

9/09/20 Special Board Meeting – list of public speakers

1. Ricardo Camacho - Concerned Citizen
2. Claudia Alvarez - School Counselor, Morton East High School
3. Abigail Segovia - Social Worker, Morton East High School
4. Erica Hade - Social Worker, Morton East High School
5. Bill Bush - Lawndale Christian Health Center
6. Tina Ogboi –Patient
7. Emily Daniels – GCFD
8. James Ayuba - Patient
9. Mark Foellmer – IAHPERD
10. Carolyn Cutean – Concerned Citizen
11. Brenda Ford – Patient
12. Jasmine Hosley – Nurse, Morton East High School
13. Louvell Houston – Patient
14. Rosalba Hernandez – Head Nurse, Morton East High School
15. Thalía Morán – Patient
16. Mei Ming Mak – Patient
17. Jay Readey – NeighborScapes
18. Dr. Philip Wong – Near South Clinic
19. Katie Spoden - Alliance to End Homelessness in Suburban Cook County
20. Dr. Ahmed Nadeem – Provident Hospital
21. Rev. Micheal H. Bell - Mt. Olive MB Church
22. Gabriela Espinoza – Parent of patient
23. Brenda Jackson – Patient
24. JoAnne Rzadzki – Concerned Citizen
25. Monica Melendez – School Counselor, Morton East High School
26. Dr. Simon Piller – Physician – ACHN and Stroger Hospital
27. Rondal Jones - Bremen Township
28. Kristen Nuyen – EverThrive Illinois
29. Cynethia Mireles – Patient
30. Michelle Murray – Retired Social Worker, Morton East High School
31. Araceli Vargas – Parent of patient
32. Alvin J Robinson - Urban Development Corp-North Washington Park Manor
33. Dr. Rosario Pesche – Clinical and School Psychologist
34. Merrion “Butch” Bolton – patient
35. Michelle Ramirez – Concerned Citizen
36. Jenny Calero - Family of patient
37. Blanca Gomez – Concerned Citizen
38. Liz Figueroa - Sarah's Inn
39. Jaclyn Wallen – Concerned Citizen
40. Scott Mason – Patient
41. Anthony Grazzini – Educator and Resident, Town of Cicero

42. Lynda Schueler - Housing Forward
43. Vanessa Melgoza – Corazon Community Services
44. Pamela Vanderwall – South Suburban PADS
45. Andrea Lara – Morton East High School Graduate
46. Pauline Vrettos – Concerned Citizen
47. Mabel M. Solis – Student – J. Sterling Morton East High School
48. Amaya Vasquez – Concerned Citizen
49. Diana Rivera – Psychiatric Social Worker at CCH Morton East Adolescent Health Center
50. Lydia Weber – Registered Nurse, North Riverside Health Clinic
51. Minister Jennifer Harris Goldsmith – Registered Nurse
52. Fatimah Shaheed – Registered Nurse
53. Nahsis Davis – Registered Nurse, Provident Hospital
54. Akilah Muhammed – Concerned Citizen
55. Consuelo Vargas – Registered Nurse, Stroger Hospital Emergency Department
56. Beatriz Chagoya – Registered Nurse
57. Erika Medina – Concerned Citizen
58. Oluwatobi Ariyo – Pediatric Resident
59. Dr. Letitia E. Hillsman – Housestaff, Cook County Health
60. Jingpin Li – 3rd Year Resident, Near South Health Center
61. Christiana Thomas – Parent of patient
62. David Ayodiran – Patient
63. Tadeusz Kawalko – Parent of patient
64. Betsy Benito – Corporation for Supportive Housing
65. Jennifer Jimenez – Former student, Morton East High School
66. Deirdre Clayton – Retired Director of Community Relations, Provident Hospital
67. Carol Best – Assistant Principal, Morton East High School
68. Carolyn K. Ross – All Chicago Making Homelessness History
69. Dr. Jahangir Tai – Physician, Provident Hospital Emergency Department
70. Doctors’ Council SEIU
71. Patricia Menges – School Counselor, Morton East High School
72. Martha Merrill – AFSCME Council 31
73. Mavis de la Rosa - ELLAS
74. Eugenia Silverio – ELLAS
75. Maribel Cordero – ELLAS
76. Jorge Rivera – Concerned Citizen
77. Ilda Hernandez – Enlace Chicago (presenting testimony from a resident)
78. Lauren Gestes – Counselor, Youth Crossroads
79. David Terrazino – Concerned Citizen
80. Mary Calderon – Doula at New Moms Oak Park
81. Dr. George Paul – Chair, Division of Pediatric Emergency Medicine, CCH
82. Beulah Brent - Sisters Working It Out
83. Christa Hamilton - Centers for New Horizons, Inc.
84. Elilda Cortez – Former Student, Morton East High School
85. Dan Fulwiler - Esperanza Health Centers

86. Alba Hernandez – Student, Morton East High School
87. Dr. Vanessa Davis – Pediatric Endocrinology
88. Dr. Aaron Hamb - Former Medical Director Provident Hospital
89. 7th District Health Task Force (co-convenors Sue Avila and Linda Coronado)
90. Ted Hufstader - Esperanza Health Centers
91. Dr. Marjorie Fujara – CCH Child Abuse Pediatrician
92. CCH Department of Pediatrics
93. Maria Eugenia Rodriguez – Concerned Citizen
94. Michael Reese Research and Education Foundation’s Care Program
95. Pediatrics Residency Leadership Team
96. Linda Swaney - former Provident employee
97. Dr. Abeyome Akintorin – Attending Physician
98. Myiti Sengstacke - Chicago Defender Charities, Inc.
99. Allison Byrd – PGY3 Pediatric Residency
100. Donna Thompson - Access Community Health Network
101. Kimberly Smith – Concerned Citizen
102. Diane Wilder – Concerned Citizen
103. Robert Urso - PCC Community Wellness Center
104. Dr. Michael Escoto – Physician, Provident Hospital Emergency Department
105. Rocio Vargas-Garcia - Site Coordinator, Morton East High School
106. Rodrigo Anzures-Oyorzabal – Concerned Citizen

Electronic Testimonial Submission

No Reply - Cook County Health <WP-Notifications@cookcountyhealth.org>

Thu 9/3/2020 11:28 AM

To: Santana, Debbie <dsantana@cookcountyhhs.org>

Type of Message

Message

Message

The Morton East School Based Clinic has been a beacon of hope and support for students and families from the community and now more than ever during the current pandemic. In providing medical services, including mental health supports, the clinic has been an avenue for families accessing and receiving help like one of my students for example. She had access to staff and professionals that were understanding, provided guidance, and reassured her and her mother. I'm not sure what could've happened if a resource like the clinic hadn't been available to them in the building and if they would've accessed such support elsewhere. In a time where our students and families have been immensely impacted, the clinic is vital at continuing to provide much needed services. The school based clinic needs to be open. This cannot be taken away. Please advocate for our families as well.

Date of Meeting or Public Hearing

09/09/2020

Name

Ricardo Camacho

Address

[Redacted Address]

Phone

[Redacted Phone]

Phone Type

[Redacted Phone Type]

Email

[Redacted Email]

September 3, 2020

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Claudia Alvarez and I am a proud School Counselor at Morton East High School. Over the years, I have had countless, positive interactions with our school-based clinic. As a counselor, I often see students who suffer from trauma, depression, crippling anxiety, and suicidal thoughts. I also have students who do not know where to go when they think they might be pregnant, and are afraid to go to their family doctor for a pregnancy test. The clinic has always been there for our students, and for those of us doing our very best every day to help them navigate life's challenges. I truly cannot imagine Morton East without them.

I can recall one student in particular who I believe is still here today because of the clinic. This student had been bullied for many years; she was extremely depressed, and often thought about taking her own life. She attempted suicide one day, but was taken to the hospital after being found in time by her father. After a brief hospitalization, my student returned to school. She said she did not feel like she had anyone to talk to, her parents could not afford therapy, and they did not have a car to take her to a therapist even if they could afford one. I referred my student to the clinic, and she returned on a weekly basis for one-on-one therapy. After a couple of months, my student started smiling again, and she was significantly improving academically. Sadly, my students' father passed away over the summer. I was terribly worried about her, and kept a close eye on her because I knew about her troubled past. To my surprise, she told me not to worry, that she felt like she could move forward from this because of the tools she has learned from the clinic, and she was still meeting with her therapist virtually which has helped her tremendously. The benefits my student has received from the clinic are clear to me, and she continues to thrive to this day. This is just one story, and I can confidently say the clinic has saved hundreds of our students lives, just by being right here at school.

