

9/11/20 Special Board Meeting – list of public speakers

1. Carol Petersen, Catholic Charities
2. Cindy Alonso – Student, Morton East High School
3. Darrel McKinney – Patient
4. Dejeanette M. Flournoy – patient
5. Emil Hardy - F.U.T.U.R.E. Foundation
6. Granada Williams – CEDA
7. Kaitlyn Quigley - Legal Aid Chicago
8. Doctors’ Council SEIU
9. Kelley Nichols-Brown – Patient
10. Marilyn Barnes - Ford Heights Education District
11. Mary Galloway – Patient
12. Mayor Tyrone Ward - Village of Robbins
13. Michelle Ramirez - Family Focus
14. Pablo Cruz - Casa Esperanza
15. Rosalie Peoples – Patient
16. Shirley Cain – Patient
17. Trenetta McLemore - Family Focus
18. Vanessa Melgoza - Corazon Community Services
19. Ariq Cabbler - Brothers’ Health Collective
20. Aurelio Barrios – Patient
21. Franchesca Aguilera – PrimeCare
22. Laurie Carrier - Heartland Health Centers
23. Shirley Bomar Cole - Former Provident COO
24. David Wu and Grace Chan McKibben – Coalition for a Better Chinese American Community

Cook County Health
Board of Directors
1950 W. Polk
Chicago, IL 60612

RE: Fiscal Year 2021 Cook County Health Budget

Dear Cook County Health Board of Directors,

I am Carol Petersen, Regional Project Manager for the South/Southwest Regional Office of Catholic Charities located in Blue Island, IL. At our office, we provide Emergency Services including rental and utility assistance, Behavioral Health Services, and New Hope Apartment programming, a transitional housing program for those in need.

In my role as Regional Project Manager, I am involved in community outreach and engagement as well as fundraising. I collaborate with many organizations including the United Way Neighborhood Network of Blue Island/Robbins, local school districts, universities, churches – Catholic and other denominations, and local community leaders. Through these relationships I have come to learn how residents in the South/Southwest suburbs of Cook County rely on Cook County Health services to remain healthy.

With the closing of Metro South Hospital at the end of 2019, the local communities of Blue Island, Calumet Park, Robbins, Riverdale, Posen, and Markham were left with a critical need for good health care, especially seniors and lower income residents. In part, the need has been alleviated with the opening of the Cook County Blue Island Health Center that offers a wide range of services including pediatrics, obstetrics, cardiology, endocrinology, as well as primary care, health education, and a pharmacy in a new, modern facility in the heart of Blue Island.

During the current COVID 19 crisis, the new Blue Island Center has proven to be a much needed and welcomed resource to our neighbors in need and communities of color who, we know, have been impacted at a greater rate than the general population. Local residents trust Cook County Health; they are known to be safe places to get help when experiencing a health concern.

Additionally, Cook County Health has been a valuable resource, providing trusted information and advice on how to help the individuals and families that we work with be safe and proactive on disease prevention during the current pandemic.

I urge you to continue to fund and expand programming in the south suburban clinics that provide essential services to residents of the Southland who already experience disparity in health resources.

Thank you for all that Cook County Health does to better the lives of our residents. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Carol Petersen
Regional Project Manager
South/Southwest Region - Catholic Charities

My name is Cindy Alonso and I am a student at Morton East High School. At my school, a lot of students rely on our school-based health center (SBHC), and although that might sound like a nurse's office, it actually offers much more. The Morton East Adolescent Ambulatory Community Health Center provides health care services to students and community members in Cicero. It also offers mental health care. Mental health care is especially important as more and more students have problems with issues like depression, grief, or anxiety. These struggles can lead to bad grades, not going to school, or worse. With the help of the staff at Morton East SBHC, students and the community can receive treatment that will help them feel better and continue to succeed in school and life.

Having lost my childhood friend and my family falling apart, I had blamed myself and suffered. And with the stress of school, and being reminded of her, I was at a breaking point. But with the help of the staff in the health center. I was able to finally move forward from the burden. Though I still grieve at times, I am able to move forward and have people I can trust in.

The Morton East SBHC is an important part of our community, and preserving the mental, emotional, and physical health services provided at my school is vitally important. Especially now, when the ongoing stress created by the pandemic, has changed our lives. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of my SBHC.

Board of Directors
Cook County Health
1950 W. Polk
Chicago, IL 60612

RE: Fiscal Year 2021 Cook County Health Budget

Dear Cook County Health Board of Directors,

For over 10 years, I have been a patient of Cook County Health. I've always had a great experience with the medical care that I have received both at Provident Hospital and the Englewood Health Center. My doctors have taken real good care of me and for that I am extremely grateful.

I would recommend my doctors at Provident to anyone and everyone. Dr. Winston Burke has helped me greatly as my podiatry doctor. I also have diabetes, which is now under control and am looking forward to the future opening of the Provident Lifestyle Center. Some of my other conditions, now under control, include high blood pressure and heart problems. Taking care of my health and monitoring it properly couldn't have been achieved without the help of my primary care doctor at the Englewood Health Center, Dr. Alexandra Albanese.

As I am on a path to becoming healthy, much of this could not have been achieved without health insurance. I have CountyCare, which is great. I use the rewards program which partially encourages me to keep my visits as I get rewards. But overall, having CountyCare helps me avoid the mental stress of not knowing how to pay for my medical care.

I want to thank Cook County Health and my doctors at Provident Hospital and Englewood Health Center for taking care of me, making me healthier and helping me take care of myself.

Sincerely,

Darrel McKinney

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

September 2, 2020

Board of Directors
Cook County Health
1950 W. Polk
Chicago, IL 60612

RE: Fiscal Year 2021 Cook County Health Budget

Dear Cook County Health Board of Directors,

I, Dejeanette Flournoy, am a patient of the Cook County Health breast and oncology department. I am EXTREMELY grateful to Cook County Health for providing superior health services to not only myself, but others in my community and beyond.

