



# COOK COUNTY HEALTH

**ISRAEL ROCHA, JR.**  
**CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER**  
**REPORT TO THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS**  
**September 30, 2022**

## **Employee Recognition**

CountyCare will be celebrating its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary on October 26. The health plan was established through collaboration with the federal, state and county governments to expand Medicaid to low-income adults in Cook County one year prior to the ACA implementation date for statewide expansion. In its first year, CountyCare enrolled 82,000 members across Cook County and by the time Medicaid was expanded in Illinois, CountyCare covered nearly half of the total statewide enrollment of newly-eligible adults in Medicaid. Today, CountyCare is the largest Medicaid managed care plan in Cook County with more than 420,000 members. CountyCare has received many accolades over the past decade for its operations and member services, including being ranked as the highest managed care plan in the state by the Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services and accreditation for demonstrating a commitment to quality by the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA). Since its beginning, CountyCare has served more than 938,000 members over the past 10 years, and facilitated more than 32 million medical claims. Congratulations to the entire **CountyCare team** for this milestone.

Cook County Health's **emergency medicine residency program** and **preventive medicine residency program** were recognized in Becker's Hospital Review for being among the best clinical training programs, according to Doximity's 2022-2023 Residency Navigator. Physicians contribute nominations, ratings and reviews. Ratings comprise three major parts: current resident and recent alumni satisfaction data, reputation data and objective data. This recognition underscores Cook County Health's position as a leading national academic institution, training the next generation of health care experts and leaders.

**Dr. Michael Alebich**, Co-Director of Medical Student Programs and Attending Physician in the Division of Hospital Medicine, has been named an "Emerging Leader" by the Health & Medicine Policy Research Group (HMPRG). In his nomination, Dr. Alebich was recognized as "a dedicated problem solver. He takes on whatever obstacle may interfere with patients getting what they need and works for solutions with an eye towards access and equity. He is about making things better for everyone...Despite being early in his career, Dr. Alebich's leadership has already made a tremendous impact at Cook County Health." The award was presented at HMPRG's gala on September 29, 2022.

**Dr. Dhara Amin**, Director of Quality Improvement and Patient Safety and Attending Physician in the Department of Emergency Medicine, has recently been named as a Fellow in two prestigious health care programs. Dr. Amin was named a Fellow in Medical Justice in Advocacy by the American Medical Association and Satcher Health Leadership Institute. Founded on the principles of servant leadership, justice and collaboration, fellows in this program will generate and exchange solutions and implement health equity projects that inform policy to ensure optimal health for all. She was also named a Fellow in Diagnostic Excellence by the Society to Improve Diagnosis in Medicine (SIDM). During the course of her fellowship, she will be focused on better incorporating patients with limited English proficiency in the diagnostic process by enhancing emergency room discharge practices.

## Activities and Announcements

### Monkeypox

As of September 14, CDC reports that there are currently 25,509 monkeypox cases in the U.S. with Illinois reporting 1,305 cases. CCH and CCDPH continue to monitor the situation very closely. CCH is currently offering vaccine at four sites (CORE, Arlington Heights, North Riverside and Blue Island). The CORE Center is providing testing and treatment as well. All services require appointments.

CCH's monkeypox microsite went live this month. Patients and community members can now make appointments for monkeypox vaccine and learn more about testing and treatment services at [monkeypox.cookcountyhealth.org](https://monkeypox.cookcountyhealth.org).

### COVID-19 Update

Chicago and suburban Cook County are in low transmission. Efforts continue to vaccinate and boost eligible populations continue. Cook County Health and the Cook County Department of Public Health are now offering the bivalent COVID vaccines. As of September 29, CCH has administered 1,022,365 doses of COVID vaccine.

### Cook County Health Foundation Annual Gala

This year's Cook County Health Foundation gala, *The Future is Bright – Moving toward Equity and Excellence*, will be held on October 12<sup>th</sup> at the Hyatt Regency Chicago and will support scholarships for individuals pursuing careers in health care. To purchase tickets or learn more, please visit the [CCHF website](#).