The lives of our students are changing now more than ever, and it is creating more anxiety and trauma for our entire community. This is a time when we need resources like the clinic the most. I urge you to consider keeping our school-based clinic. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Claudia Alvarez

Claudia Alvarez

Electronic Testimonial Submission

No Reply - Cook County Health <WP-Notifications@cookcountyhealth.org>

Thu 9/3/2020 12:43 PM

To: Santana, Debbie <dsantana@cookcountyhhs.org>

Type of Message

Message

Message

I have been working at Morton East High School as a social worker on and off for the last 6 years. In 2014, when I started as an intern, I was so thankful to have the School Based Clinic. The families in our district experience countless barriers to healthcare, and it is thanks to the clinic and the staff working tirelessly every single day that those barriers are able to get knocked down to give our students and families the care that they deserve. I remember working with a student who had been experiencing issues with his mental health, and they had gone untreated for so long he was having thoughts of suicide. His family was not supportive and he desperately needed help immediately. As an intern, I had no idea how to help, and my supervisor recommended I bring him to the clinic. He was able to get in for an appointment that same week. I remember how much hope it brought him, just to be able to be supported and receive the care he deserved. It is an invaluable resource to our school and community, and I know it has saved many lives. The trauma and adversity our students face every day sometimes seems unbearable, but I always know they will be in good hands when I make a referral to the clinic. Whenever I feel stuck in how to advocate or support my students, the clinic is always an answer.

Date of Meeting or Public Hearing

September 9, 2020

Name

Abigail Segovia

Address

[Redacted Address]

Phone

[Redacted Phone]

Phone Type

[Redacted Phone Type]

Email

[Redacted Email]

Electronic Testimonial Submission

No Reply - Cook County Health <WP-Notifications@cookcountyhealth.org>

Thu 9/3/2020 1:25 PM

To: Santana, Debbie <dsantana@cookcountyhhs.org>

Type of Message

Message

Message

As a Cook County resident and a social worker at Morton East High School I urge you to continue the Morton School Based Health Clinic. So many of the district's student have limited access to health care and the clinic is a vital resource to ensure they receive essential services such as mental health services. By having a clinic within the school vulnerable student who might otherwise never receive care are able to visit a social work. There are many hurdles to students receiving mental health care--such as transportation and the stigma associated with mental illness. But because the clinic is within the school, student can access mental health services without relying on parent transportation and many parents who would not allow their child to visit a community facility feel comfortable sending their child to the school based health clinic social worker. County health should be expanding school based health centers, not eliminating their role in them. Health care is a vital issue to voters and I urge the county board to continue operating the Morton Adolescent School Based Health Clinic at Morton East High School.

Date of Meeting or Public Hearing

Sept. 9, 2020

Name

Erica Hade

Address

[Redacted Address]

Phone

[Redacted Phone]

Phone Type

[Redacted Phone Type]

Email

[Redacted Email]

To whom it may concern:

At Lawndale Christian Health Center, we are so thankful to have John Stroger Hospital as a partner in caring for our community. The access to specialists through econsults has been very helpful in managing complex conditions. When in-person evaluation and tests are necessary we can refer them knowing that our most vulnerable patients will receive high quality and compassionate care. Thank you for all you do.

Bill Bush, PA-C | Clinical Director - 3860 East

3860 W. Ogden Ave., Chicago, IL 60623 | p. 872-588-3439

BillBush@lawndale.org | Please visit www.lawndale.org



Good afternoon,

It was called to my attention two days ago by Dr Dighe, that the pediatric unit is closing, please before proceeding closing the unit, you have to consider the children coming to that unit because it has been a great unit for me and my family. I live five minutes away from the hospital, which is close to my community, and if the unit is closed, I have to be traveling miles away looking for a hospital for my kid.

The story of my child started ten year ago when I migrated from west African Nigeria to the united states. one day she fell sick, so I took her to two different hospitals, but could not find out what is wrong with her until my friend recommended cook county pediatric clinic for me, then it was Fantus clinic.

There, a lot of tests were carried out, so they now found out that my daughter has S.C. Disease. Ever since then we have been using this clinic, and all the staff are very polite and especially DR Dighe who has been with us all through this ten years both time of good and rough time. Please whatever it takes to keep the unit open, I'm in support of it because I do not want to start from scratch again looking for a hospital for my daughter again. I know during this pandemic things are very difficult but consider the children first before closing the clinic, because the children in this unit have gone through a lot of pain and their family too. Thank you for your anticipation cooperation.

Tina Ogboi



4100 West Ann Lurie Place
Chicago, IL 60632-3920
773-247-FOOD
chicagosfoodbank.org

September 1, 2020

Cook County Health Board of Directors,

My name is Emily Daniels, and I'm the Senior Manager of Programs at the Greater Chicago Food Depository.

1 in 8 in Cook County is at risk for food insecurity, meaning they struggle to access the food they need to live a healthy life. Even one is too many. Hunger is as much a problem in suburban communities as it is in the city, and the consequences of inadequate food access threaten the health of children and families in every neighborhood.

While the rate of mortality related to chronic illness - like heart disease, stroke and diabetes - has declined thanks to improvements in treatment, investing in chronic disease prevention will save additional lives and resources while lowering healthcare costs for all.

We believe a healthy community starts with food. For the past five years, the Greater Chicago Food Depository has partnered with the Cook County Health to incorporate food insecurity screenings into patients' medical records. Patients who screen positive are provided with information and resources to access healthy food.

Food insecure patients receive a list of locations where they can access emergency food, a referral to our SNAP hotline to apply for nutrition benefits, and a referral to visit the Fresh Truck, provided by the Greater Chicago Food Depository.

The Fresh Truck visits participating CCH sites every other month to provide food insecure patients with fresh fruits and vegetables. Eating fresh produce is extremely important for preventing and managing chronic disease, but is frequently less accessible for food insecure people who many times can't afford it or don't live close to a grocery store that carries it.

Currently, all CCH health centers are conducting food insecurity screenings with 13 community health center locations hosting fresh produce distributions. Over the past year, the Fresh Truck has been at these sites 77 times and distributed 216,331 pounds of fresh fruits and vegetables to 9,623 households, representing 32,540 individuals. On average, 130 people attend each of these distributions (with a high of 285). Since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, the Greater Chicago Food Depository has seen the number of individuals turning to us and our partners for food increase significantly. Our partners, staff and volunteers have made changes to processes and procedures to ensure that we are able to continue distributing food to Cook County residents. The support and resilience of the health center teams has been vital during this time.

Resources are available to help patients access SNAP benefits as well as nutrition education materials, like recipe cards and samples of different produce items to taste.

We continue to look for new ways to engage the patient population. This year we worked with Cook County Health on a six-month pilot to provide a weekly delivery of 7 frozen meals to a cohort of 10 prediabetic patients.



4100 West Ann Lurie Place
Chicago, IL 60632-3920
773-247-FOOD
chicagosfoodbank.org

We are extremely happy with this partnership and the entire CCH staff have truly embraced this work. I want to thank Cook County Health for your leadership and commitment to the health of Cook County residents. As you present the 2021 budget, I urge you to continue investing in the health, wellbeing, and nutrition of Cook County residents. The Food Depository is committed to being your partner to ensure everyone in Cook County has the nutritious food they need for a healthy life.

We know that we cannot do this alone and are truly grateful for your support.

Sincerely,

Emily Daniels
Senior Manager of Programs
Greater Chicago Food Depository

To whom this may concern,

Hello!

My name is James Ayuba, and I am a native-born Chicagoan who has been receiving health care from the pediatric department of John H. Stroger Cook County Hospital since birth, (year 2000). I am a 20 year old African American man who was diagnosed with Sickle Cell Anemia at birth, and I can wholeheartedly say that this facility, specifically the pediatric department, saved my life. Without the extraordinarily talented pediatricians in this department, and adequate funding, I most likely would have died at the age of 13, due to complications from a surgery. Without this facility, my brother, who also had Sickle Cell Anemia, would have died from complications related to the disease.

This pediatric department saved both of our lives, and also caters to a widely diverse population, catering to various demographics that have other diseases outside of Sickle Cell. African American and Hispanic children are a demographic largely treated at this facility. When we strip the funding of a pediatric department that saves the lives of many ethnically diverse children, we aid in the perpetuation of systematic oppression of racial minorities. We deny children a basic right. Healthcare should NOT be a privilege. Defunding this pediatric department and denying these children the healthcare that they deserve strips these families of a fundamental civil liberty. It is THIS pediatric department that saved my life, and my brother's. It is this department that will CONTINUE to save the lives of many other children in need-- and that stems directly from the hardworking pediatricians who are so detail oriented and conscientious in providing exemplary health care.

Defunding this pediatric department endangers an extortionate amount of children in need of adequate healthcare. Defunding this department also endangers the hardworking pediatricians here as well, as they no longer have the adequate funding for the necessary P.P.E. and other precautionary measures. Lastly, defunding this department is not a quiet act. This is an act sure to create monumental ripples of despair to all participants involved. The children that attend this pediatric department deserve so much more, as well as the brave healthcare providers that work these hospitals. The pediatric department of John H. Stroger Cook County Hospital, as an entirety, deserves more.

I, someone who routinely attends this pediatric department, ask from a warm place that you do not aid in the defunding of this department. I ask that you please continue to support the pediatric department of John H. Stroger Cook County Hospital by simply not defunding it.

For me, for the brave and talented pediatricians, and most importantly, for the children, who typically tend to be too young to even understand how important and NECESSARY this facility is for them.

I thank you from the bottom of my heart for reading this inquiry. This pediatric facility matters. The pediatricians matter.

The children matter.