As a 38 year old former professional athlete, with no family history of breast cancer, who lives a very healthy lifestyle, minus a chocolate chip cookie here or there, I never expected or remotely imagined I would be in the situation that I endured health wise beginning in late August of 2018. Nonetheless, I know that GOD makes no mistakes in the journey HE chooses to set us on in life and I truly THANK GOD that along this difficult journey HE blessed me to end up in the care of the wonderful staff within the breast and oncology department at Cook County Hospital. Their comprehensive care in my opinion is second to none! This goes beyond the exceptional treatment they provide physically/medically to patients, but the support and reassurance they provide intangibly from a kind word, to big smile, to a funny joke, to simply being caring and comforting human beings in those times when as a patient you really just want to scream in disbelief. My sentiment includes the entire staff within this department that I have encountered during my cancer journey starting at the top with Dr. Marcus, Dr. Weczler, Dr. McDunn (retired), Dr. Ganshaw, Ola, Kris, Dr. A and her radiation staff, to physician assistants Kathy and Alexa, to the nursing staff Love, Izzy, Ciera, and intake specialist Jackie. I must also mention nurse Cheryl (retired) and nurse Diane who were both in the mammogram/biopsy department and were equally great during my journey. I chose to identify all these individuals by name because their awesome work and how they treated me has earned them this right and impacted my life in a tremendous way. Treatment, the uphill fight, and prayerfully healing for cancer patients like myself is more than medicine and procedures, it is about having an amazing, competent, empathetic, caring medical staff with ample resources in place to assist them in accomplishing this BIG goal for many a patients. I still have appointments, tests, and monitoring and will for a while as a result of my diagnosis, but I THANK GOD and I thank this staff that I am now healthy, I am happy, and I am here!

With this being said, I know that in these difficult times, programs may need to be realigned and that you will have to make difficult decisions, but this department should never be up for discussion. In actuality, this department needs to be given more resources and highlighted as a shining example as to what truly exceptional and comprehensive patient care looks like and feels like from a patient's perspective. I trust that you will look at more valuable things than numbers and figures during your budgetary decision making, like the hope being given and more importantly, the lives being saved through the work of this department.

Many thanks for being there for us in the community.

GOD BLESS,

Dejeanette M. Flournoy

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]



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Public Sector

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Emir A. Hardy

Location

1628 Drexel Avenue
Ford Heights, IL 60411-3800
Phone: 708-252-3087
www.future-foundation.org

Board of Directors
Cook County Health
1950 W. Polk
Chicago, IL 60612

RE: Fiscal Year 2021 Cook County Health Budget

Dear Cook County Health Board of Directors,

I am Emir Hardy, Executive Director of the F.U.T.U.R.E. Foundation Organic Market Farm and Food Hub Incubator and a native of the Ford Heights community. I also serve as a member of the Cottage Grove Health Center's Community Advisory Council.

In my role as Executive Director of the F.U.T.U.R.E. Foundation, I collaborate with many organizations on community building, violence prevention, economic development and creating access to high quality foods in under resourced communities and neighborhoods throughout the South Suburbs.

The Cottage Grove Health Center provides Primary Care to children and adults and plays an important role serving as a safety net for some of our neediest residents in the South Suburbs. It also serves as an anchor in the community and supports community efforts ranging from sponsoring local baseball teams to offering free use of their community meeting room so that local organizations can partner on initiatives to better the community. Food insecurity is a significant problem in Cook County and in impoverished Ford Heights, where more than 45 percent of residents live below the poverty line, the Cottage Grove Health Center has provided a vital lifeline with its food programs including the Fresh Truck Partnership with Greater Chicago Food Depository and their Summer Meals program.

The Cottage Grove Health Center and its staff make a difference every day in the lives of their patients and in the surrounding community and I urge you to continue to fully fund these worthwhile services.

Thank you for your consideration,

Emir Hardy
Executive Director
F.U.T.U.R.E. Foundation Organic Market Farm and Food Hub Incubator



September 2, 2020

Cook County Health
Board of Directors
1950 W. Polk
Chicago, IL 60612

RE: Fiscal Year 2021 Cook County Health Budget

Dear Cook County Health Board of Directors,

The Community and Economic Development Association of Cook County, Inc. (CEDA) is a private, non-profit Community Action Agency. Social services are offered in the areas of education, emergency assistance, OJT job placement, energy conservation and services, health, nutrition, and housing. Through the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) funded Family Support and Community Engagement Program (FsACE) staff work specifically through their case management program to help stabilize and support families and individuals to health and financial stability in communities across suburban Cook County.

The Robbins Health Center provides Primary Care to children and adult and plays an important role serving as a safety net for some of our most vulnerable residents in suburban Cook County. In addition to Primary Care, the Robbins Health Center and other Cook County Health clinics provide critical Behavioral Health services to residents including counseling assessment and in addition, treatment. Without this treatment, individuals, families, and whole communities might be in crisis due to the domino effect that untreated mental illness can have. During the Covid-19 crisis the south suburban clinics (Robbins, Ford Heights and Blue Island) have served as an anchor in the community and patient trust that these are safe places to go to receive help.

CEDA supports the efforts of Cook County Health and urge you to continue funding and expand programming in the South Suburban Ambulatory clinics. Cook County clinics have been a vital lifeline to residents of the Southland who already experience a disparity in health resources.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Respectfully,

Granada Williams
Chief Program Officer

Helping People. Changing Lives.

Community and Economic Development Association of Cook County, Inc.

