

Testimony of Dian Palmer, President of SEIU Local 73

Chairman Taylor and distinguished members of the Cook County Health Board of Directors,

I am speaking on behalf of the 2,500 Union members of SEIU Local 73 employed in various elected offices throughout Cook County who have worked throughout the ongoing pandemic.

In 2020, the federal government provided Cook County with funding which allowed 80 hours of paid leave time to be utilized in the event an employee, or someone in their household tested positive for COVID and needed to quarantine. This funding was provided to prevent the spreading of this deadly virus and to protect the public.

While these 80 hours were extended in 2021 it has not been extended for 2022. We have members who have contracted COVID on multiple occasions. Our members use this time for themselves, or to care for their children, their spouses, and in many cases, their elderly parents.

We call on you to urge Cook County Commissioners to pass a resolution that the 80 COVID hours will replenish every fiscal year (December first) retroactive to December 1, 2021 for all Union employees to come out of federal dollars provided to Cook County for COVID-19 purposes.

This resolution is in the interest of protecting the public as a whole, and discouraging employees from coming to work while sick.

Thank you.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dian Palmer", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Dian Palmer
President

My name is Joyce Ball and I am a Registered Nurse in the Emergency Department at Provident Hospital. I am here on behalf of the CCHHS Registered Nurses. Cook County Health is requesting an additional 64.1 million dollars in funding for agency nursing contracts, which costs County taxpayers more money than retaining staff nurses. CCHHS nurses continue carrying the hospital system's patients safely through the ongoing pandemic. CCHHS has done nothing to retain staff and is hemorrhaging RNs. NNOC last met with CCHHS January 11th. County has intentionally delayed responding with counter proposals for staff retention. We demand to meet immediately and for the County to release their counter proposals to NNOC.

Respectfully,
Joyce Ball