



COOK COUNTY HEALTH

DR. ERIK MIKAITIS
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
REPORT TO THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS
December 20, 2024

Employee Recognition

Highlighting its nationally recognized achievements in patient safety and quality, Cook County Health's Provident Hospital was named a **Top General Hospital by The Leapfrog Group**. The Leapfrog Top Hospital award is widely acknowledged as one of the most competitive awards American hospitals can receive. The Top Hospital designation is bestowed by The Leapfrog Group, a national watchdog organization of employers and other purchasers known as the toughest standard-setters for health care safety and quality. Provident Hospital is one of 134 hospitals nationwide and only one of 4 in Illinois to be recognized in 2024. Congratulations to the entire Provident Hospital team on this national achievement!

Activities and Announcements

An **11-bed observation unit** opened last month at Provident Hospital. The new unit will enhance patients' healing, optimize the use of hospital resources, and represents just one of the many investments being made to CCH services on the South Side.

On December 3, CCH held a press conference with Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle, Commissioner Donna Miller and Commissioner Bridget Degnen, to celebrate the **doula program** being established at Stroger Hospital. Doulas are non-clinical support professionals trained to empower and support birthing parents at all stages of pregnancy, through delivery, and in the postpartum period. CCH plans to welcome 10 doulas to the hospital in early 2025.

CCH was joined by Cook County Government leaders, and representatives from Superior Ambulance and JumpHire to celebrate the first cohort of graduates from CCH's **EMT Apprenticeship Program** on December 12. The program, funded through U.S. Department of Labor dollars secured by Senator Dick Durbin, is a 15-week collaborative internship with paid on-the-job training that prepares participants for EMS employment opportunities. 17 apprentices graduated from the program. Those who pass their licensure exam will be hired by Superior Ambulance.

Legislative Updates

Local

- Cook County Health's work to address food insecurity began in 2015 with a two-question food insecurity screening, which was later adopted by all CCH primary care sites and incorporated into the CountyCare health risk screening tool. CCH patients who screened positive received a voucher to access fresh produce from the Greater Chicago Food Depository's Fresh Truck.

Since its inception, CCH's Fresh Truck partnership with GCFD has resulted in more than 500 visits to CCH health centers providing fresh fruits and vegetables, as well as some shelf stable items during the COVID-19 pandemic, to over 50,000 households, representing more than 165,000 individuals.

Over the next several months, CCH and GCFD will be pivoting to a different model to connect patients with fresh and nutritious food. This includes piloting an onsite food pantry at Belmont Cragin Health Center and a medically-tailored meals program based initially at Provident Hospital that will further align the health conditions identified by CCH providers with food-related resources following a provider visit. These efforts are funded by an ARPA award to CCH from Cook County; these funds will also support a full-time Food Security Manager, based in the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. We are also exploring other models that work best for our patients and look forward to sharing more when details are available.

- The week of December 16, CCH leadership appeared before the following Cook County Board committees to provide testimony and respond to questions from Commissioners.
 - **Criminal Justice Committee** – Representatives of the Cook County Sheriff's Office along with CCH appeared before the committee in response to a *Resolution Calling for the Office of the Cook County Sheriff and Cook County Health to Appear Before the Criminal Justice Committee to Educate the County Board on its Various Policies and Procedures to Address the Health and Safety of Detainees at the Cook County Department of Corrections*. CCH participants included Dr. Erik Mikaitis, CEO along with Manny Estrada, COO Cermak Health Services and Dr. Priscilla Auguston, Chair of the Department of Correctional Health and Cermak Medical Director.
 - **Finance Committee** – Pam Cassara, CCH CFO addressed questions related to the *County's Monthly Revenues and Expenses Report* as well as CCH finances. CCH leadership was also available to respond to questions related to *CCH's November 2024 Monthly Report* which is a compilation of the metrics and presentations made to the CCH Board of Directors from the previous month.
 - **Health & Hospitals Committee** – Dr. LaMar Hasbrouck appeared before the committee to present *CCDPH's 4th Quarterly Report on Public Health Data Equity & Improvement Initiatives*. Also on the agenda was a *Resolution Requesting the State Convene a Panel for a Level II Trauma Center in the Southland*. The Resolution recommends that the that the State, through the Illinois Department of Public Health convene a panel of trauma health experts, health representatives, Southland community leaders and select members of public health advocate organizations, including representatives of the Cook County Department of Public Health (CCDPH). This item was deferred.
- The Cook County Board of Commissioners met on December 19, 2024.