567 W. Lake Street, Suite 1200 • Chicago, Illinois 60661

Phone: 312-782-CEDA (2332), Fax 312-795-1034

www.cedaorg.net

September 3, 2020

Cook County Health Board of Directors
c/o Deborah Santana, Secretary to the Board
1950 W. Polk Street
Room 9106
Chicago, IL 60612

Dear Members of the Cook County Health Board of Directors,

I am a supervisory attorney in the Public Benefits Practice Group at Legal Aid Chicago. I manage our medical-legal partnerships, including Health Forward/Salud Adelante, Legal Aid Chicago's medical-legal partnership with Integrated Care at Cook County Health.

Legal Aid Chicago's Health Forward staff work primarily work with CCH care coordinators. When CCH care coordinators identify CCH patients or CountyCare members who have legal needs, they refer them to Health Forward for help. We work on "health harming legal needs," like public benefits, domestic violence, and conditions like mold in rental housing. Whenever possible, we try to intervene before there is a crisis—before a member is going hungry, before a patient skips medical appointments, before a member becomes homeless. Having care coordinators on the ground with CountyCare members and CCH patients makes that possible.

So far, in 2020, CCH care coordinators have referred 300 new cases to Health Forward and have had about 100 consults with Health Forward staff. I would like to highlight a few recent Health Forward success stories for you:

- A care coordinator from Stroger Hospital referred a patient to Health Forward back in 2017. At that time, he was living on the street, had untreated serious mental illness, and had no source of income. Health Forward staff at Legal Aid Chicago represented him in an application for Social Security disability benefits, which began with an initial application, continued with a request for reconsideration, and culminated with a hearing in May 2020. The Social Security Administration approved him for ongoing SSI benefits as well as \$22,950 in back payments. With this reliable source of income, he qualified for subsidized housing. He moved into his new apartment in June 2020.
- In late 2019, a care coordinator from the complex care team referred a CountyCare member to Health Forward for help with SNAP benefits. Legal Aid Chicago determined that the Department of Human Services incorrectly charged her with a SNAP overpayment, gave her less SNAP each month than she and her two kids were entitled to, and was planning to improperly terminate the family's Medicaid coverage. Legal Aid Chicago filed an appeal with

the Department of Human Services, negotiated resolution of the overpayment issue, and secured the family's Medicaid and an additional \$150 per month in SNAP benefits.

- In January 2020, a care coordinator from the waiver team referred a CountyCare member to Health Forward because she had received a notice of eviction. She was 62 years old, disabled, and living in subsidized housing. Health Forward staff determined that her landlord had de-committed from the subsidy program—which was not her fault but meant that she had to move—and that she was eligible for SNAP and cash benefits that she was not receiving. Legal Aid Chicago attorneys helped her apply for those benefits and advocated with her landlord for additional time to find new housing. When the COVID-19 pandemic broke out, a Legal Aid Chicago social worker helped her determine how to move safely into her new apartment. She is now stably housed and receiving an additional \$180 per month in SNAP and cash benefits.

These are just three examples; we have had many other successes. Clients who have been able to stay in their homes after threatened evictions and clients who have been able to leave apartments that were making them sick. Clients who have been able to stay on Medicaid and with CountyCare. Clients who have been approved for disability benefits on their first application, without going through the lengthy appeals process.

The care coordinators' assistance in all of these cases is invaluable. They identify patients with health harming legal needs and refer them to Health Forward. They help Legal Aid Chicago staff communicate with clients, and they help us understand clients' backgrounds so that we can tailor our service to each client's situation. The holistic services CCH care coordinators offer CCH patients and members of CountyCare continually impress me. More than one client has told me that their care coordinator has made a huge difference in their life. I know that Health Forward is just one tool in Integrated Care toolbox. We at Legal Aid Chicago are proud to work alongside CCH care coordinators to help improve health and wellbeing for residents of Cook County.

Sincerely,

Kaitlyn Quigley

Supervisory Attorney, Public Benefits Practice Group

p: 312.229.6361 **f:** 312.612.1561

120 South LaSalle Street, Suite 900, Chicago, IL 60603

www.legalaidchicago.org

Doctors Council SEIU statement in opposition to Cook County Health's FY2021 budget proposal

Doctors Council SEIU represents the attending physicians, dentists, and psychologists of Cook County Health. As such, our members – including the undersigned – are always concerned about timely access to quality healthcare services, especially for underserved communities of color. This is especially so now during the COVID-19 pandemic, which has disproportionately affected these communities and caused them to suffer the most.

We cannot support Cook County Health's FY2021 budget proposal because it includes facility closures, cuts to healthcare services, and layoffs. We strongly oppose CCH's plans to eliminate the Pediatric Inpatient Unit; privatize the Chicago Children's Advocacy Center and Morton East Adolescent Health Center; downgrade the Provident Emergency Department to an urgent care center; and close both the Near South and Woodlawn Clinics. To make these cuts in healthcare access in the midst of a brutal pandemic is especially wrong and harmful to these communities.

We strongly strongly oppose any plans to layoff County healthcare workers and believe that Cook County should work towards alternatives that would not cost workers their jobs. The County budget problems need to be solved but not on the backs of those who work for the CCH, who have given and continue to give so much to deal with the COVID-19 pandemic. Layoffs will clearly make our economic crisis worse by adding to an already record number of job losses.

We also strongly oppose these actions for patient care reasons. Closing facilities and eliminating services will make it harder for the residents of Cook County to access healthcare. Compounding the problem, first, is the reduction of services happening on the South Side of Chicago with the impending closures of Mercy Hospital and reduction in services at Holy Cross and Jackson Park hospitals. Second, is our current economic crisis, which has caused rates of unemployment not seen since the Great Depression and led directly to 175,000 Illinoisans losing their health insurance.

We appreciate that the County has publicly decried and have made calls to address racial inequities in healthcare, in particular, and systemic racism, in general. But the cuts proposed by CCH contradict these positions.

We think there's a better way. We believe it's possible for CCH to make improvements to its services that would benefit our communities while lessening racial inequities in healthcare and stemming the tide of unemployment. We hope Cook County officials work to find a better way and oppose any closures, cuts to services, and layoffs.