### Presentations of Note

September 19-21, CEO Rocha joined President Preckwinkle and other Cook County leaders as part of the County's annual visit to our Congressional Delegation.

On Thursday, September 29, CEO Rocha participated in a panel discussion at the Illinois Hospital Association Leadership Summit on addressing health disparities.

### Food As Medicine

As access to healthy food remains a great need for our patients and communities, the Fresh Truck partnership between Cook County Health (CCH) and the Greater Chicago Food Depository (GCFD) continues. The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic required CCH and GCFD to develop and implement revised protocols for the Fresh Truck distributions that allow for appropriate screenings and social distancing to protect patients, as well as CCH and GCFD staff and volunteers. These revised protocols are in place until further notice.

Through September 16, CCH's Fresh Truck partnership with the Greater Chicago Food Depository (GCFD) resulted in 410 visits to CCH health centers – Arlington Heights, Austin, Belmont Cragin, Blue Island, the CORE Center, Cottage Grove, Englewood, North Riverside, Provident/Sengstacke, Prieto, and Robbins.

Collectively, the Fresh Truck distributions have resulted in the provision of fresh fruits and vegetables, as well as some shelf stable items during the COVID-19 pandemic, to an estimated 43,537 households, representing 143,835 individuals. Most of the individuals benefiting from the Fresh Truck screened positive for food insecurity at a CCH health center visit.

## **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 2022 Fourth Quarter topic presentations include the 2023 CCH Budget, Cancer Services, the Housing Authority of Cook County and the CountyCare's Medicaid Open Enrollment. In addition, updates on Cook County Health, Covid-19 Vaccination and Community Outreach are provided. Each clinic also does an update on its operations at the meeting.

Upcoming CAC meeting dates, including the 2022 schedule:

Provident Hospital/Sengstacke Health Center: Wednesday at 9:00 AM: October 12  
500 W. 51st Street, Chicago, IL 60609

Cottage Grove: Tuesday at 1:00 PM: October 25  
1645 S. Cottage Grove Avenue, Ford Heights, IL 60411

Blue Island: Wednesday at 1:00 PM: November 16  
12757 S. Western Ave., Blue Island, IL 60406

Arlington Heights: Tuesday at 1:00 PM: November 29  
3520 N. Arlington Heights Road, Arlington Heights, IL 60004

Robbins: Tuesday at 1:00 PM: December 13  
13450 S. Kedzie Road, Robbins, IL 60472

North Riverside: Wednesday at 1:00 PM: December 14  
1800 S. Harlem Avenue, North Riverside, IL 60546

Englewood: Thursday at 1:00 PM - December 15  
1135 W. 69th Street, Chicago, IL 60621

## Upcoming Event Participation

Cook County Health and CountyCare will be present at events to promote the health system and the Medicaid program. Events in the month of October include the following:

- October 1 Cook County Health and CountyCare promotion at the Blue Island Community Health Fair which is sponsored by the City of Blue Island and which will take place at the John D. Rita Recreation Center located at 2805 W. 141st Street in Blue Island. Our Blue Island Health Center team will do screenings at the event.
  
- October 1 Cook County Health and CountyCare promotion at the Bloom Township High School District 206, Parent University 2022 which is sponsored by the school, and which will take place at the school's Auditorium located at 101 W. 10th Street in Chicago Heights.
  
- October 5 Cook County Health and CountyCare promotion at the Cook County Housing Authority's Women's Connection Event which will take place at the White (Willye B.) Park located at 1610 W Howard Street in Chicago.
  
- October 6 Cook County Health and CountyCare promotion at the Posen Intermediate School Hispanic Heritage Month Community Expo which will take place at the school located at 14545 California Avenue in Posen.
  
- October 7 Cook County Health and CountyCare promotion at the AOK/ECC, Youth Crossroads, Inner City Impact and Cicero Community Collaborative's Trunk or Treat event which will take place at the ICI Parking Lot located at 23rd Place and Laramie Street in Cicero.
  
- October 8 Cook County Health's HR Department will have a recruitment table at MOLA's 6th Annual Latino Health Symposium which will take place at Northeastern Illinois University located at 5500 North St. Louis Avenue in Chicago. CEO Israel Rocha will provide one of the keynote addresses to the group of Hispanic physicians.
  