State

- The House and Senate will hold their "lame duck" session days starting Saturday, January 4 through Tuesday, January 7. New members of the 104th General Assembly will be sworn in January 8.
- Cook County Health has been working with President Preckwinkle's legislative team on the 2025 state legislative agenda. Priority issues include:
 - Protecting and preserving Medicaid
 - Increasing funding for local health departments
 - Harm reduction legislation that reduces overdose deaths and prioritizes treatment

- Behavioral health infrastructure and addressing gaps in workforce
- The 2025 spring session calendars for the [House](#) and [Senate](#) are now online. The Governor's state of the state and budget address will take place February 19 and the scheduled adjournment date is May 31.

Federal

- **FY 2025 Budget and Appropriations Process**

The current FY 2025 continuing resolution (CR) expires on December 20. A second CR, which would last into the middle of March 2025, is in the works. Bipartisan, bicameral negotiations around additional measures that could be added to the CR are ongoing, including a package of extending expiring health programs. The County along with other public health care and hospital systems, has been advocating for a provision to repeal or delay the statutory reductions to Medicaid disproportionate share hospital (DSH) payments.

- **Trump-Vance Administration Health Policy Agenda and 119th Congress**

In late November President-Elect Trump named Dr. Mehmet Oz to be the Administrator of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). This appointment requires Senate confirmation and will face scrutiny for some of his positions and financial ties. CMS administrators are not required to have medical qualifications and recent appointees from both parties have not been physicians.

On December 9, Rep. Brett Guthrie (R-KY), was selected to be the next Chair of the House Energy and Commerce Committee (E&C). He is expected to continue the committee's focus on the oversight of the U.S Department of Health and Human Services and its agencies. Rep. Guthrie was the Chairman of E&C's Health Subcommittee and co-chair of the House Republicans' Healthy Futures Task Force. He recently told the press that he is interested in reviving a proposal that would cap Medicaid spending on each enrollee, known as a "per capita cap" or allotment, a component of the failed ACA "repeal and replace" legislation in 2017.

President-elect Trump promised on the campaign trail not to cut Medicare, Social Security, and Defense. This will likely put Medicaid cuts on the table as Republicans plan to find offsets to fund the extension of the expiring Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017. Medicaid reductions could include imposing work requirements, making block grants or spending caps for states (as noted above), and reducing the Affordable Care Act's ninety percent match for the Medicaid expansion population. These changes would likely take shape in the context of budget reconciliation bill, which can evade the Senate filibuster and advance with a simple majority.

- **Biden-Harris Administration Health Policy Actions**

On November 26, CMS announced that it was reevaluating current statute and proposed rules to permit Medicare and Medicaid coverage of expensive GLP-1 medication to treat obesity. The proposal faces an uncertain future under the incoming Trump Administration and state Medicaid directors are expressing concern over the impact of the proposal on state health care budgets.

On December 11, HHS announced that it was extending liability protections for COVID-19 vaccines, treatments and diagnostic tests under the Public Readiness and Emergency Preparedness Act through Dec. 31, 2029. The extension gives health care providers, including pharmacists and pharmacy interns and technicians protection when administering COVID-19 vaccines and tests, as well as seasonal flu vaccines. The extension takes effect Jan. 1.

Redetermination Events

Cook County Health and CountyCare are currently hosting a series of Rede events in the System's facilities, other FQHCs and community partners. Rede events target CountyCare members living in or close to the Zip Codes of the hosting site. Members receive calls, postal correspondence, email, and texts advising them of the event happening in their vicinity.