The budget problems of Cook County should not be solved on the backs of our patients, communities, and healthcare workers.

Sincerely,

Dr. Annie Torres
Dr. Angela Bales
Dr. David Carr
Dr. Satra Mishra
Dr. Natasha Margeta
Dr. Chandra Chataut
Dr. Marlon Garcia
Dr. Fayez Mekael
Dr. Melanie Watson
Dr. Lisa Palivos

Doctors Council SEIU statement in opposition to Cook County Health's FY2021 budget proposal

Dr. Salman Khan
Dr. Justin Gandia
Dr. Sully Cardona
Dr. Pierre Nunez
Dr. Patricia Hoyos
Dr. Manisha Ogale
Dr. Tapan Bhatt
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Dr. Jon Tottleben
Dr. Alvi Saad
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Dr. Padma Kudaravalli
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Dr. Ioana Haratau

Doctors Council SEIU statement in opposition to Cook County Health's FY2021 budget proposal

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Dr. Dipika Patel
Dr. Kyngran Shim
Dr. Rhonda Y. Gans
Dr. Carolyn Adams-Winn
Dr. John Keen
Dr. Chinedu Oranu
Dr. Swati Bhobe
Dr. Caroline Kato
Dr. Rafael Turbay
Dr. Tatyana Kagan
Dr. Linda Strozdas
Dr. Philip Wong
Dr. Simon Piller
Dr. Michael Escoto

Board of Directors
Cook County Health
1950 W. Polk
Chicago, IL 60612

RE: Fiscal Year 2021 Cook County Health Budget

Dear Cook County Health Board of Directors,

I am Kelley D. Nichols-Brown and due to my recent job loss during the Covid-19 pandemic, my young son and I became uninsured. We enrolled in CountyCare and the Meridian Health plans and with the closure of St. James Hospital and elimination of most of their outpatient services in Chicago Heights, there are very few options for health care for those of us living in the southern most edge of Cook County. Thankfully I knew exactly where to turn for compassionate medical care and who would accept our insurance. We recently became patients at Cook County Health at the Cottage Grove Health Center in Ford Heights, which is very close to my residence in Chicago Heights.

I have first-hand knowledge about the services offered at the Cottage Grove Health Center because I am also a member of their Advisory Council. From the kind and caring Pediatricians to the dedicated staff who provide wrap-around services to those living with HIV, the medical staff there is extremely committed. They even partnered with me on a unique homeless outreach program that I ran in Chicago Heights by helping visitors get tested for HIV and sharing information about services at the Clinic.

Even though my life is in a temporary upheaval right now due to my job loss and the pandemic, my mind is so much more at ease knowing that my family's doctors are close by. As an Advisory Council member, a homeless outreach program provider, and a current patient, I ask that you please continue to **fully fund** the services provided by the staff at the **Cottage Grove Health Center**. I thank you in advance for your support to provide invaluable services to those of us in need, especially during this world-wide pandemic.

Sincerely,

Kelley D. Nichols-Brown
Cottage Grove Health Center Advisory Council Member and Patient





Ford Heights School District 169

Board of Education

910 Woodlawn Avenue • Ford Heights, Illinois 60411-2298 • 708-758-1370 • Fax 708-757-5287

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Latricia D. Walker
Assistant Principal

Cottage Grove Upper Grade Center

Dr. Sharon P. Rivers
Principal

Chantel L. Jones
Assistant Principal

Cook County Health
Board of Directors
1950 W. Polk
Chicago, IL 60612

RE: Fiscal Year 2021 Cook County Health Budget

Dear Cook County Health Board of Directors,

My name is Marilyn Barnes, Director of Curriculum and Instruction for Ford Heights School District 169, and have been in this role for many years. In my role as Director of Curriculum and Instruction, I collaborate with many organizations to advocate on behalf of the students in the District.

Over the last ten (10) years, the District and Cottage Grove Health Clinic has partnered with the to ensure students have the required physicals and immunizations, thus allowing them to not be excluded from school due to being out of compliance per the requirements of the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE). In addition to providing the medical requirements by ISBE, the clinic has been instrumental in providing our students in grades 5th through 8th with sports physicals. Through this partnership, several of the families have opted to choose the clinic as their primary health provider. The clinic is centrally located in the community, and is convenient for families who lack transportation, which sometimes is the cause of them not seeking out the important medical services.

In particular, during the Novel Coronavirus Pandemic, the South Suburban Clinics in Robbins, Ford Heights and Blue Island have served as an anchor in the community, and patients trust that these are safe places to get the help they need either in person or via telehealth appointments.

As the Director of Curriculum and Instruction for Ford Heights School District 169 and as an advocate for our students, I urge you to continue funding and expand programming in the South Suburban Ambulatory clinics, which have been a vital lifeline to residents of the Southland who already experience a disparity in health resources.

Many thanks for all the things that Cook County Health does to better everyone's health.

Warm Regards,

Mrs. Marilyn Barnes
Director of Curriculum and Instruction

Board of Directors
Cook County Health
1950 W. Polk
Chicago, IL 60612

RE: Fiscal Year 2021 Cook County Health Budget

Dear Cook County Health Board of Directors,

In 2010, I became a patient at Cook County Health. I lost my job and insurance but Provident Hospital provided me with medical care. I was linked to County Care and other resources through staff. I suffered a TIA stroke in 2011 and Provident Hospital treated and care for me again. The medical care that I have received at Provident Hospital has been exceptional. The folks there have really taken care of me and treated me with respect.

My mostly recent experience at Provident Hospital was on August 28, 2020 for a Covid-19 test. On August 31, 2020, I returned to the hospital for a colonoscopy. I was very nervous but the professionalism exhibited by the staff gave me a sense of calm. The bedside manner was state of the art by my doctor. The admitting clerk, nursing staff, and transportation staff all contributed to this wonderful experience before, during, and after my procedure.

