

Written testimony for 8/23/24 CCH Board Meeting, regarding proposed CCH FY2025 Preliminary Budget

Good morning, Cook County Health Board of Directors:

My name is Hope Pavich, and I serve as the Executive Director of Care for Friends. We currently operate out of Edgewater and are excited to expand to two locations in 2025, when our newly constructed building opens in Lincoln Park, our historic home base.

As a community hub, Care for Friends tackles Chicago's food, housing and healthcare crises through an all-inclusive, no questions asked approach to providing easy access to critical resources. We aim to earn the trust of our guests and break down the barriers preventing them from connecting to the services they need.

Although I am unable to attend today's meeting, I am eager to express our strong support for the work of CountyCare. Through our healthcare clinics at Care for Friends, we connected with CountyCare and have been a part of the CountyCare network since 2023. We have found this partnership to be a perfect alignment with our mission of eliminating barriers to care and support.

Each month, we host Redetermination events with CountyCare, and regularly experience a 25% increase in our food program attendance on those days. Reliable access to healthcare is critical for our guests and for our community, and we are fortunate to partner with CountyCare to ensure their coverage remains uninterrupted. The importance of these events is underscored by the fact that our community members often arrive three hours early to secure their Medicaid renewal. And when you hear just one story out of thousands, you immediately understand why. The experience of one of our guests, who has type 1 diabetes, illustrates the life-saving impact of this partnership. The patient was unaware that their Medicaid coverage would not automatically renew after the end of COVID emergency benefits. Thanks to CountyCare, they were able to renew their coverage just in time, avoiding a potentially life-threatening lapse in care.

Care for Friends is proud to be part of the CountyCare family, and we wholeheartedly support their ongoing efforts to expand and continue providing care for those most in need in Cook County.

Thank you,

Hope Pavich

Executive Director

Care for Friends