



COOK COUNTY
HEALTH

SYSTEM NEWS

October 2023

Letter from the CEO

Dear Cook County Health friends and partners,

As you may be aware, last week I made the bittersweet announcement that I will be departing Cook County Health to pursue a new professional opportunity. Serving as Cook County Health's CEO has truly been a privilege. I am humbled and grateful to have been a part of CCH's rich legacy.

Over the past three years, it has been an honor to see Cook County health continue to rise to the occasion – be it our response during the COVID-19 pandemic, helping set up a clinic to support the care of new arrivals, operating the largest Medicaid managed care plan in Cook County, or the day-to-day care we provide to patients across our hospitals and health centers. I continue to be amazed at what the Cook County Health team can accomplish with a shared vision and mission.

Earlier today, the Cook County Health Board of Directors announced their intention to appoint Dr. Erik Mikaitis, CCH Chief Quality Officer, as interim CEO.

Since joining CCH in September 2022, Dr. Mikaitis (*pictured below*) has implemented numerous quality initiatives to improve patient outcomes across CCH. He deployed a new multifaceted strategy deployment system that resulted in significant improvement in the system's sepsis prevention and treatment. Dr. Mikaitis enhanced the system's quality and safety dashboard and deployed a regulatory readiness program. He is also implementing an upstream peer learning system to identify care improvement opportunities and is partnering with critical care leaders to establish Extracorporeal Membrane Oxygenation (ECMO) capabilities for Stroger Hospital's intensive care units. In his role, Dr. Mikaitis also provides guidance for utilization management, coding and documentation, and hospital throughput.

Dr. Mikaitis previously served as Vice President and Chief Medical Officer for Franciscan Health Crown Point, where, among other duties, he led the development of safety protocols and processes during the COVID-19 pandemic and developed a new dashboard for



communicating quality improvements to the board. Prior to assuming that role, Dr. Mikaitis served as Medical Director of the Franciscan Health Accountable Care Organization in the northern Indiana and south suburban Chicago regions.

A board-certified Internal Medicine Physician, Dr. Mikaitis earned a Bachelor of Science from the University of Illinois at Chicago, a Master of Business Administration from DePaul University, and a medical degree from Ross University.

Dr. Mikaitis' nomination will go before the Cook County Board in November as the Cook County Health Board of Directors launches a national search to identify a permanent replacement.

I have every confidence that the incredible team that comprises CCH will continue to carry on the powerful work of the health system and its historic legacy and lead it into a bright future.



I thank all of you for your partnership and support of Cook County Health.

Sincerely,



Israel Rocha, Jr.
CEO

Cook County Leaders Stress Importance of Flu, COVID Vaccines This Fall

Double Your Defense
with the latest flu
and COVID vaccines.



Get vaccinated today!

 **COOK COUNTY HEALTH** cookcountyhealth.org

Duplica tu Defensa
con las vacunas contra
la gripe y el COVID.



¡Vacúnate hoy mismo!

 **COOK COUNTY HEALTH** cookcountyhealth.org

On October 6, Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle and CCH Israel Rocha joined with Cook County Health officials to discuss the importance of the latest flu and COVID-19 vaccines.

In mid-September, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) approved updated COVID vaccines. The updated COVID vaccines offers better protection against the COVID variants currently circulating and causing the most serious infections and hospitalizations in the U.S.

This season's flu vaccines reduced the risk of being hospitalized by 52 percent for patients in the Southern Hemisphere which typically sees flu season first, according to a September CDC report. U.S. vaccines could offer similar protection if similar viruses continue to be the predominate ones.

“Vaccinations are an important part of healthy lives and healthy communities,” Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle said. “I am proud to stand here with these medical professionals, backing science, backing medical history and supporting vaccines.”

“Cook County Health is proud to be able to offer access to the flu and COVID vaccines,” Cook County Health CEO Israel Rocha said. “The health system has provided more than one million COVID vaccination doses, establishing ourselves as a major resource to our patients and the local community. We are honored to be able to be here when people need us the most.”

Cook County Health (CCH) is offering COVID vaccines to patients and community members. Community COVID vaccines are available at Stroger and Provident Hospitals. For more information, visit [our COVID website](#).

Cook County Health Participates in Breast Cancer Events

October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month. Studies show that 1 in 8 women will be diagnosed with breast cancer during their lifetime.

Cook County Health staff have participated in a variety of events across the area to raise awareness about CCH services and encourage mammograms. In collaboration with CountyCare, staff at Provident Hospital provided services to 70 women that included physical exams, pap smears, mammograms and more at a women's health fair.

At Cermak Health Services, the team was invited by the Cook County Sheriff's Office to join other community partners on October 19 to provide information about community-based health resources available to individuals when they are released from custody. Additional information was provided about breast and cervical health awareness.



Staff also provided information about CCH services at Friend Health Annual Think Pink Event.

Cook County Health offers comprehensive breast cancer services. To schedule a mammogram, call 312-864-0200.