Thank you to all the great staff at Provident Hospital for the wonderful care and patient experience.

Sincerely,

Mary Galloway

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]



Village of Robbins

Office of Mayor Tyrone Ward

3327 W. 137th Street, Robbins, IL 60472 | Ph. 708.385.8940 | www.robbins-il.com

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Cook County Health

Board of Directors

1950 W. Polk

Chicago, IL 60612

RE: Fiscal Year 2021 Cook County Health Budget

Dear Cook County Health Board of Directors,

On behalf of the Village of Robbins, I would like to thank Cook County Health for your continued commitment to the welfare and health of our residents in Robbins and those in Cook County's south suburbs. The Robbins Health Center provides many services to our residents and is an anchor in our community.

As Mayor of Robbins, I can attest that the Robbins Health Center and its staff arduously work to better our community. Whether it is through the food distributions done in conjunction with the Greater Chicago Food Depository or the Summer Meals Programs with USDA, Cook County Health is at the forefront in bringing resources to our residents. From participating in our health fairs or conducting screenings for students of the Posen-Robbins School District, Cook County Health staff is always present to share resources and participate in activities.

With the closing of Metro South Hospital at the end of 2019, our community was left without a hospital where patients could go for specialty care and the new Blue Island Health Center certainly fills that gap. I am excited that in the future, you will expand some programs at the Robbins Health Center, which will definitely compliment those offered at your new facility. During this treacherous Covid-19 pandemics, our area has been hit hard with the virus, but I have to compliment your Department of Public Health for executing innovative outreach education programs in our communities. By working together, we can all better everyone's lives.

I thank you for your attention and humbly ask that you keep funding and expanding programs in the Southland. On behalf of our residents and the Village of Robbins, thank you for all that Cook County Health does to better the lives of our residents.

Sincerely,

Tyrone Ward
Mayor



Nurturing Children • Strengthening Families

August 31, 2020

RE: Letter in support of Cook County Health CareLink Program

Board of directors,

My name is Michelle Ramírez and I am the Bilingual Case Specialist and Family Support Worker with Family Focus Nuestra Familia in Cicero, IL. As a Case Specialist and Family Support worker, I assist our families in obtaining resources needed, file applications for public benefits, provide immediate support and more.

Through this letter, I am asserting my greatest gratitude for the CareLink program. It is a program that is incredibly needed and touches the lives of many. The families we serve are of migrant background and low income that would otherwise not have access to medical attention. This program is very dear to my family as one of my parents is also a CareLink participant. Being a state and county in support of immigrant families through programs such as the Immigrant Family Resource Program or the Illinois Welcoming Centers, I cannot imagine this program going unfunded.

Not only has this program touched my family directly, but it has granted access to coverage, attention, and medication all of which are a basic human right to any individual. It is furthermore a resource I refer participants to on almost a daily basis. Our communities of color are disproportionately affected by systems that only oppress migrant and communities of color, COVID-19 has only reinforced this. CareLink is a program that reiterates to our families that we belong here, that we matter, and that our elected officials at all levels are indeed advocating for the needs of our communities.

As an agency we are dedicated in advocating for the wellbeing of our families and their children. This is not attainable if our parents are not able to access preventative medical attention or treatment that are determining factors in their life expectancy. Moreover, programs of this nature should receive increased funding as the need is indeed evident. Individuals such as Patricia Hernandez who continuously perform remarkably to properly serve our community are appreciated more than we can ever verbalize. Patricia has been a warm hand to our families that are continuously neglected by systems that believe otherwise. If program is continued to be funded, be assured, it will continue to impact the lives of our communities.

Please feel free to contact me for further questions or for further discussion.

Kindly,



Michelle N Ramírez
Bilingual Case Manager Family Specialist
Family Focus Nuestra Familia
1500 S 59th Ct. | Cicero IL, 60804



Board of Directors
Cook County Health
1950 W. Polk
Chicago, IL 60612

RE: Fiscal Year 2021 Cook County Health Budget

Dear Cook County Health Board of Directors,

I am Pablo Cruz and I serve as the Director of Casa Esperanza, (House of Hope), which is part of the Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish in Melrose Park. I also serve as co-chair of the Community Alliance, which is comprised by more than 50 local west suburban organizations.

Casa Esperanza provides comprehensive service within an arm's length of the community in which every individual is cared for spiritually, morally, intellectually, physically, socially and emotionally in a linguistic and culturally friendly environment. We do this by linking our clients and patrons directly to the services that they need some of which include medical, food, financial, housing and other help.

In terms of the Community Alliance, we are extremely proud of the Cook County Health involvement for the past many years. Patricia Hernandez has been very successful sharing information with the participating organizations ranging from the new North Riverside facility and the services provided, as amazing and great asset to the community, to enrollment Medicaid and CareLink enrollment information. Most recently, the Cook County Department of Public Health has also joined us to share information on the Covid-19 pandemic and resources available to the suburban community to better resident's lives.

While we are grateful to the services and care the Cook County Health provides, I cannot say the same about other local and area health systems. It is frustrating that these systems do not really provide health assistance to those whom lack insurance and they do the minimum to stabilize them, as required by State law, and let them look for other resources to take care of their needs. Recently, we had to deal with a situation with a Hospital which refused to help a woman who lost her insurance coverage and who had been recently diagnosed with cancer. It is unfortunate that insurance status carries so much weight to "not-for-profit" institutions, rather than abiding by the tenet of helping those who don't have enough.