Thank you,

- James Ayuba

Illinois Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation & Dance



affiliated with
MID-WEST DISTRICT OF SOCIETY OF HEALTH AND PHYSICAL EDUCATORS
and the
SOCIETY OF HEALTH AND PHYSICAL EDUCATORS

September 2, 2020

To Cook County Health Board of Directors:

Over the past several years, the Illinois Association of Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance (IAHPERD) have had the privilege to be asked to collaborate with the Cook County Public Health Department (CCDPH) and their tremendous staff on the annual Wellness Conference.

This is such important work done by CCPHD organizing and offering a conference for school professionals working in school wellness programs (school nurses, social workers, health and physical education teachers and administrators). These professionals, many times, are overlooked when it comes to professional development and being informed on current wellness issues in our schools. CCPHD's workshop has addressed this issue by offering a workshop featuring general session presentations by public health leaders on topical issues and session tracts in Nursing, Social Work and Health and most recently a Physical Education tract.

As President of IAHPERD (2018-20), I was honored to be a part of this workshop and CCPHD's planning of the event. This year, while we were not able to have the event in person due to the Covid-19 crisis, CCDPH made every effort to conduct all sessions via video. They were truly successful in carrying out the initiative and engaging with our education professionals.

I, and IAHPERD, look forward to a continued relationship and collaborative efforts moving forward, in the name of all Cook County students and school wellness professionals. I also ask you to ensure that CCDPH and Cook County Health receive the necessary funds needed to keep this program going and to ensure that the health and safety of our children and people in the Cook County suburbs are guaranteed.

Thank you,

Mark Foellmer
IAHPERD President

AFFILIATES

Action for Healthy Kids*American Heart Association*Consortium to Lower Obesity in Chicago Children*Illinois Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development*Illinois Athletic Directors Association*Illinois Coaches Association*Illinois Chapter American Academy Pediatrics* Illinois Elementary School Association* Illinois High School Association*Illinois Athletic Trainers Association*Illinois School Health Association*Mid-American Chapter-American Red Cross*St. Louis Dairy Council*Suburban High School Association for Department Chairs of Health and Physical Education

Electronic Testimonial Submission

No Reply - Cook County Health <WP-Notifications@cookcountyhealth.org>

Fri 9/4/2020 10:04 AM

To: Santana, Debbie <dsantana@cookcountyhhs.org>

Type of Message

Message

Message

I am submitting this on behalf of the Morton Based Health Clinic housed inside Morton East High School in Cicero, IL. We are a community made up of immigrants and low income families, many without transportation. Our clinic provides an easily accessible, valuable service to our students as well as the community. Our teen moms bring in their infants for their shots. Our students who don't have a primary care doctor, or insurance, are able to be seen and have access to medical care. Removing this service, which is so vital to our community, would mean taking away both physical and emotional care to a population in dire need of it. Our community has been hit hard by the COVID-19 pandemic. This would be another devastating blow to a community that has suffered so much already. The impact to the community would be felt deeply. PLEASE DO NOT TAKE AWAY THIS IMPORTANT AND VALUABLE SERVICE!!

Date of Meeting or Public Hearing

SEPTEMBER 9,2020

Name

Carolyn Cutean

Address

[Redacted Address]

[Map It](#)

Phone

[Redacted Phone]

Phone Type

[Redacted Phone Type]

Email

[Redacted Email]

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 enjoy coming to Provident Hospital since 2014 for care. The service and care should be the standard for all hospitals. I frequently use the services at Provident. Having access to all these services is so important to me and many of the residents in the community. Please understand the importance of what this hospital provides to the community and how much we need these services.

Thank you.

Brenda Ford

Electronic Testimonial Submission

No Reply - Cook County Health <WP-Notifications@cookcountyhealth.org>

Fri 9/4/2020 10:40 AM

To: Santana, Debbie <dsantana@cookcountyhhs.org>

Type of Message

Message

Message

CCHB Meeting: Morton East Adolescent Health Center of Cook County Health
Meeting Date: Wednesday September 9, 2020 at 6:00 p.m.

Greetings,

My name is Jasmine, and I am in support of keeping the Morton East Adolescent Health Center open. I am one of the nurses at Morton East High School, and for the past 3 years I've got to witness just how much the students and community rely on the school-based clinic. Although this is a separate entity from the Nurse's Office, we often are able to effectively collaborate and provide multiple services for our students, their families, and the Cicero community as a whole. The School Based Clinic is vital, and the services they offer/ provide are essential for the sustainability of many of our students (ie. Vaccinations, physicals, STI testing, insurance information, mental health/wellness, etc.). Mental health is especially important as it becomes more and more apparent that the students/community are struggling with receiving appropriate care for problems such as depression, grief, trauma or anxiety. Leaving this area without the resources the Clinic provides will be detrimental to the school, students, families, and the Cicero community as a whole.

The nurse's office has personally benefited from having the on-site Adolescent Center. It makes for a smoother transition when referring students and getting them the necessary treatment, which then builds a better rapport as they feel safe and confident that we were able to get them help. This convenient location makes a world of difference as well, as we understand many students don't have easy access to transportation to travel outside of their surrounding area. The employees (from clerical, Nurse Practitioners, Certified Medical Assistants, Social Worker, to the Physicians) are also a wealth of knowledge that we utilize, and a valuable asset to all.

The Morton East SBHC is an important part of our community, as is preserving the mental, emotional, and physical health of its members. Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimonial in support of their continuity.

Date of Meeting or Public Hearing

September 9, 2020

Name

Jasmine Hosley

Address

[Redacted Address]

Phone

[Redacted Phone]

Phone Type

[Redacted Phone Type]

[Redacted Phone Type]

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 Louvell Houston and patient at Cook County Health, more specifically at the GMC Health Center. I am grateful to you and Cook County Health for providing great health services to others and me in my community.

I have been a patient and a part of general medicine for over 50 years. I utilize general medicine under the care of Dr. Peter Clarke as well as the foot clinic, sleep clinic, cardiology and a host of others. My treatment and services at the health center are great and I feel that my life is improving as I am taking care of my health and becoming healthier.

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. The one thing that has been constant and actually an increase in need is Stroger Hospital and all the clinics.

Many thanks for being there for us in the community.

Sincerely,

Louvell Houston Sr.

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████████████████████
████████████████

Electronic Testimonial Submission

No Reply - Cook County Health <WP-Notifications@cookcountyhealth.org>

Fri 9/4/2020 2:30 PM

To: Santana, Debbie <dsantana@cookcountyhhs.org>

Type of Message

Message

Message

My name is Rosalba Hernandez and I am the head nurse at Morton East High School. I rely on the services that the school-based health center (SBHC), Morton East Adolescent Ambulatory Community Health Center provides our students and our community. Access to mental health services are limited in the community and the Morton East Adolescent Ambulatory Community Health Center helps meet that gap in our community. It's one of the vital components of our school because their services help those students/community members of Cicero receive the treatment they need to help them feel better and succeed in school and in life. Especially right now, when the ongoing stress created by the pandemic, has changed our lives. Without the support of the SBHC our students and community will have one less resource available to them. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of our SBHC.

Date of Meeting or Public Hearing

Wednesday, September 9

Name

Rosalba Hernandez

Address

[Redacted Address]

Phone

[Redacted Phone]

Phone Type

[Redacted Phone Type]

Email

[Redacted Email]

Dear Cook County Health Board of Directors,

These are my first sentences to express and thank you for the services and treatment that I have received and am receiving by all the medical personnel of Cook County Health at Stroger Hospital. And I want to showcase the excellent service and medical attention received during the days that I was hospitalized during the birth of my first child; which would have been impossible at my country of origin due to due to low sustainability, training in the service provided and lack of technology by the health system; and even more difficult due to the delicate situation we are going through because of the pandemic. In short, without you who provide a great service to the community, especially to people like me, who being in a country other than the country of origin makes it almost unattainable for us to be able to access these kinds of opportunities and medical treatment that are important and indispensable in the life of any human being.

My story is full of surprises, ups and downs; since I traveled to the United States with the primary idea and goal of learning and mastering the English language at an advanced level, since at a competitive level my professional career demands it. Two months after working as a babysitter and attending my English classes, in view of feeling different and seeing irregularities in my period, I decide to take 2 pharmacy pregnancy tests which give me positive, within days my baby's father died due to a motorcycle accident leaving me devastated, with many questions and a stirring of many feelings since it left without having a sure and tacit answer that I was in a state, despite this difficult situation and full of fears I decided to continue with my pregnancy, at which time I also wanted to return to my country to be with my family but due to the COVID-19 pandemic and my contract with the family where I was working informed of my situation and supported by it, it made it impossible for me to travel to my country. When I was 7 months pregnant, for obvious reasons, the family where I was working and living decided to end my contract without having discussed it for a considerable time with me, leaving me adrift without having a safe place to be and with many questions regarding the delivery of my baby.