- October 13 Cook County Health and CountyCare promotion at the Greater Auburn-Gresham Development Corporation's Fall Health Fair on The Block event which will take place at the sidewalk between 79th and Racine to 79th and May Street in Chicago.
  
- October 14 Cook County Health and CountyCare promotion at 34th Annual IDCFS Latino Family Institute Day which will take place virtually. The CCH and CountyCare presentation will provide information to staff on the resources that are offered at the health system.

- October 22 Cook County Health and CountyCare promotion at the Chicago Housing Authority's Operation Warm which will take at the UIC Forum located at 725 W. Roosevelt Road in Chicago.
- October 22 Cook County Health and CountyCare promotion at the Speaker Emanuel "Chris" Welch's Annual Senior & Veterans Resource Fair which will take at the Proviso Math & Science Academy located at 8601 W. Roosevelt Road in Forest Park.
- October 22 CountyCare is hosting a Women's Health Event at Provident Hospital which is located at 500 E. 51st Street in Chicago. CountyCare members empaneled with CCH and other who live in the Provident catchment area will be invited to attend to get their annual screenings.
- October 29 Cook County Health and CountyCare promotion at the Delta Research and Educational Foundation's Breast Event which will take at the Kingdom Baptist Church located at 301 N Central Avenue in Chicago.

## **Legislative Update**

### **Local**

- On September 14 CCH appeared before the Cook County Health & Hospitals Committee presented the Monthly COVID-19 Vaccination Program and Contact Tracing Update. An overview of the system's response to Monkeypox virus was also included. Additional agenda items included CCDPH's Third Quarterly Report on the Building Healthy Communities Initiative & Funding Process Overview as well as a presentation on the ARPA Healthy Communities Program initiatives implemented by CCDPH.
- On September 21 the Cook County Legislation and Intergovernmental Affairs Committee met to consider appointments to the Cook County Health Board of Directors. The appointment of Jay Bhatt was approved. The appointment of Sam Robinson was deferred.

Four (4) CCH Board Director terms are scheduled to expire in late fall 2022/early winter 2023 (Gugenheim, Munar, Prendergast, Koetting). Pursuant to County Ordinance, the Nominating Committee of the Board of Directors of the Cook County Health and Hospitals System (NomCom) is required to submit three (3) candidates for each vacancy to the County Board President for consideration.

The Nominating Committee is scheduled to meet next month to consider additional candidates to submit to the President for consideration.

- On September 22, the Cook County Board met and approved the CCH FY2022 Preliminary Budget for inclusion in the President's Executive Budget Recommendation which is expected to be introduced in the coming weeks. The Cook County Board is expected to approve the FY2023 Annual Appropriation Ordinance in November.

Also at the September Cook County Board meeting, the CCH Strategic Plan and Financial Forecast was introduced and referred to the Health and Hospitals Committee for consideration.

### **State**

- Earlier this year, legislators expressed interest in convening a special session to address access to abortion care as well as gun safety legislation. No special session days have been announced, and given the upcoming veto session, a special session looks unlikely.

The 2022 Fall Session is scheduled for November 15-17 and November 29-December 1. While these days are often referred to as “Veto Session”, the Governor did not veto any legislation from the Spring 2022 session. The Fall Session will follow the statewide general election on November 8.

Legislators have been asked to hold January 4 – 10, 2023 for possible “lame duck” session days that may also be scheduled for early 2023, prior to the inauguration of the 103rd General Assembly. The 2023 spring session calendar has not been announced.

Legislation approved after May 31 requires a supermajority (71 in the House, 36 in the Senate) for an immediate effective date; legislation passed with a simple majority (60 in the House, 30 in the Senate) would have an effective date of June 1 of the following year. Legislation passed during lame duck or regular session before May 31 only requires a simple majority for an immediate effective date.