On behalf of Casa Esperanza and the Community Alliance, I want to thank you, the Cook County Health Board of Directors, for ensuring that our community, especially those without health insurance, are seen for their medical conditions and don't have to worry about how they are going to pay for their services. I urge you to encourage the Cook County Board of Commissioners, State Officials and the Illinois Hospital Association to pass legislation that ensures that hospitals have to take care of those in their communities regardless of their ability to pay. I particularly want to thank you for a great new health facility right in our backyard, which will truly be an asset in our community.

Thank you for taking care of our community. Muchas gracias!

Sincerely,

Pablo Cruz
Casa Esperanza Director
Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish & Community Center
1115 N. 23rd Ave.
Melrose Park, IL 60160
Office: 708 345 - 3632 X 301
Fax: 708 345 - 3951

Cook County Health
Board of Directors
1950 W. Polk
Chicago, IL 60612

RE: Fiscal Year 2021 Cook County Health Budget

Dear Cook County Health Board of Directors,

My name is Rosalie Peoples and I am a patient at Cook County Health; more specifically at the Oak Forest and Stroger Health Center. I am very pleased to have the opportunity to write this letter. I am also grateful to you and Cook County Health for providing magnificent health services to me and others in my community.

My first oldest son who would now be 30 was delivered at Cook County Hospital. In 2007 I was going through issues involving gynecology. My sister who was is now a NP suggested to me to go to Cook County Hospital to get to the root of my medical concern. She raved about the education she received while completing her practicum at the Hospital. Since that time and moving forward, Cook County Hospital has been my only choice for my medical care.

My second biggest medical event was being diagnosed with Pulmonary Embolism. From 2016 until 8/2020 I have undergone various treatments and many trips to various Cook County clinics. My ENTIRE team of doctors (Gynecology/Hematology/Cardiology/PCP), have played an outstanding role in improving my health and quality of life.

I have two doctors who I would like to especially focus on at this; Dr. Valerie Hansbrough and Dr. Lorraine Y Bangayan. After being placed on blood thinners it resulted in constant bleeding. Being a female who was still experiencing a monthly cycle the continuous bleeding was not only depressing it came to a point that I feared leaving my home after having several accident while in public. I expressed my concerns and feelings of hopelessness in this situation to Dr. Hansbrough during one of my visits. Her exact words to me were "I am not going to stop working on this until we find a satisfactory solution!" She kept her word. I am so thankful and grateful to have been placed as a patient with her, and I will NEVER forget her dedication in resolving my problem.

During a visit with Dr. Bangayan and discussing my concern with my constant weight gain as a result of me having to abruptly change my diet due to the medication that I was prescribed. She worked with my medical team and me and was able to change my medication which resulted in me being able to enjoy a healthier food selection and return to a healthier weight. My treatment and services with the Cook County Hospitals have been outstanding and I feel that my life has improved and continue to positively improve.

I know that in these difficult times, programs may need to be realigned and that you will have to make difficult decisions. I trust that you will look at data and make appropriate decisions to ensure that the residents of Cook County will have appropriate access to healthcare resources either through Cook County Health or the CountyCare network.

Many thanks for being there for us in the community.

Sincerely,

Rosalie Peoples

A solid black rectangular box used to redact the signature of Rosalie Peoples.

Cook County Health
Board of Directors
1950 W. Polk
Chicago, IL 60612

RE: Fiscal Year 2021 Cook County Health Budget

Dear Cook County Health Board of Directors,

Hello my name is Shirley J. Cain,

I am patient at Provident Hospital where I receive cardiology, neurology, and mammogram services. Each of these services have been instrumental in maintaining my health and life. I feel important and treated as a priority as a patient at Provident Hospital Cook County. I had a stroke November 1, 2017 so the customer service has been so important to me. The staff and doctors demonstrate so much patience's when caring for me. This is why Provident Hospital is so important to the community as it provides access for people like me. I even refer my family members because of the excellent care I receive. My experience is that the staff go above and beyond for me. They genuinely show compassion to me which means a lot because I feel like they actually care about me. They see me and others as human beings despite anyone's ability to pay. In today's world Provident Hospital of Cook County is being inclusive of every resident. I appreciate all the care and services and will always advocate for the medical intuition. This hospital is truly a blessing to me and other Southside residents.

Sincerely,

Shirley J. Cain





September 1, 2020

Dear Cook County Board of Directors,

As a Supervising Manager of home visiting programs in Englewood and on the behalf of Family Focus Englewood, I would like to express my strong support for the Englewood health Center. Our mission at Family Focus is to promote the well-being of children from birth by supporting and strengthening families in and with their communities. We help parents gain confidence and competence as the primary caregivers and educators of their children. We provide parents and their children with critical resources and learning opportunities to encourage healthy development in their communities.

Englewood Health Center is one of the resources that aid us in carrying out our mission. We strive to meet many outcomes, helping families find primary care, promoting annual checkups and immunizations are just a few. We are only able to meet this requirement through our partnership with the Englewood Health Center. Families are assisted with securing health insurance and ultimately finding primary health care that they feel comfortable with and will continue with after they have transitioned from our programs.

Englewood Health Center also connects our organization with other organizations within the community. Through our quarterly meetings, we can learn about upcoming events and gain other linkages to support our families. This partnership is vital to families and the community we serve. I am grateful for the opportunity to work with the Englewood Health Center; I again strongly support this organization.

Sincerely yours,

Trenetta McLemore

PI Program Manager
Family Focus - Englewood
6727 S. Western Ave.
Chicago IL, 60636
Ph: 773.962.0366
Fax: 773.962.0966
Trenetta.McLemore@family-focus.org www.family-focus.org

Promoting the well-being of children from birth by supporting and strengthening their families in and with their communities.

Board of Directors
Cook County Health
1950 W. Polk
Chicago, IL 60612



Corazón

Dear Cook County Health Board of Directors,

I am Vanessa Melgoza and I serve as the Director of Health Programs at Corazón Community Services, a social services agency in Cicero. I also serve on the North Riverside Health Center Advisory Council and am excited that we will have our first meeting later on this month.

