



CCH FY2026 Proposed Budget Introduction

August 5, 2025

Remarks as prepared

Dr. Erik Mikaitis

Today, we are presenting the Board with Cook County Health's proposed Fiscal Year 2026 budget. To say that the upcoming year presented a budgeting challenge is an understatement.

As you know, we are already feeling the impacts of reduced reimbursements related to the sunset of the health coverage program for immigrant adult. Looming large are the planned federal cuts to Medicaid and other social service programs that are expected to take effect in 2027.

This budget demonstrates our efforts to prepare ourselves for upholding our mission in a time with fewer resources and greater need. Our budget planning was centered not just on our bottom line, but on preserving and reinforcing the key services on which our patients, members and communities rely.

During this fiscal year, the team rallied together to identify cost-saving opportunities: meeting our goal to reduce expenses by 10%, including a temporary hiring freeze for select positions. These efforts, although difficult, will carry over into 2026.

At the same time, we have also made important progress in reducing our agency utilization. Cook County Health is committed to our labor workforce and collaborating with our union partners. We have reduced agency FTE positions by more than 400 since last fall and now are under 1,000 agency workers, further reducing costs. More than 230 agency staff members have accepted offers of employment with the health system. While our work is far from over, we will continue to build on this positive momentum.

As we step into the coming year, we are prepared to meet the challenges that 2026 will inevitably bring, and prepared to reinforce our foundation for the even larger storms on the horizon.

Despite these threats, we are not without hope.

This hope is grounded in the work our team is doing to transform Cook County Health into a more nimble and modern organization. We are approaching our work with both vision and urgency. We see an opportunity to build a more equitable, more efficient, and more compassionate health system, not just for today, but for generations to come.

In the coming year, we will continue enhancing care quality and improving patient and member satisfaction, while building on recent progress in employee recruitment and retention. We are also preparing for continued, sustainable growth in public health and sponsored programs.



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We are embracing technology to modernize care delivery, strengthening our revenue cycle operations to ensure financial sustainability, and entering into more value-based and risk-based agreements to drive both quality and revenue.

There is no doubt Cook County Health's work as a provider of care, steward of public health, and health plan will only be more essential in the coming years. As I continue to say: we will do as much as we can for as long as we can.

We are pushing ahead with the unwavering commitment that has always defined Cook County Health- to protect the health, dignity and well-being of every person who walks through our doors, regardless of their ability to pay or immigration status.

Before I turn it over to Pam, I would like to extend my gratitude to this Board for your leadership and guidance, and to President Preckwinkle and the County Board for their support. I would also like to thank Chief Financial Officer Pam Cassara, Associate Chief Financial Officer Scott Spencer, Budget Director Joe Franzwa, and the entire finance department for preparing this budget in a time of great uncertainty.

Of course, this work would not be possible without our entire Cook County Health team and their exceptional contributions to the health system on behalf of the patients, members and residents we serve. Thank you.