said Mrs. Hernandez. "Dr. Pyslar is so nice. She checked on me all the time. This is the first time I've had a doctor like her." Today, Mrs. Hernandez's heart condition is well controlled and she and her family are thriving.

This year, U.S. News and World Report recognized Stroger Hospital with its highest rating for heart failure care in their annual Best Hospital rankings. The 450-bed

facility is the flagship hospital of the Cook County Health & Hospitals System.

"With extensive clinical expertise and access to the most modern medical technology, the Stroger Hospital team has demonstrated their exceptional ability to care for those suffering from advanced forms of heart failure," said Dr. Jay Shannon, CEO, CCHHS. "Our mission is to provide the highest quality of care to our patients and, while we excel in treating late stage disease, we continue to strive to prevent such serious illnesses whenever possible through primary care interventions."

U.S. News evaluates hospital performance in heart failure using patient survival data and a variety of other factors related to care. To receive a national specialty ranking, a hospital must excel in caring for the sickest, most medically complex patients.

"This recognition is a testament not only to the skilled work and dedication of the staff in the Division of Cardiology, but also an acknowledgment of the contributions of each and every person involved in the care of patients with congestive heart failure. Our patients' outcomes rely on us all, from personnel in the diagnostic laboratories and nurses in coronary care and short stay units, to care coordinators and physicians, all working around the clock to care for our patients," said Dr. Rami Doukky, Chair of Cardiology, CCHHS.

U.S. News assessed data on almost 5,000 medical centers nationwide to help patients find the best place to receive treatment. Only 18 percent of hospitals nationwide were named High Performing in heart failure. Stroger Hospital offers a variety of procedures that are crucial in the care of heart failure patients including advanced diagnostic cardiac testing, valve surgery, coronary artery bypass surgery, pacemakers, and implantable cardioverter-defibrillators.



Focus on the Cook County Health Foundation

The Cook County Health Foundation was established in 2011 to support programs and services that improve quality patient care and meet the health care needs of the communities served by the Cook County Health & Hospitals System. As an independent 501(c)(3) nonprofit, the Cook County Health Foundation is governed by an independent Board of Directors. Chicagoland native Joseph Flanagan recently was appointed Chair of the Cook County Health Foundation Board.

After spending his career in the insurance industry, Mr. Flanagan is now devoting his time to improving local access to health care and serving the uninsured. "It was important for me to give back in ways that I could," he said. "We all search for ways we can contribute and be helpful and with my insurance knowledge my path led here." Mr. Flanagan also served as the Chairman of Access to Care, a nonprofit organization that provides primary care health services to uninsured individuals in suburban Cook County.

Mr. Flanagan noted that the foundation is focused on two primary goals: raising funds for the health system to support capital, service line and community engagement projects, as well as elevating the profile of CCHHS among the civic community as a community asset for the provision of care, clinical workforce training, discovery and innovation.

"The health system is very mission-driven," said Mr. Flanagan. "I marvel at the commitment of the doctors and nurses. Something inside them drives them to

provide a quality patient experience as healers."

The foundation will hold numerous events throughout the year that support CCHHS. The marquee event being planned for 2018 is a gala to be held in April to raise funds for CCHHS' women and children's services.

"We are looking for new ways to partner with community members and stakeholders to impact the quality of life of the people in Cook County," added Mr. Flanagan. Visit chealthfoundation.org to learn more about the foundation and how you can get involved.

CCHHS Teaming Up With Other West Side Health Centers to Address Economic Conditions Tied to Poor Health

Patients' health outcomes are tied not only to the healthcare they receive but also to the conditions in the communities where they live. Some hospitals and health systems on Chicago's West Side and those who serve patients on the West Side are adopting a new, shared strategy known as the "Anchor Mission" to explore how to use their local economic power - their status as community anchors - to build community health into core business practices so that the positive impact of how they invest, purchase and hire is aimed at improving the economic conditions tied to poor health.

There are a number of organizations doing great work throughout the West Side to improve health and wellness. To maximize impact, these efforts need to be coordinated across sectors and across neighborhoods. Thus, the University of Illinois Hospital and Clinics, Cook County Health & Hospitals System, Presence Health, Lurie Children's Hospital, Rush System, Loretto Hospital and the Illinois Medical District have formed the West Side Anchor Committee to magnify the impact of individual anchor missions by collaborating across healthcare institutions. Backbone support is being provided by Chicago Anchors for a Strong Economy (CASE) and the Civic Consulting Alliance (CCA).

Collectively, these healthcare institutions represent 43,000 total employees. In 2015/2016, over 5,600 individuals were hired and \$2.8 billion was spent on external supplies and services.

As a member of the West Side Anchor Committee, each institution is:

Implementing anchor mission strategies according to how their own hiring, investing, and/or purchasing efforts support existing missions

- Participating in sub-committees to coordinate efforts, share best practices, and kick start initiatives in impact investing, purchasing, employee volunteering, local hiring and career development, and communications that further the efforts of the WSAC organizations to improve health and wellness on the West Side
- Supporting the efforts of the broader West Side Total Health Collaborative to connect community-based organizations, government institutions, schools, social services, religious institutions and other groups and develop a unified 'West Side Voice' that outlines the vision and collective priorities for this area.

Learn About Stroke Risks & Symptoms

Stroke affects nearly 800,000 people each year, and is one of the leading causes of death in the U.S. A stroke occurs when blood cannot get to an area of the brain, often because of a clot or tear in a blood vessel in the brain. Stroke can cause long-term brain damage or even death. It is critical to seek care at a hospital as soon as possible after stroke symptoms begin. Call 911 right away if you think someone is experiencing a stroke.

The Cook County Health & Hospitals System's John H. Stroger, Jr. Hospital has stroke specialists available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and is recognized as a

Primary Stroke Center by The Joint Commission and The American Heart Association/American Stroke Association for the hospital's long-term success in improving outcomes for stroke patients.

Stroger Hospital cares for more than 400 stroke patients each year. Unfortunately, more than 85% of patients the hospital cares for do not seek care until more than six hours after their stroke begins, making typical stroke treatments far less effective.

"Recognizing the symptoms of a stroke is very important, as time is of the essence in stroke treatment," said Dr. Michael Kelly, Chair of CCHHS' Division of Neurology. "The faster someone can get to a hospital after a stroke the better our ability is to reduce potential brain damage. I encourage everyone who thinks they possibly may be having a stroke, no matter how minor their symptoms, to come to the hospital immediately."

According to the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#), the symptoms of a stroke can include:

- Numbness or weakness in the face, arm, or leg, especially on one side of the body.
- Confusion, trouble speaking, or difficulty understanding speech.
- Trouble seeing in one or both eyes.
- Trouble walking, dizziness, loss of balance, or lack of coordination.
- Severe headache with no known cause.

High blood pressure, high cholesterol, diabetes and smoking can all increase a person's risk for a stroke. Nearly 80% of strokes could be avoided with healthy lifestyle decisions.

CCHHS In The News



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[Frostbite A Real Danger, Authorities Say](#)

[Flu Cases Surging In Cook County In The Past Few Weeks](#)

Daily Herald

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Chicago Tribune

Visit our website at cookcountyhhs.org.

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

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



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