Corazón Community Services' mission is to improve the quality of life for children, youth and families through holistic social services offered in a culturally sensitive environment. Every month, we provide direct services to over 600 Individuals and more than 2,000 Community Members are impacted by our monthly community education & events.

Our health related programs utilize regular data collection and unique methods of education and information dissemination to improve health outcomes and increase health literacy as well as knowledge in Cicero, Berwyn and surrounding communities. These programs engage youth and parents as both learners and messengers, guiding them to be advocates for the health of their peers. Our three Core health components involve: 1) Teen Pregnancy prevention; 2) HIV Testing and Counseling; and 3) our Health Ambassadors. We also offer programs on Violence Prevention and Leadership.

Corazón Community Services has had a long partnership with Cook County Health and our local clinics. We worked and referred patients regularly to the former Cicero Health Center on Cermack Avenue. While the former location was better from a geographical point of view, the new North Riverside Health Center is truly a state-of-the-art facility. We are excited that we will be able to refer people to a modern facility where they are treated with respect. I am excited that the center will offer dental services which are of dire need in this area. I also look forward to working with your social workers, who work with us on different Cicero collaboratives, on programs to better our youth.

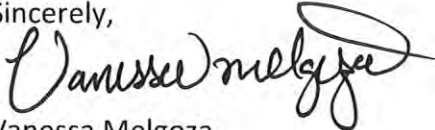
I also want to highlight the work that the Cook County Department of Public Health is doing to educate people and stop the spread of the Covid-19 pandemic. Most recently, I was able to speak at the Mask-Up press conference with Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle and I am relieved that the department is ensuring that this message is being transmitted in Spanish and in a culturally appropriate and inclusive manner, which resonates with the youth, adolescents and young individuals whom we serve.

On behalf of Corazón Community Services, I encourage you as a Board and the Cook County Health administration to keep expanding programs were appropriate but also make your

decisions based on data and on the impact that programs have on communities. I do not envy you having to make hard choices in financially difficult time, but please remember that the communities that you serve are usually the ones with no choice and they are dependent on your health system for their overall welfare.

Thank you for taking care of my community. I look forward to working with your staff at the North Riverside Health Center Advisory Council on improving programs in my community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Vanessa Melgoza". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end of the last name.

Vanessa Melgoza

Director of Health Programs

CorazónCommunity Services

5339 W. 25th Cicero, IL 60804

P: (708) 656-1400 Ext: 222

F: (708) 656-1411

www.corazoncs.org

Toni Preckwinkle
County Board President
Cook County Health Board of Directors
118 N. Clark St.
Room 537
Chicago, IL 60602
United States

Re: Cook County Health Budget Hearing

Dear Honorable Members of the Cook County Health Board of Directors

Founded in 2010, Brothers' Health Collective (BHC) is a minority-based, peer-led community not-for-profit 501(c)(3) organization, dedicated to health promotion. The agency's mission is "to provide culturally intelligent, caring and compassionate services to promote health equity." The majority of BHC's programs are dedicated to decreasing impacts of HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted diseases amongst communities of color.

BHC has worked with the Ruth Rothstein Core Center, as a community partner and as a referral source for patients to access lifesaving HIV/AIDS treatment, case management and more importantly, to one of the nation's first FibroScan Centers to advance community based Hepatitis C MRI level liver scanning to determine the level of fibrosis. The FibroScan score allows for providers and patients to know their liver staging in real-time; to make vital decisions regarding provider treatment options; collective next steps for families who may be impacted by a suffering loved one and allowing patients to make lifesaving decisions about their health.

The FibroScan Center truly advances the County's goal to achieve health equity. Cook County, ranks 4th in the nation to achieve comprehensive Hepatitis C care which includes screening, diagnosis and treatment for vulnerable communities of color.

A budget shortfall will truly impact the Cook County populous to achieve medical innovation often experienced by those of higher income means.

Sincerely,



Ariq Cabbler
Executive Director

September 4, 2020

Board of Directors
Cook County Health
1950 West Polk Street
Chicago, Illinois 60612

RE: Fiscal Year 2021 Cook County Health Budget

Dear Cook County Health Board of Directors,

My name is Aurelio Barrios, and I am patient at Cook County Health, specifically at John H. Stroger, Jr. Hospital of Cook County. I am grateful to you and my care team at Cook County Health for providing great health services to me and others in my community, especially as we continue to fight the COVID-19 pandemic.

In the spring, I was diagnosed with COVID-19 and was hospitalized at Stroger Hospital for 11 days. As you can imagine, being in a hospital for that length of time is not fun, but the care I received at Cook County Health was great. During my time on the hospital's COVID unit, the entire team catered to me, so I could recover from this nasty virus that has taken hold of our society. Because of the care I received at Stroger, I am now a COVID survivor and am forever grateful for all the time and energy the Cook County Health team put into making sure I was able to fully recover. The treatment and services at Stroger Hospital are top rate. I would even recommend it over Northwestern Medicine and Rush University Medical Center where I have had poor experiences with my care and so has my family. After recovering COVID-19, my health is continuously improving, I am taking care of my health and becoming healthier, and trying to live each day to its fullest.

I am grateful to Cook County Health for bringing my health back and for being an anchor in the community. Your entity helps those who otherwise cannot go to other places. I know that most institutions are suffering financially right now, but as you make your plans for the next budget, please make sure that you leave enough resources open for those of us who do not have much access to health care.

Many thanks for being there for us in the community.

Sincerely,

Aurelio Barrios



TO: President Preckwinkle and the Cook County Health Board of Directors

SUBJECT: Cook County Health Budget Hearing

PrimeCareHealth is a Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC). We embody the belief that everyone has the right to high-quality care, regardless of one's race, ethnicity, disability, immigration status, sexual orientation, or the ability to pay. What makes us unique from other FQHCs in that we are a family medicine practice. We specialize in ongoing, personal patient-provider relations focused on integrated care.