Seeing the high costs of taking a blood pregnancy test and not having financial resources, I looked on the internet for help to get a blood test done as soon as possible since I wanted to start with my due follow-up to bring the baby safe and sound to the world. Searching and reading about the organizations I found my guiding ray of light, the organization of Mujeres Latinas en Accion (Latin Women in Action), being they who have guided me, advised me and taken actions for me to obtain different benefits for my well-being, follow up on my pregnancy and childbirth, how to obtain Medicaid and also advised to have the best medical insurance that will suit my needs, also benefits such as WIC to bring a healthy, balanced nutrition, legal advice and also emotional support and moving forward, aspect that stands out a lot because any organization does not. They presented my situation to Ms. Patricia Hernández that without having much communication, she has been the sponsor, mentor and the one who has made possible all the benefits that I have received and am receiving, since she is the one who has been in charge of manage, seek resources for me, open doors and find solutions to each of my needs, for which I cannot find a word to describe how grateful I am, how very happy and blessed I feel to have contacted her through the organization of Muejeres Latinas en Accion, since she has been the person in conjunction with Mrs. Irasema as direct staff of the organization that has been helping me throughout this time from the moment I made the phone call to the organization.

At the end, thanks to God and the organization Mujeres Latinas en Acción who presented my case and put me in contact with Ms. Patricia Hernández, I have been able to obtain benefits from Cook County Health in a medical aspect for the total follow-up of my pregnancy, first class care for everything I might

need and coverage for all the costs of the delivery of my baby and the well-being of both my baby and mine.

For this reason, I thank you for having this kind of program for people like me, who, due to destiny, find ourselves in difficult situations, you being our valuable source to get ahead in the midst of so much difficulty with our health care that is the basis of everything. And I urge you to continue expanding, fighting and doing your best to take care of us, since you are our means and best way to continue striving day by day and thus create a better future and productive contribution to society.

Forever grateful,

Thalía Morán

"All the good that you give, returns to You multiplied in blessings"

Pediatric Inpatient Infusion Therapy Department

Mei Ming MAK [REDACTED]

Sun 9/6/2020 9:46 AM

To: Santana, Debbie <dsantana@cookcountyhhs.org>

Hello Ms. Santana and to all CCH Board members,

My daughter, Quinny, and I hope this letter finds you well. Unlike before, this year has been frightening and unpredictable to say the least which I'm sure you are all very much aware of with the pandemic, racial injustice, economic strife, and the current state of our country. Our family's stress, fears, and anxiousness were again heightened and validated when we were informed of the potential defunding/removal of the pediatric inpatient infusion therapy program.

We implore you to meaningfully reconsider what the removal of such medical treatment will mean for individuals like my daughter Quinny. She has been a patient at the Stroger Hospital of Cook County since late 2015 when she was diagnosed with lupus. And has since built a strong rapport, trust, and found her support system in the medical staff of the pediatric department. She has been receiving treatment and guidance from the pediatrics medical staff ever since (Allergy – Dr. Yu, Pediatric Nephrology – Dr. Jandenska, Dermatology – Dr. Reed, and Hematologist – Dr. Iqbal/ Dr. Dighe). These doctors know Quinny, and Quinny knows them. She trusts them.

In all honesty, after having lost my husband in January of 2018, it has been painfully difficult to navigate life as a single mother, and I cannot stress enough how hard it is to come by the type of medical treatment and services Quinny has been getting. We truly are appreciative of the medical staff for this, and we have put Quinny's life in their care. Our time receiving the infusion therapy treatment specifically has been critical in Quinny's mental and physical wellbeing since her lupus recently acted up.

If this treatment/program is no longer made accessible to my daughter, it would greatly impact our current day-to-day basis as we have established a routine and familiarity with her treatment and medication. We would have to determine where or if she would be able to get the same type of treatment elsewhere, and if we were able to find the medical support/services she currently is dependent on. This will cause a lot of

stress for the unknowns. We would be risking potential misdiagnosis, or being recommended the wrong type of treatment since we would need to rebuild the rapport and trust we currently have with her doctors with someone new. It would also greatly inconvenience us because we would have to build from the ground up again by making sure all medical records/history are successfully transferred to the right department/people. We would also have to learn how to navigate a new medical institution understanding how their system and staff operate.

We truly believe we are on the right path of treatment, and we hope we can continue to rely on the pediatrics department to help Quinny live life as intended. She will be starting her junior year at Jones College Prep High School and already has ambitions of studying mechanical engineering in college one day. Again, I cannot emphasize how important the medical treatment she is receiving is for her. As her mother, all I want is for her is to live a life where she is as happy and healthy as she possibly can be. Thank you for having read through my letter/plea. I implore for you all to reconsider what the consequences will be for families like ours. We have great faith in the treatment Quinny is currently receiving, and we have and will continue to put Quinny's life in the care of the pediatric department.

From a sincerely worried parent,

Mei Ming Mak

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]



Neighbor Scapes

3011 West 183rd Street, #257, Homewood, IL 60430

Tel/Fax: 1-877-214-6630 | www.neighborscapes.org

SERVICE FOR YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD

8/31/2019

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 Jay Readey, Founder and President of NeighborScapes, NFP, a youth and workforce development organization committed to strengthening neighborhoods.

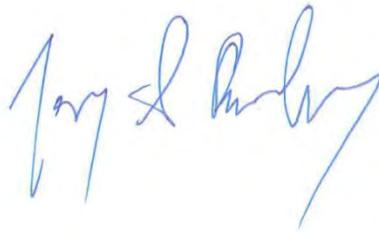
In connection with the Civic Leadership Corps program that I have run and my role as Co-Chair of the Southland Human Services Leadership Council, I collaborate with many organizations to advocate on behalf of disadvantaged populations including Cook County Health.

The Robbins 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. In addition to Primary Care, the Robbins Health Center and the other Cook County Health Clinics in the Southland provide critical Behavioral Health services to residents including counseling, assessment and addiction treatment. During the Covid-19 Crisis 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 President of NeighborScapes NFP, 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. In addition, the expansion of mental health and behavioral health programs, especially in this time of crisis, needs to be a consideration. Many thanks for all the things that Cook County Health does to better everyone's health.

Thank you for your consideration,

Jay Readey
President
NeighborScapes, NFP
Co-Chair, Southland Human Service

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jay Readey". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Jay" being more prominent than the last name "Readey".

Electronic Testimonial Submission

No Reply - Cook County Health <WP-Notifications@cookcountyhealth.org>

Mon 9/7/2020 4:33 PM

To: Santana, Debbie <dsantana@cookcountyhhs.org>

Type of Message

Message

Message

I am a doctor from HongKong. I had Family medicine training at Cook County Hospital in the early 80s. I started working and teaching on the South side of Chicago in 1985 and at the Near South Clinic in 1998. I went to Shanghai China in 2007 with my family. At that time I had so many Chinese patients that they started hiring other Chinese doctors to take care of them. I returned to the clinic in 2012 and now we have 6 Chinese doctors serving about 7% of our patients that are Chinese. Many of our Chinese patients walk to the clinic and many do not speak English. They prefer our care than other doctors in the area. I think closing the clinic totally will affect the care of these underserved minority patients and the hope of these minority Physicians severely. We would like to have the clinic open at least partly to let us serve them if at all possible without affecting the budget too much. My understanding is that the building is rented to the County by the City with a nominal rent for many years and I hope this will continue for the foreseeable future.

Date of Meeting or Public Hearing

September 9, 2010

Name

Philip Wong, MD, DABFM, FAAFP

Address

[Redacted Address]

Phone

[Redacted Phone]

Phone Type

[Redacted Phone Type]

Email

[Redacted Email]

To: Board of Directors of Cook County Health
From: Alliance to End Homelessness in Suburban Cook County
Contact: Katie Spoden, Advocacy and Development Coordinator (katie@suburbancook.org)
Re: Cook County Health Budget Public Hearing
Date: September 1, 2020

The Alliance to End Homelessness in Suburban Cook County is committed to preventing and ending homelessness in our community, a region that covers more than 570 square miles and 130 municipalities. On any given night, nearly 850 individuals are experiencing homelessness in suburban Cook County. This includes adults and children staying in emergency shelters and crisis housing, as well as those that are staying on the streets and places not meant for habitation. Of the individuals experiencing homelessness on a given night, 21% have been homeless for more than a year, 4% are Veterans, and 35% are households with children.

In 2019, the Alliance completed a 3-year strategic plan informed by a comprehensive needs assessment of suburban Cook County. The plan is driven by our local data and insight from diverse stakeholders. To more effectively prevent and end homelessness, our community needs more resources to divert individuals from homelessness, to provide permanent crisis housing for families, and to create more permanent housing options. **These resources were needed before the COVID-19 public health crisis and are even more dire in the wake of the pandemic.**

As we respond, recover, and rebuild after this public health crisis, it is both necessary and within our reach to come together as a community to create sustainable housing opportunities and end the experience of homelessness for our neighbors. We ask President Preckwinkle and the Department of Budget and Management Services to prioritize safe and stable housing for Cook County residents experiencing homelessness in the FY2021 Budget.

Fully fund Cook County Health. Our suburban Cook County homelessness system relies on our partnership with Cook County Health to reduce housing instability and improve health outcomes for medically vulnerable high utilizers of the healthcare system and homelessness system. CCH works in partnership with suburban homeless service providers to house high utilizers of the healthcare system in permanent supportive housing. Now, more than ever, it is clear that housing is healthcare. Fully funding Cook County Health programs that support people experiencing homelessness means that families have safe and stable housing. A home is the best protection against COVID-19. When everyone has a good, stable home and can shelter in place, it protects us all.