## Federal

- Congress returned to Washington, DC after Labor Day for a brief, but intense, work period focused on passing a short-term stop-gap bill to fund the federal government after the end of the fiscal year on September 30.
- **Continuing Resolution** – Early on September 27, Senate leaders released the Continuing Appropriations and Ukraine Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2023, or continuing resolution (CR), to fund the government through December 16, 2022.

The CR does not include supplemental funding requested by the Administration for COVID or monkeypox response.

The CR provides \$1.775 billion in additional funds for FY 2023 (and available through FY 2025) for U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Administration for Children and Families to address increased costs in refugee and entrant assistance programs. Additionally, it provides \$62 million to support the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline and provide services to 988 callers for the duration of the CR.

Congressional leaders hope to send the bill to the President’s bill before midnight September 30.

- **FY 2023 Appropriations Year-End Omnibus** – Whether Congress can reach a bipartisan, bicameral agreement on annual appropriations levels will not become clear until after the November mid-term elections. Meanwhile, organizations are advocating for unfinished priorities to be included in any must-pass year-end omnibus appropriations package. Many, including the National Association of Counties (NACo), and Cook County, are making the case for bipartisan mental health provisions, including provisions to lift the Medicaid inmate exclusion, to be included. America’s Essential Hospitals is also advocating for \$7 billion in targeted fiscal assistance for safety net hospitals, and other measures, which could be incorporated into a year-end bill.
- **Biden Administration** – On August 29, HHS announced that it is allocating \$11 million to “fill and finish” the Jynneos monkeypox vaccine at Grand River Aseptic Manufacturing (GRAM) in Grand Rapids, Michigan. GRAM will fill and finish 2.5 million vials of Bavarian Nordic’s vaccine.
- On August 30, the HHS Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response (ASPR) announced that it expects to shift COVID-19 vaccine distribution to the private sector as soon as January 2023. The move to the private market for testing, treatment and vaccines for COVID-19 would make the response work more like the rest of the U.S.

health care system, rather than with the federal government taking the lead. The Administration indicated that it had always been its intention to move in this direction, but the unwillingness of Congress to appropriate additional funds for COVID response had accelerated the timeline.

- On August 31, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) published a proposed rule that would overhaul Medicaid and CHIP enrollment processes. The rule would limit renewals to once a year (12-month continuous coverage), allow applicants 30 days to respond to information requests, require states to repopulate renewal forms, and create a renewal process consistent across states. The proposed rule would also address the concerns that millions will lose coverage once the COVID public health emergency (PHE) ends and states must begin eligibility redeterminations for nearly 90 million Americans covered by Medicaid and CHIP.
- On September 6, HHS announced a \$19.8 million contract to AmerisourceBergen to expand the distribution of treatments and vaccines to respond to the monkeypox outbreak. The contract will allow weekly delivery of up to 2,500 shipments of frozen Jynneos vials as well 2,500 “ambient temperature” shipments of the Tpoxx antiviral treatment. State and local governments have struggled to acquire enough vaccines to immunize at-risk populations.
- On September 8, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) finalized a rule to replace the Trump-era Public Charge rule which had sought to limit immigration of those it thought might rely on public social services. The new final rule rolls back the Trump Administration’s rule, which excluded potential immigrants who had received assistance from one program over the course of a year, adding new programs like food stamps and Medicaid, which had not previously been taken into account.
- On September 13, CMS announced that individuals with Medicare, Medicaid, CHIP coverage, private insurance, or no health coverage can get COVID-19 vaccines, including the bivalent Moderna and Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccines, at no cost, as long as the federal government is purchasing and distributing these vaccines. People are eligible for the updated vaccine shot at least two months after completing at least their primary vaccination series. The new Moderna vaccine is authorized in individuals 18 and older and the updated Pfizer vaccine is authorized for individuals 12 and older.
- On September 21, the HHS Office of Inspector General (OIG) reported that 47 state Medicaid agencies made improper capitation payments for beneficiaries enrolled in Medicaid and living in other states. The improper payments totaled \$117 million in August 2020, compared to \$73 million in August 2019. CMS acknowledged the problem but said that the OIG’s recommendation of Transformed Medicaid Statistical Information System (T-MSIS) monitoring would be “redundant, inefficient, and confusing to states.”