Cook County Health Foundation Gala Raises Funds to Support Health System Initiatives

On October 25, the Cook County Health Foundation held its annual gala in support of Cook County Health.

The Cook County Health Foundation works with Cook County Health to increase access and supplement the quality care the health system is providing. Among the initiatives this year were a community mural project at our two hospitals and two community health centers and the second year of the Provident Hospital Scholarship Program, which distributed \$1 million in scholarships to students committed to caring for underserved populations.

The Foundation is also working to support some of the needs of the new arrivals through an Amazon Wish List that provides items such as women's health products, clothes, diapers and more. To donate, [visit the link](#).

Learn more about the Foundation's [work here](#).

The Foundation honored Chicago Bulls and Chicago White Sox owner Jerry Reinsdorf at this year's gala with the Ruth M. Rothstein Award for Excellence for his philanthropic work.

Awards and Recognitions

Shannon Andrews, Chief Equity and Inclusion Officer, was named to Crain's Chicago Business' List of Notable Leaders in Diversity, Equity & Inclusion. The list recognizes leaders who are striving to ensure that their organizations maintain a workforce, supplier chain and ecosystem that represent all people.

In recognition of her outstanding contributions and dedication to the education of physicians, students, and others in emergency medicine, **Dr. Tarlan Hedayati** was awarded the 2023 National Faculty Teaching Award by the American College of Emergency Physicians at their annual conference. Dr. Hedayati also delivered the Leon L. Haley, Jr. Lecture, detailing how outcomes in cardiovascular emergencies differ dramatically across gender, race, ethnicity, etc., and how they can be improved.

Nimmy Tom and Gins Thachil, Nurse Coordinators, Medical/Surgical Division, Stroger Hospital, won 3rd place for their poster presentation titled "Prevention is Better than Treatment: Journey to Zero Falls" at the 2023 Illinois Organization of Nurse Leaders conference. These prevention efforts have already demonstrated a significant reduction in falls over the last six months.

Angela O'Banion, Cook County Health Chief Information Officer, was named the CIO Year of the Award in Chicagoland by the Society for Information Management, Chicago Chapter, along with the Executives' Club of Chicago and the AITP-Chicago Chapter.

Aaron Galeener, CCH's Chief Administrative Officer of Health Plan Services, was named to Crain's Chicago Business' 40 Under 40 class of 2023. Their annual feature profiles rising stars across a range of industries in the Chicago area.

Serena Valino, Associate Director of Nursing Services for Professional Development and Education, and **Domenica Flanagan**, Clinical Nurse I, Emergency Medicine, were invited to present a poster presentation at the International Conference on Forensic Nursing Science & Practice. The project, "Keeping Things Fresh! Building a SANE Reference Library," was deemed innovative in providing 24/7 educational tools to clinicians working with victims of violence. The best practices developed by our sexual assault nurse examiner (SANE) program were shared with more than 10,000 forensic nursing experts from around the world.

Craig Williams, Cook County Health's Chief Administrative Officer, was recognized by Becker's Hospital Review on their "COOs to Know" list. The list included leaders who are highly strategic and lead the ideation, development and implementation of initiatives that enhance operational efficiency at their organizations.

Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle Joins Cook County Health Panel for Hispanic Heritage Month

In recognition of Hispanic Heritage Month, Cook County Health held a panel discussing the role of Hispanics in medicine, the importance of diversity in healthcare and the work Cook County Health is doing to recruit a workforce that reflects our patients.

To check out the presentation, [visit here](#).



HFS announces next steps for Health Benefits for Immigrant Seniors program

The Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services (HFS) announced today that as the [Health Benefits for Immigrant Seniors](#) program nears 16,500 individuals, a temporary pause on new enrollees will take effect November 6.

HFS [previously announced](#) that new HBIS enrollment would be temporarily paused at 16,500 individuals, an enrollment benchmark the program is expected to reach in the coming weeks. Anyone who is already enrolled in the HBIS program and remains eligible for coverage will stay covered. The Department will not be removing any current enrollees who remain eligible for HBIS coverage.

The HBIS program provides Medicaid-like health care coverage to individuals aged 65 and older who would be eligible for Medicaid but for their immigration status, which launched in late 2020. The Department also operates the [Health Benefits for Immigrant Adults](#) program (HBIA), which provides similar coverage for individuals aged 42 to 64. Through the end of September, nearly 69,000 individuals are covered across the HBIA and HBIS programs.

Cook County Health is urging eligible seniors to apply before November 6. If your organization has eligible members, tell them to visit <https://hfs.illinois.gov/medicalclients/coverageforimmigrantseniors.html>.

Illinois Health Benefits for Immigrants 65 Years or Older NEW

You deserve affordable health care

You may be eligible for this program if you meet all 4 requirements:

- 1 You are 65 years old or older**
- 2 You are one of the following:**
 - A legal permanent resident (LPR) for less than five years (also known as having a green card), or
 - An undocumented immigrant (including individuals in a Temporary Protected Status)
- 3 You are an individual with 2022 annual income at or below \$18,754, or a couple with annual income at or below \$25,268***
- 4 An individual with assets below \$2,000 or a couple with assets under \$3,000** CURRENTLY WAIVED FOR COVID-19****


* We can also use your medical bills to reduce your countable income or assets. This may make you eligible.
** We won't count assets until after the COVID-19 emergency. Also, we won't count certain assets like a home or a car.