Invest in fixed-site shelters in suburban Cook County. Most shelters in suburban Cook County are seasonal, meaning they are not open in the summer. Shelter sites are largely managed by volunteers, are in rotating locations, and people sleep on pads on the floor - usually in a church basement. These shelters meet an important need but are not the ideal emergency response for anyone experiencing homelessness, especially families.

Our shelter system was fragile prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. For the health and safety of our shelter guests, volunteers, and staff, the suburban Cook County emergency shelter model had to be immediately modified and pivot to a hotel-based shelter model. Since March 20, we have sheltered

more than 1,120 individuals and provided more than 84,000 nights of shelter. The large majority of shelter guests have been placed in hotels and the remainder have been sheltering in modified 24/7 congregate shelters. Hotels were a necessary solution, but they are not a sustainable nor cost effective solution for permanent housing. We need the County to invest in small, year-round shelters for special populations that are safe and appropriate for COVID-19. Special populations include but are not limited to people who are chronically homeless, have a physical disability, have a mental illness, elderly, families, or people who are homeless in need of respite-medical care.

Invest in landlord risk mitigation funding. People experiencing homelessness encounter many barriers to finding affordable apartments (i.e. low credit score, past history of eviction, unpaid utility bills, etc.). A Landlord Risk Mitigation Fund provides an incentive for landlords to relax or eliminate some screening criteria that might restrict persons exiting homelessness from qualifying for tenancy. The Fund would provide potential landlords assurance that their exposure for damages and non-payment of rent can be reduced or eliminated. Counties across the nation have funded and implemented landlord risk mitigation funds and found that providing this assurance to landlords increases the availability of housing for households experiencing homelessness. Lake County began implementing a landlord risk mitigation fund at the beginning of 2020 and should be looked to as a model for how to implement a similar fund across Cook County.

Invest in flexible funding for homeless diversion. Experiencing homelessness is a traumatic experience with a high social and economic cost. However, trauma can be avoided and reduced using homeless diversion and rapid exit, a national best practice that provides the support and flexible financial assistance necessary to divert families from homelessness and rapidly exit families from shelter. Approximately half of all households that enter shelter in suburban Cook County were staying with family and friends prior to entering shelter. Many of these shelter stays could have been avoided or reduced with case management and flexible financial assistance that helps families rely on their own strengths and support network. **In response to COVID-19, hotel-based shelter capacity is limited and flexible homeless diversion funding is vital for keeping families in housed situations so they do not have to enter the emergency shelter system in the first place.**

September 8th, 2020

I'm Dr Ahmed Nadeem, an attending physician in the Provident Hospital Emergency Department and members of Doctors Council. I do not feel it is the right decision for the county to close the Emergency Room at Provident hospital. At this time, we are in the middle of a pandemic and the at the cusp of the start of a busy flu and asthma season. Closing our ER doors to the population will only endanger them - they will be forced to go to other ERs and other hospitals. Mercy hospital and Holy Cross hospitals are also closing its doors in the next couple of months. I feel that the surrounding hospitals and their resources will be overwhelmed. This will lead to longer wait times in the EDs and compromise the delivery of healthcare. If anything, we should be expanding our services to accommodate the patients who were going to Mercy and Holy Cross hospitals.

We take care of the underserved population including homeless and uninsured patients. In the middle of a pandemic and busy flu season, where are these patients going to go? Other hospitals are private and would have limitations to the care they can provide to such patients. At provident ER, we treat our patients irrespective of their ability to pay for healthcare and where they come from - We are unified in our goal to treat all patients.

I saw three COVID+ patients on my last shift in the ER. All of them thanked me for being there. One asked me about my PPE and N-95 respirator that i had on and how it stopped me from getting the virus. She went on to say that she and her whole family have always come to Provident hospital for their care and commented on how one of the docs saved her dads life in the ED years ago. She then stated that she always keeps our staff in her prayers. I thanked her.

I feel that we as healthcare professionals should be asking ourselves how we can do better for our population when healthcare centers around us are closing down in the middle of a pandemic. We have an ethical responsibility to serve the community as they depend on us. Please keep in mind that closing the ER or converting it to an urgent care would not serve that purpose. Please keep the doors to the Emergency Room at Provident hospital open.

Sincerely,
Ahmed Nadeem DO



Rev. Micheal H. Bell, Pastor

Mt. Olive MB Church

September 1, 2020

**Cook County Health
Board of Directors
1950 W. Polk Street
Chicago, Illinois 60612**

Re: Fiscal Year 2021 Cook County Health Budget

Dear Cook County Health Board of Directors:

Greetings in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ! My name is Rev. Micheal H. Bell, Pastor of the Mt. Olive MB Church located at 13619 Claire Blvd., in Robbins, Illinois. I have been the Pastor of the church since 2016.

In my role as Pastor, I collaborate with the community, as well as the surrounding community areas advocating on behalf of the spiritual, health, safety and well-being of the people in the community and Cook County Health, as I serve as a member of the Community Advisory Council at the Robbins Health Clinic.

The Robbins Health Center provides primary care to children and adults, and play a very intricate role within a population of poverty-stricken individuals. The need for this clinic is a necessity for this community, which is in crisis. This clinic not only provides health services, but also Behavioral Health treatments to include, counseling, assessment and addiction. Without this treatment, this community will cause a spiral increase in an epidemic of unstable and unhealthy people. During this COVID-19 crisis, this clinic, as well as surrounding area clinics have been a pillar to these communities and have been safe havens for most of these residents.

As Pastor of the Mt. Olive MB Church, I am in constant prayer that the funding and expansion of the South Suburban Ambulatory Clinics will continue.

Mtalivembchurch136@gmail.com

(708) 371-9696 Church

revmichealbell@gmail.com

(773) 842-6332 Cell

It has been proven with statistics that these services are truly needed and has been a continuous lifeline to these residents who already have a disparity in health resources especially during this pandemic.

Thank you for your cooperation and consideration in this matter and thank you to the Cook County Health Clinic for continuing to assist in making this community better for our residents.

Humbly Submitted,

Rev. Micheal H. Bell

**Rev. Micheal H. Bell
Pastor/Teacher- Mt. Olive MB Church**

13619-21 Claire Boulevard, Robbins, Illinois 60472

Mtalivembchurch136@gmail.com

(708) 371-9696 Church

revmichealbell@gmail.com

(773) 842-6332 Cell

Gabriela Espinosa



Good Morning

My daughter Camila Valencia has been a patient at Cook County Pediatrics since June 2015, when she was diagnosed with Leukemia. When she started her treatment, several people were telling me to move my daughter to a better hospital. Honestly, from other clinical experiences from different departments at cook county hospital the service and treatment were not so good. But speaking about the pediatrics department especially the oncology department it is the best place I have known and I would also recommended to others by saying that they are very efficient, they listening to you and your child needs. Also the waiting time is minimum. Since the first day that my daughter started treatment, I have received the highest quality of care. My experience with the service on the pediatrics unit has been amazing. The Pediatric Oncologists are extremely knowledgeable, and the nurses are so caring. So, I told my husband there is no way I will move my daughter to another hospital when she is receiving the best treatment here at cook county.

Having a hospital where you can have all the services in one place is very convenient. I do not know the reason why the pediatrics department wants to close, but it is very heartbreaking because there is a lot of low-income people like myself that depend on these services. If the pediatric department closes, many children like my daughter will lose the best care and treatments this hospital has to offer. I would be forced to go to other hospitals like Ann & Robert Lurie Children's Hospital, which is not accessible for people like myself that depend on public transportation. Can you imagine driving for more than one hour with a child that is receiving chemotherapy treatment? You probably don't, but I do. Please do not close the pediatrics department our children deserve to be treated there.

Sincerely,

Gabriela Espinoza
Concerned parent

September 9, 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 am Brenda Jackson and a patient at Cook County Health, more specifically at Provident Hospital. I am grateful to you and Cook County Health for providing great health services to me and others in my community.

I suffer from heart failure, and for the past year, I have been going to Provident Hospital to receive blood tests to ensure I am getting the correct dosage of medication. Before going to Provident, I was experiencing extreme shortness of breath, and I could not walk more than a few feet without stopping to catch my breath. It was awful being stuck inside my home.

Dr. Victor Pelaez, who is my cardiologist at Provident Hospital, has been very thorough with my care. Initially my medication was not working, and Dr. Pelaez knew how to monitor my dosage to ensure my symptoms were under control. I no longer experience shortness of breath. I'm able to go for walks in my neighborhood and walk around the grocery store. My treatment and services at the hospital are great and I feel that my life is improving as I am taking care of my health and becoming healthier.

I know that you will keep making positive changes to Provident Hospital in Chicago's south side and I look forward to the day when I can visit the new Provident facility, which I hope can still be built.

Many thanks for being there for us in the community.

Sincerely,

Brenda Jackson

██████████
██████████

Electronic Testimonial Submission

No Reply - Cook County Health <WP-Notifications@cookcountyhealth.org>

Tue 9/8/2020 10:30 AM

To: Santana, Debbie <dsantana@cookcountyhhs.org>

Type of Message

Message

Message

The Clinic based at Morton East has been a blessing to us. Many of our pregnant students exclusively use the clinic. The same goes for students who need social work or psychological services. Not only is it the only clinic in Cicero right now, it is also conveniently located inside Morton East. They do not need to find transportation to a clinic in a nearby town or in Chicago. Without this clinic, our students and the greater Cicero community will suffer.