For 28 years we have committed ourselves to assisting people overcome barriers to care. In an effort to integrate care, PrimeCareHealth has established two dental centers, and two medication-assisted treatment centers in the communities we serve. We also offer Behavioral Health services at our six primary care sites.

In our effort to promote access to high-quality care to the most at-risk populations, we continuously partner with other community organizations and programs. One such partnership is with the The Ruth M. Rothstein CORE Center.

Stephanie Zaas and the team at CORE have done outstanding work with our excellent referral department and our providers through trainings and effective communication. Their versatile communication practices allow us to exchange information in an efficient and secure manner. This has made our infectious disease referral process to the CORE center very seamless. Their outreach and prompt response time with our centers has been invaluable for our communities.

Our experiences through this partnership has been nothing but pleasant. The CORE center staff is extremely helpful with making sure all referrals are complete and are exemplary in their follow up response. They treat patients with respect and warmth. Our organization has become enriched by this partnership.

Keep up the great work you do. You improve patient lives.

Franchesca Aguilera
Manager of Care Coordination
PrimeCareHealth



September 8th, 2020

Re: Cook County Health Budget Hearing

Attention President Preckwinkle and the Cook County Health Board of Directors:

Heartland Health Centers is a collection of 17 FQHCs on the northside of Chicago providing full spectrum family practice to a diverse population, including many immigrants and refugees. We have partnered with CORE since our inception and appreciate the high quality and individualized care that the CORE Center provides.

Pam Maness is one of our nurse practitioners and a site leader at our co-located Heartland/Trilogy location where she works with a 100% severely mentally ill population. She recently shared, "I have had very positive experiences with CORE. I have sent several patients with significant impacting mental illnesses for HCV treatment and all have been treated successfully. The team there has been responsive both to the patients and to me. I find them careful, skilled, respectful, and professional. They have been a great help to me and to my patients."

Jeff Panzer, MD, a family practice physician and Vice President of Care Transformation at Heartland shares, "The CORE center provides essential services to some of our patients at HHC. I have two patients with Hep C who were struggling to get adequate care for their disease. I connected with Stephanie who explained the process very clearly to me, and also made herself available should I have questions. The CORE center treated them with dignity, cured them, and communicated the care plan and follow-up back to me as the PCP. I don't often hear from specialists but the team at CORE called me directly which was great. I so appreciate having CORE center as a partner."

These are just two examples of how our providers feel about working with CORE and we have many more where those came from. We are so thankful for the services and support that the CORE Center offers and the accessibility for both patients and providers. Having such a responsive and caring partner makes challenging cases and situations much easier to navigate. We truly appreciate this fantastic partnership!

Sincerely,

Laurie Carrier

Laurie Carrier, MD
Heartland Health Centers
Chief Medical Officer

September 10, 2020

Board of Directors
Cook County Bureau of Health
1950 W. Polk St
Chicago, IL 60612

RE: Fiscal Year 2021 Cook County Health Budget

Dear Board of Directors,

As a former chief operating officer of Provident Hospital, I am writing to provide my support of Cook County Health's plans to "Reimagine Provident Hospital". Consistent with the mission to deliver integrated health services in partnership with other health providers and communities this plan will enhance the health of our Black and Brown communities by addressing healthcare disparities.

I understand the current fiscal/budgetary challenges caused by COVID-19 and the effect of this pandemic on institutions and governments nationwide which leads institutions such as Cook County Health to make tough decisions based on the need to achieve efficiencies in operations. However, with the planned closure of Mercy Hospital, the third hospital in the past 24 month serving minority communities, access to medical and mental health services will be catastrophically reduced.

The majority of the population served by Provident Hospital is economically challenged, underserved, underprivileged and uninsured. Provident Hospital historically has been a cornerstone in addressing these issues and retailoring the focus of operations will ensure future success.

Many thanks for keeping the rich history of Provident Hospital alive and making sure that its legacy continues through proper planning and enhancement of services that directly impact health disparities/health deserts.

Sincerely,



Shirley Bomar-Cole, RN, BSN, MHA



COALITION FOR A BETTER CHINESE AMERICAN COMMUNITY
華埠更好團結聯盟

SOLIDARITY

To the Cook County Board of Commissioners:

We write as leaders of the Coalition for a Better Chinese American Community, a community planning and policy advocacy organization based in Chicago's Chinatown. We unite the voices and energies of the residents and organizations, including social service agencies, education institutions, business associations, and faith-based organizations to affect changes that benefit the Greater Chinatown Community. Through our efforts over the past two decades, we have been able to complete many initiatives that benefit the community, including bringing a state-of-the arts field house and a world-class library into the neighborhood.

We recently learned of the impending closure of the Cook County Near South Clinic. While it is heartening to hear that the historic Provident Hospital will be getting a new extension as well as extensive renovation of the current facilities so it can better serve residents of the south side, we are concerned about the impact of that this change will have on current Chinese patients, mostly recent immigrants that speak limited English.

Many of them are already familiar with the six Chinese doctors at the Near South Clinic and will consider following these doctors to their next clinic but also may consider getting care at Stroger Hospital. Many of the Chinese speaking residents of Chinatown and Bridgeport are already familiar with Stroger Hospital, which is slightly closer and on more familiar CTA bus and train routes.

Our primary concern is how the needs of this particular marginalized population will be met with the new changes. With the impending closure of Mercy Hospital, our residents are losing two medical facilities that they are familiar with, and which have Chinese staff that are able to provide linguistically and culturally appropriate help. We call for community meetings to share information and collect feedback, as well as a process for the community to give input in order to facilitate a smooth service transition.

Sincere,



David Wu
Board President
and Executive Director, Pui Tak Center



Grace Chan McKibben
Executive Director