Covered Benefits

The new medical program will offer a benefit package with \$0 premiums and \$0 co-payments. Covered services include doctor and hospital care, lab tests, rehabilitative services such as physical and occupational therapy, home health, mental health and substance use disorder services, dental and vision services, and prescription drugs. Nursing facility services will not be covered. The program may cover prior health care up to 3 months before you apply.

Public Charges

If you have questions about how enrollment in this program would affect current or future requests to change your immigration status, please email [Protecting Immigrant Families at pifillinois@povertylaw.org](mailto:ProtectingImmigrantFamilies@pifillinois@povertylaw.org) or call the Immigrant Family Resource Program at 1-855-437-7669. They will help you find an organization to answer your questions.



For more information contact the Office of Welcoming Centers for Refugee and Immigrant Services, DHS Bureau of Refugee and Immigrant Services phone (312) 793-7120 or email DHS.BRIS@illinois.gov

Beneficios de Salud de Illinois para Inmigrantes de 65 años o más NEW

Usted merece una atención médica asequible.

Usted puede ser elegible para este programa si cumple con estos 4 requisitos

- 1 Tiene 65 años o más.**
- 2 Es una de las siguientes:**
 - Residente Permanente por menos de cinco años (también conocido como titular de una tarjeta de residencia permanente o mica), o
 - Persona indocumentada (esto incluye a las personas beneficiarias del estatus de protección temporal del programa TPS).
- 3 Es una persona con un ingreso anual de \$18,754 o menos para el año 2022, o una pareja con ingresos anuales de \$25,268 o menos.***
- 4 Una persona con activos (bienes, dinero) por el valor de \$2,000 o menos; o una pareja con activos por el valor de \$3,000 o menos.**


** ACTUALMENTE ESTE REQUISITO NO ES APLICABLE DURANTE LA PANDEMIA DEL VIRUS COVID-19.**
* Podemos utilizar sus facturas médicas para reducir sus ingresos y/o el valor de sus bienes. Esto le puede hacer elegible a este programa.
** No tomaremos en cuenta el valor de sus bienes hasta que la crisis generada por la pandemia del virus COVID-19 haya terminado. Además, no tomaremos en cuenta ciertos bienes, como una casa o automóvil.

Beneficios cubiertos

El nuevo programa médico ofrecerá un paquete de beneficios con primas de \$0 y copagos de \$0. Los servicios cubiertos incluyen atención médica y hospitalización, análisis de laboratorio, servicios de rehabilitación como terapia física y ocupacional, servicios de salud en el hogar, salud mental, y problemas de educación o abuso de drogas, servicios dentales y de visión, y medicamentos recetados. Este programa no cubre servicios en hogares para personas de la tercera edad o adultos mayores. El programa puede cubrir la atención médica previa hasta 3 meses antes de que presente la solicitud.

Beneficios públicos

Si tiene preguntas sobre cómo la inscripción en este programa afectará las solicitudes actuales o futuras para cambiar su estatus migratorio, envíe un correo electrónico a [Protecting Immigrant Families at pifillinois@povertylaw.org](mailto:ProtectingImmigrantFamilies@pifillinois@povertylaw.org) o llame al Programa de Recursos para Familias Inmigrantes (Immigrant Family Resource Program) al 1-855-437-7669. Ellos le ayudarán a encontrar una organización que responda a sus preguntas.



Comuníquese con los Centros de Bienvenida para Servicios de Refugiados e Inmigrantes del DHS (Office of Welcoming Centers for Refugee and Immigrant Services), llame al (312) 793-7120 o envíe un correo electrónico a DHS.BRIS@illinois.gov

Cook County Health in the News















Fox 32: [Inside Cook County Jail's battle against drug-soaked paper trade](#)

WBBM: [With cold weather coming, doctors recommend COVID, flu vaccines](#)

Yahoo Life: [What parents need to know about childhood obesity](#)

Univision: [Condado Cook invita a personas a vacunarse contra influenza y refuerzo del coronavirus](#)

Lawndale News: [Cook County Health's Stroger Hospital Ranked #1 Most Racially Inclusive Hospital in IL](#)

Becker's Payer Issues: [The top-rated Medicaid plan in every state, per NCQA](#)

Chicago Crusader: [IDPH reports measles case identified in Cook County](#)

Cook County Health is hiring!

To learn more about a career with CCH, [click here!](#)



COOK COUNTY HEALTH

Visit our website at cookcountyhealth.org

If you would like to invite a representative from CCH to attend a community event, please send an email to events@cookcountyhhs.org.

To provide feedback on CCH Community News, please email Marcelino Garcia, Director of Community Affairs, at mgarcia6@cookcountyhhs.org.



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