Date of Meeting or Public Hearing

09/09/2020

Name

JoAnne Rzadzki

Address

[REDACTED]

Phone

[REDACTED]

Phone Type

[REDACTED]

Email

[REDACTED]

Electronic Testimonial Submission

No Reply - Cook County Health <WP-Notifications@cookcountyhealth.org>

Tue 9/8/2020 11:27 AM

To: Santana, Debbie <dsantana@cookcountyhhs.org>

Type of Message

Message

Message

To all,

I am a current School Counselor at Morton East and during my 12 years here I have taken countless students to the clinic. The clinic has served as an invaluable resource to our students and their families. The ease of access to high quality service is something that can not be replaced. It is my hope that you can see that the clinic at Morton East, is an integral part of not only the school but the surrounding community as well. Please keep the clinic open at Morton East High School.

Date of Meeting or Public Hearing

September 9, 2020

Name

Monica Melendez

Address

[Redacted Address]

Phone

[Redacted Phone]

Phone Type

[Redacted Phone Type]

Email

[Redacted Email]

testimony

Santana, Debbie <dsantana@cookcountyhhs.org>

Tue 9/8/2020 1:02 PM

To: Santana, Debbie <dsantana@cookcountyhhs.org>

To the Finance Committee

My name is Simon Piller. I am a physician in working in ACHN and Stroger. I am writing to express my concern over plans cut to pediatrics at CCH. For almost 25 years I have been working for Cook County. I have seen many ups and downs in our system. I remember the closure of Oak Forest Hospital and the near closure, a few years ago, of Pediatrics. As a founding member of Cook County's branch of the Doctors Council, I have been on the front lines of both delivering care to my patients, but also playing a role in Committee:how the medical staff is treated. I believe strongly in the mission of Cook County Health. I believe strongly that it must survive and ultimately thrive. This is not just for me personally (since I am a taxpayer and a senior citizen), but for all the people of Cook County including the patients I have been taking care of for many years.

I understand that our system yet again is being confronted by a fiscal crisis that, in my opinion, threatens its viability. In the past, taxpayers contributed more. I am not convinced that this cannot again be some source of assistance if it is approached properly. I am concerned that the decisions being made by upper management may have long term damaging effects on the survival of CCH. From what I can see, no attempt has been made to consult with front-line staff regarding ways to save money. I speak, for example, about the stated plan to cut inpatient pediatrics. Logically this does not make sense, since—how do you do pediatric trauma and PICU without an inpatient pediatrics area?

I am an internist and pediatrician. I take care of adults and kids, like Family Practice. Holistic family care both in clinic and availability in the hospital is a draw for patients. The care we give is compassionate and timely, regardless of the level of insurance or otherwise "ability to pay." The closure of Mount Sinai's pediatrics department makes it even more imperative that our program continue to exist. Our Adolescent Medicine Department and Child and Family Welfare Department are next to none. They are at risk in this plan. The ongoing need for their services in and out of the hospital is crucially important to many families. There are many doctors that have trained in these programs that have gone on to work in other health systems in the Chicago area with high regard. Further, the hematology/ oncology department is highly regarded for its care, for example, of sickle cell and malignancy, through late adolescence, unlike many programs of care.

I appeal to you to reject the plan to end inpatient pediatrics. Working with staff to determine both ways of enhancing financing and decreasing spending is the prudent, and most viable course ahead.

Sincerely,
Simon Piller, MD FACP, FAAP

|



BE COUNTED. COOK COUNTY CENSUS 2020

Be counted in the 2020 census. Visit www.cookcountyil.gov/census for more information.

BREMEN TOWNSHIP

16361 South Kedzie Parkway Markham, Illinois 60428 708-333-9530 / Fax: 708-333-1958

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John P. Flaherty, Highway Comm.
Kathryn Straniero, Trustee
John M. "Mike" Tatro, Trustee



John D. Lord, Clerk
Willie A. Jones, Assessor
Mary Catuara Trustee
Keith Gomillia, Trustee

September 4, 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,

I am Rondal Jones, the Office Manager at Bremen Township located in Markham, Illinois. Bremen Township serves the communities of Oak Forest and Midlothian and parts of Posen, Blue Island, Robbins, Homewood, Orland Park, Tinley Park, Crestwood, Hazel Crest, Markham, Country Club Hills and Markham. The Township Office Manager serves as the day-to-day manager of Township operations. In my role, I collaborate daily with a wide variety of organizations to assure that the residents of the township have access to necessary community services to maintain and improve their quality of life.

Bremen Township has been a long-time partner with Cook County Health, which has clinics in the South Suburban communities of Blue Island, Robbins and Ford Heights. At Bremen Township we are grateful for the care that Cook County Health provides residents on a daily basis. With the closure of Metro South Hospital in Blue Island and St. James Hospital in Chicago Heights, obtaining health care is now more difficult than ever.

Cook County Health's beautiful new, modern facility in Blue Island is a welcome addition to the community and is so much more accessible for our residents than the Oak Forest location. We trust the medical staff there to provide exceptional Primary and Specialty care for adults and are looking forward to the addition of Pediatric care there soon. The Robbins Health Center has also been an important healthcare provider to many Bremen Township residents.

Some of the neediest residents of Cook County reach out to us to ask where they can see a doctor or receive help for a nagging health problem and we trust that Cook County Health will provide the care that they need at their clinics in Blue Island, Robbins and Ford Heights. I urge you to continue to fully fund these clinics and the worthwhile services that they provide.

Thank you for your consideration,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rondal Jones". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being the most prominent.

Rondal Jones
Office Manager
Bremen Township

Cook County Health and Hospital Systems – FY21 Budget Briefing

September 9, 2020

My name is Kristen Nuyen, and I am the Health Systems Manager at EverThrive Illinois, where I staff the Illinois School-Based Health Alliance. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony. I urge you to preserve the integrity of services provided at the Morton East Adolescent Ambulatory Community Health Center.

EverThrive Illinois is a non-profit organization that has worked tirelessly for over 30 years to improve the health of Illinois children and families. We care deeply about preserving access to vital health services and believe that the Morton East school-based health center provides excellent care to students and the community.

The Morton East school-based health center has been part of the greater Cicero community for almost 25 years. The center is located in Morton East High School and provides primary care, behavioral health, nutrition, and prevention services to the student population and people living in the surrounding communities.

In a time when COVID-19 has exacerbated health disparities in Black and brown communities, we must protect the health centers and clinics that serve minority families and those earning low incomes. The potential sponsor changes and budget cuts jeopardize the Morton East school-based health center's ability to do so. According to the most recent National School-Based Health Center Census, over 90% of the individuals served in the clinic are Black or Hispanic, and about 90% of the students are eligible for free or reduced lunch.¹ School-based health centers are an evidence-based way to increase access to care in communities. They increase immunization rates, improve access to mental health services, and are vital to ensuring that kids have access to well-child visits.

In 2017, approximately 30-40% of the youth accessing care from the center sought support from mental health services, specifically. The Morton East school-based health center is a critical component to addressing the mental health needs of youth in the community, including depression, grief, anxiety, and suicidal ideations. Mental health resources are especially important because more than 1 in 6 adolescents in Illinois have seriously considered attempting suicide, while almost 1 in 10 have made an attempt.²

The Morton East school-based health center minimizes barriers to care through its first-floor location at the school and by serving not just students, but their families and neighbors, too. Beyond providing medical care, the Morton East school-based health center staff assists individuals in finding food, housing, and refer people to other vital social services. The team cares deeply about the people they serve and go above and beyond to make sure their patients are healthy. They regularly coordinate with the Morton East school resource team to ensure they are working together to best address student needs. After working hard to establish positive relationships with the school and community for nearly 25 years, it would be a huge loss for everyone if the CCHHS no longer sponsored the school-based health center.

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Executive Director

Chi Chi Okwu, MPH

EverThrive Illinois strongly supports CCHHS's continued sponsorship of the Morton East Adolescent Ambulatory Community Health Center. Through our experience providing technical assistance and training to the 66 school-based health centers across the state, we know that the Morton East school-based health center plays a vital role in the community. Cutting or altering services would have a detrimental effect on youth and their families.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

Sincerely,

Kristen Nuyen
Health Systems manager
EverThrive Illinois
knuyen@everthriveil.org

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 Cynethia Mireles and patient at Cook County Health, more specifically at the Fantis Health Center. I am grateful to you and Cook County Health for providing great health services to me and others in my community.