- January 4 – **Robbins Health Center** – 13450 S. Kedzie Ave Robbins, IL 60472
- January 6 – **North Riverside Health Center** – 800 S. Harlem Ave, North Riverside, IL 60546
- January 7 – **Cottage Grove Health Center** – 1645 S. Cottage Grove Ave Ford Heights, IL 60411
- January 8 – **Primecare Health Center** – 5635 W. Belmont, Chicago, IL 60634
- January 9 – **Alivio Health** – 2021 S Morgan St., Chicago, IL 60608
- January 10 – **Englewood Health Center** – 1135 W. 69th Street, Chicago, IL 60621
- January 11 – **Cottage Grove Health Center** – 1645 S. Cottage Grove Ave Ford Heights, IL 60411
- January 13 – **Austin Health Center** – 4800 W. Chicago Avenue, Chicago, IL 60651
- January 14 – **Robbins Health Center** – 13450 S. Kedzie Ave Robbins, IL 60472
- January 15 – **Provident Hospital** – 500 E. 51st Street, Chicago, IL 60615
- January 16 – **Friend Health** – 5635 S. Pulaski, Chicago IL 60629
- January 17 – **St Bernard Hospital** - 6307 S Stewart St Chicago, IL 60621
- January 18 – **North Riverside Health Center** – 800 S. Harlem Ave, North Riverside, IL 60546
- January 21 – **Esperanza Health Center** – 4700 S. California Ave Chicago, IL 60632
- January 22 – **Primecare Health Center** – 5635 W. Belmont, Chicago, IL 60634
- January 23 – **Care For Friends** – 5749 N. Kenmore Avenue, Chicago, IL 60660
- January 23 – **Stroger Hospital** – 1969 W. Ogden, Chicago, IL 60612
- January 24 – **Englewood Health Center** – 1135 W. 69th Street, Chicago, IL 60621
- January 24 – **Arlington Heights Health Center** – 3520 N. Arlington Heights Road, Arlington Heights, IL 60004
- January 27 – **Blue Island Health Center** – 12757 S. Western Avenue, Blue Island, IL 60406
- January 29 – **Provident Hospital** – 500 E. 51st Street, Chicago, IL 60615
- January 30 – **Chicago Family Health Center** - 9119 S Exchange Ave Chicago, IL 60617
- January 31 – **Arlington Heights Health Center** – 3520 N. Arlington Heights Road, Arlington Heights, IL 60004

CCH Community Advisory Councils

Cook County Health Advisory Councils include patients, community and religious organizations and serve as a way to promote our services in the communities where our centers are located. The Councils provide feedback to our staff and help strengthen our health center's relationships in the community. The councils meet quarterly to provide current information on Cook County Health and as an avenue for members to share information about their organizations.

The 2025 First Quarter topic presentations include CCH's Cook County Health and Cook County Human Resources and Hiring Process. CountyCare will also provide an update on plan activities and rewards. In

addition, the meeting provides updates on Cook County Health, Community Outreach, and each clinic's programs.

Upcoming CAC meeting dates, including the 2025 schedule:

Cottage Grove: Tuesday at 1:00 PM: January 23, April 23, July 23, October 22
1645 S. Cottage Grove Avenue, Ford Heights, IL 60411

Provident/Sengstacke: Wednesday at 9:00 AM: January 24, April 10, July 10, October 9
500 W. 51st Street, Chicago, IL 60609

Blue Island: Wednesday at 1:00 PM: February 14, May 15, August 14, November 13
12757 S. Western Ave., Blue Island, IL 60406

Arlington Heights: Tuesday at 1:00 PM: February 20, May 21, August 20, November 19
3520 N. Arlington Heights Road, Arlington Heights, IL 60004

Prieto: Tuesday at 1:00 PM: March 5, June 4, September 3, December 3
2424 S. Pulaski, Chicago, IL 60623

Robbins: Tuesday at 1:00 PM: March 12, June 11, September 19, December 10
13450 S. Kedzie Road, Robbins, IL 60472

North Riverside: Wednesday at 1:00 PM: March 13, June 12, September 11, December 11
1800 S. Harlem Avenue, North Riverside, IL 60546

Englewood: Thursday at 1:00 PM - March 14, June 13, September 12, December 12
1135 W. 69th Street, Chicago, IL 60621