I was born in Cook County Hospital and have been a long time patient. When I was employed by Ada S. McKinney, I used my insurance at Stroger. I do not believe there is a better facility of care. I have also been to Oak Forest as well as Provident. I whole heartedly trust them with my health care. The services are essential and I pray no budget cuts are made to affect the services at the hospital and the clinics

I know that in these difficult time, 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,

Cynethia H. Mireles

██████████
████████████████████

Electronic Testimonial Submission

No Reply - Cook County Health <WP-Notifications@cookcountyhealth.org>

Tue 9/8/2020 1:42 PM

To: Santana, Debbie <dsantana@cookcountyhhs.org>

Type of Message

Message

Message

Hello, my name is Michelle Murray, LCSW. I have recently retired from Morton East as the School Social Worker for 34 years. It saddens me to learn that Cook County is looking to close Morton East School Based Clinic. I wish each of you board members could have spent a day with me to see how the School Based Clinic impacted ALL the students in the Morton District. The clinic has been vital to so many of our students and community through the years. The clinic has provided assistance to our students for a variety of needs. Students have received medical care from Asthma to Venereal Disease and everything in between. The Clinic has also worked hand in hand with our School Based Day Care Center.

The loss of the clinic would be devastating to the students and the community! The clinic has been an essential resource to the entire school by providing health care, prenatal care, mental health care and access to County Hospital. I fear that the loss of this clinic will impact the students and residents of Cicero especially since the Cicero Health center is closed on Cermak. Asking our students and families to travel by public transportation to North Riverside for care is very difficult for our students and their families. The loss of academic instruction time and the inability to afford public transportation are just a few of the issues that plague our community. Let us remind ourselves that we are in the middle of a pandemic. The Covid numbers for the Cicero/Berwyn community are very alarming! Many of the students do not have insurance or kids care, another barrier to medical care. The clinic is available for our students to receive the necessary medical paperwork to enroll in school. The attendance and drop out rate has improved significantly since the Clinic open its doors. So many of our students are desperately in need of mental health services. The Clinic has supported and open doors to access the Psychiatry Department and Specialist at Stroger. By utilizing the school clinic the students do not loose instruction time and can remain in school. Community members can walk over to school if they have any concerns or needs for their children. The Clinic serves ALL of District 201 students. Those numbers are close to 8000 adolescents! If the clinic was to close where would these students go? Our students infants?

When Cook County put out the first RFP for a school base clinic we were denied. The school and community would not take NO for an answer. We rallied the troops and we headed downtown to the Comissioner's Office to request a meeting. After a successful meeting with the Commissioner we were granted seed money to begin the process of opening our doors. It was a community effort that has helped us keep our doors open and remain open. I can fast forward to a number of years ago when there were budget cuts at the County and Morton was once again in jeopardy of closing. The student, community and leaders all worked together to bring over 100 students, parents and leaders to a Board meeting at Proviso High School. I believe at that time the Board was able to see how important the clinic was to our students and community! There was a time that McNeal Hospital was in partnership with the Morton Clinic. Unfortunately, the powers above decided that McNeal was no longer to be a partner of the clinic.

I beg of you all NOT to close the Clinic at Morton. It is so desperately needed. The clinic has played a vital role in my success as a School Social Worker for the past 20 plus years. I could not have effectively done my job without the clinic being in place. I was able to make referrals for much needed medical and mental health care. I have so many stories that I could share with you all but for the sake of time and your ability to read all of the messages coming your way.

Lastly, during a pandemic we should not be closing this Clinic. The city and county officials have discussed numbers and scientific data regarding Covid. The Cicero community has extremely high number of cases of Covid. We must also look at the increase in mental illness related to the Covid pandemic. So many of our students are in need of the

medical and social emotional issues!

The community, residents and students of Cicero deserve health care that is accessible, comprehensive and has a proven track record! I hope the current Board sees the importance of the Morton Clinic as those who have walked the halls before you!

I am confident if there was not a pandemic you would see the Morton Student's and Community come out in droves to support the clinic.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Please feel free to contact me at anytime. I could give you story after story as to how significant the clinic has been to Morton Student's and the Morton Community at large!

Michelle Murray, LCSW

Date of Meeting or Public Hearing

Septembe 9, 2020

Name

Michelle Murray

Address

[Redacted Address]

Phone

[Redacted Phone]

Phone Type

[Redacted Phone Type]

Email

[Redacted Email]

Septiembre 7, 2020

A quien corresponda:

Hola mi nombre es Araceli Vargas, soy madre de dos niñas una de 8 años y una de 6 meses y un niño de 6 años. En el año 2016 de noviembre mi hija mayor se enfermó, ella tenía 4 años. Ella llegó en la noche al hospital y cuando me dijeron que sería internada y subir a piso no sabía que estaba pasando solo entendía que le iban a hacer una transfusión de sangre, me dijeron que la doctora en la mañana hablaría con nosotros, y así fue a las 8 de la mañana la doctora estaba ahí fue doctora Ibqal.

Mi experiencia en el hospital fue excelente. Las doctoras y las enfermeras que estuvieron atendiendo a mi hija durante el tratamiento fueron muy amables y trataron a mi hija muy bien y que estuviera tranquila. Las doctoras y enfermeras siempre estuvieron al pendiente de mi hija y muy preparadas. Y por esa razón decidimos dejar a nuestra hija en este hospital.

Y también decidimos quedarnos en este hospital porque las doctoras nos brindaron la confianza y ellas están preparadas, y por que esta cerca de donde vivimos.

Y si cierran el departamento de pediatría se perdería los servicios como las excelentes doctoras.

Yo recomendaría este hospital para que tengan su tratamiento familiares y amigos. Yo siempre les he dicho que me gusta mucho como atienden a mi hija cada vez que ella va a sus citas. Mi hija se siente muy cómoda con sus doctoras y enfermeras, mi hija siempre dice que son sus amigas.

Sinceramente,
Araceli Vargas

To whom it may concern:

Hello, my name is Araceli Vargas, I am the mother of two girls, one 8 years old and one 6 months old and a 6 year old boy. In November 2016, my eldest daughter got sick, she was 4 years old. She arrived at the hospital at night and when they told me that she would be admitted and go upstairs, I did not know what was happening, I only understood that they were going to give her a blood transfusion. They told me that the doctor would talk to us in the morning, and that is what happened. At 8 in the morning the doctor was there, it was Dr. Iqbal.

My experience in the hospital was excellent. The doctors and nurses who were taking care of my daughter during the treatment were very kind and treated my daughter very well and that she was calm. The doctors and nurses were always aware of my daughter and very prepared. And for that reason we decided to leave our daughter in this hospital.

And we also decided to stay in this hospital because the doctors gave us confidence and they are prepared, and because it is close to where we live.

And if they close the pediatric department, our community will lose a lot of their services like the excellent doctors.

I would recommend this hospital for family and friends to be treated. I've always told them that I really like how they treat my daughter every time she goes to her appointments. My daughter feels very comfortable with her doctors and nurses, and daughter always says they are her friends.

Sincerely,

Araceli Vargas

Urban Development Corporation

"Creating Communities"

550 East 50th Place
Chicago, IL 60615-2444

773-268-8500

urbandevelopmentcorporation.net



September 2, 2020

To The Board of Directors of Cook County Health and Hospital Systems:

In April of 1974, the Board of Trustees of Provident Hospital and the head of Cook County Hospital Governing Commission held a press conference at Chicago's Drake Hotel to announce plans for a new hospital. The new Provident consisted of a \$50 million structure and a new relationship as part of Cook County Health and Hospital Systems.

I served as president of Provident Hospital's Board of Trustees from 1972 until 1987 when our Board voted to sever its relationship with the hospital. We formed a non-profit for the purpose of community development in the Washington Park neighborhood. Shortly, there after Urban Development Corporation (UDC) developed a 57 – unit residential building across the street from the new Provident Hospital of Cook County.

Our residents are part of an underserved population, they are low income seniors and the disabled. Many of them depend on the hospital for their medical care and pharmacy services. Some of our residents eat their meals at the hospital cafeteria. Provident is a vital part of our resident's life.

Provident medical providers have come to our building to educate our residents about health issues that directly affect them. It goes without saying that having that opportunity to learn more about their health conditions adds to the quality of their lives. Provident is a vital part of our resident's life.

Provident is a community partner. Before the pandemic hit, members of my staff and Provident's community liaison were meeting to develop a health screening program for one of community activities. Provident is a vital part of the community at large.

Although, I no longer serve as a board member, members of my staff continue to maintain my legacy by serving on the Provident's Community Advisory Board.

As a former president of the Board of Trustees of Provident Hospital, I know that Provident Hospital is a vital institution on the south side of Chicago, therefore I humbly request that it remain fully funded.

Sincerely,

Alvin J. Robinson,

President of Urban Development Corporation

Electronic Testimonial Submission

No Reply - Cook County Health <WP-Notifications@cookcountyhealth.org>

Tue 9/8/2020 2:45 PM

To: Santana, Debbie <dsantana@cookcountyhhs.org>

Type of Message

Message

Message

Members of the Cook County Board,

I am a related health provider who has worked with the Cicero community for over forty years as a Clinical and School Psychologist. Please consider maintaining financial support for the ambulatory clinic located at the J. Sterling Morton High Schools located at Morton East in Cicero. This clinic has served thousands of members of the surrounding community whose needs far exceed those in large parts of the county. The clinic has been proactive in numerous preventive practices and is a vital part of the greater Cicero community.

Date of Meeting or Public Hearing

September 9, 2020

Name

Dr. Rosario Pesce

Address

[Redacted Address]

Phone

[Redacted Phone]

Phone Type

[Redacted Phone Type]

Email

[Redacted Email]

9/7/2020

To Whom It May Concern,

As a proud retired Veteran and skilled handyman. I found myself in 2016 waking up every night with severe leg pain. The nightly pain soon became a daily pain that no matter the time of day created a poor quality of life for me and kept me from doing the things I wanted to do. I went to my normal provider where many retired Veterans might find themselves, but I didn't appreciate the lack of concern towards the level or seriousness of pain I was having. Because I do have a choice, I went to another hospital closer to home, but I still wasn't happy with what I was hearing. I didn't have trust. That is when my partner decided that she would take me to Cook County Health and I agreed because we both understood that we knew the County would ultimately find out what the source of my pain was. And they did.

After seeing a great team of women providers who explained and educated us both on the tests I needed and the diagnosis I had (peripheral artery disease) I was confident about the surgery and treatment that I had to have. They treated me like family. I didn't feel like they were "telling" me what was going to happen, I felt like we all made an informed decision together. Also the post-operative treatment was extensive to ensure that the surgery went well and circulation in my legs was flowing correctly. My Partner and I both questioned why we didn't we just go to the County first!

I made a great recovery and in 2018 when I needed to have a similar procedure on my other leg—we didn't hesitate and went directly to Cook County and their team. My legs are pretty much back to normal like before the pain started in 2016 and I am convinced that Cook County Health saved me from losing my legs.

I have a choice and I will *always* choose Cook County Health.

Sincerely,

Merrion "Butch" Bolton

Patient 2016 & 2018

Leg Bypass Vascular Surgery

Electronic Testimonial Submission

No Reply - Cook County Health <WP-Notifications@cookcountyhealth.org>

Tue 9/8/2020 3:03 PM

To: Santana, Debbie <dsantana@cookcountyhhs.org>

Type of Message

Message

Message

Good afternoon,

I am writing in support of keeping the clinic at one of our local high schools open. The School Based Health Clinic that is housed at Morton East is an essential resource as it not only serves our students but also our community. Cicero is predominantly Latinx and is currently one of the top 5 communities in Cook County hardest hit by COVID. Moreover, our schools are deciding to open after remote learning. Our families and children need this resource and it is up to us to express the great damage that will be caused, consciously, to our families. If funding is an issue, I know where there is a will, there is a way. Please help us keep serving out community. I grew up in Cicero and went to our school. I currently work in our area and can attest to the support this clinic has in our community.

Please feel free to reach out for further questions or comments.

Thank you.

Date of Meeting or Public Hearing

SEP 9 AT 6 PM

Name

Michelle Ramirez

Address

[Redacted Address]

Phone

[Redacted Phone]

Phone Type

[Redacted Phone Type]

Email

[Redacted Email]

Jenny Calero



September 3, 2020

RE: Letter in support of the Cook County Health CareLink Program

To whom it may concern,

The purpose of this letter is to convey my support for the ongoing funding of the Cook County Health CareLink Program.

It is with great appreciation that I can say that the CareLink program has greatly helped my family by providing coverage for my father. CareLink has made this possible at a time when preventative care is crucial and is helping us address early symptoms before any chronic health conditions could develop.

As a former employer in the health care industry, I witnessed how older adult patients would discontinue their medical care to avoid facing financial hardship from stacked medical bills. Unfortunately, the consequences to that meant that patients later returned with more advanced health problems and frequent emergency room visits that could have otherwise been prevented. I highlight this example to show that many low-income patients face the challenge of seeking healthcare with the worry of how to finance this expense or resort to no medical attention at all.

CareLink has given many patients, including my father, the opportunity to seek the medical attention they need to manage their current health concerns and to have a good quality of life. The ongoing funding of this program would greatly impact many low-income Cook County residents and will continue to benefit the overall health care system.

If you have any questions, please reach out to me at jcaler2@gmail.com.

Sincerely,

Jenny Calero

Electronic Testimonial Submission

No Reply - Cook County Health <WP-Notifications@cookcountyhealth.org>

Tue 9/8/2020 3:22 PM

To: Santana, Debbie <dsantana@cookcountyhhs.org>

Type of Message

Message

Message

To whom it may concern,

I am writing this message to voice my fear of loosing Morton East School Based Clinic. I feel this clinic is a vital resource for the students and families in the community. I worked with pregnant and parenting teens at Morton East, Morton West, Morton Alternative School, Morton Freshman Center and Unity . This Clinic is where almost all of the students went for services. Many would go for prenatal services, infant care and to get tested for STD's. I believe closing this clinic will leave many teens and community families with no other form of accessible care. I ask that you please reconsider.

Date of Meeting or Public Hearing

9/9/2020

Name

Blanca Gomez

Address

[Redacted Address]

Phone

[Redacted Phone]

Phone Type

[Redacted Phone Type]

Email

[Redacted Email]

September 8, 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 am Liz Figueroa- Serrano and I work as an Advocate and Community Partners Coordinator at Sarah's Inn. I also serve on the North Riverside Health Center Advisory Council.

Sarah's Inn was founded in 1980 by a group of concerned women in River Forest and Oak Park, to address a lack of services for victims of domestic violence and their families. The agency has since grown to become one of the largest and most comprehensive domestic violence agencies serving Chicago and 22 surrounding West Cook County suburban communities. We serve women from all backgrounds, but many of our clients are immigrants and those without resources.

Cook County Health has been extremely important to us as an organization as we can always count on you to provide the health and medical services needed by the women and their children that we serve. Cook County health has never turned their backs on us, unlike what we have experienced from other health systems and hospitals, but instead, your staff has gone above and beyond to ensure the safety and wellbeing of our clients.

For my colleagues and me, it is sad that we cannot count on the kindness of the hospitals in our own community. Recently, a local hospital turned away one of our ladies as she was uninsured. Our client, an African immigrant became homeless, as she was the victim of domestic violence. She became sick and it seems that she may have cancer. Between Cook County Health and the Sinai Health System, we have been able to get medical care for our client. We do not know what will happen, but we are hopeful.

From our end and the community organizations that serve the West Suburbs of Cook County, we urge you to keep advocating for policies, which forbid hospitals and health systems for turning away patients who reside in their service areas. It is shameful that unhealthy people have to travel long distances to receive care, when they could receive it in their own backyard.

I also want to thank you for the new North Riverside Health Center, which replaced small, cramped and outdated Cicero Health Center. This new state-of-the-art facility is a one-stop shop to receive and treat all the healthcare needs of our clients. The location of this clinic also helps as it is in the middle of our service area. I am also excited to serve in the advisory council and to make sure that residents and other know about the facility and utilize its services.

Finally, I am also grateful that you have a conscientious person such as Patricia Hernandez as your Director of CareLink. She makes the process of linking clients to healthcare easy and she is always available to help those who don't have access or means. In addition, she always encourages us and other community organizations to be sure to send the message that Cook County Health needs to be able to treat the whole family, especially those with health insurance, so that you can also treat those without insurance. Thank you to Patty and thank you to your staff and support.

Many thanks for being there for us in the community. Muchísimas gracias por la ayuda a nuestras mujeres y familias!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Liz Figueroa-Serrano". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Liz Figueroa-Serrano
Advocate and Community Partners Coordinator
Sarah's Inn
lizf@sarahsinn.org
(708) 386-3305 Ext. 1104
309 Harrison Street
Oak Park IL, 60304
Crisis Line (708) 386-4225

Electronic Testimonial Submission

No Reply - Cook County Health <WP-Notifications@cookcountyhealth.org>

Tue 9/8/2020 3:27 PM

To: Santana, Debbie <dsantana@cookcountyhhs.org>

Type of Message

Message

Message

I must say that I was so disappointed to hear that there was discussion of closing the Morton East High School health center. This clinic provides a vital service to our community. It is in large part due to the clinic and it's employees hard work in our community that we have seen a decrease in teen pregnancy. Many families depend on this clinic for access to health care, mental health services and other supports. Now is not the time to pull away from Cicero! My community has incredibly high COVID positivity rates, a growing unemployment, many residents are undocumented and struggle accessing basic health care services. Please, please keep this clinic open and in our high school!

Date of Meeting or Public Hearing

Sept 9th at 6pm

Name

Jaclyn Wallen

Address

[Redacted Address]

Phone

[Redacted Phone]

Phone Type

[Redacted Phone Type]

Email

[Redacted Email]

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 Scott Mason and a patient at Cook County Health. I am grateful to you and Cook County Health for providing exceptional Primary and Specialty Care to me during this difficult time in my life.

Two years ago I lost my job and with it, my employer sponsored health insurance. Without my insurance, I didn't know where to turn for treatment of my serious medical problems but was referred to Cook County Health. I use my Medicaid insurance plan to see Doctors at the former Oak Forest Health Center and Stroger Hospital. I have seen my Primary Care Physician, Cardiologist, Nephrologist and Physical Therapist there and consider myself very fortunate to have the County Health System as my safety net. I look forward to visiting the new Blue Island Health Center very soon.

During the current worldwide Pandemic, I have had several tele-health visits with my Doctors and it was extremely helpful to be able to meet in this way. In the past, it was also incredibly convenient to use the Cook County Health Livery service that allowed me to bring a family member to help navigate with me at Stroger Hospital. I am quite pleased with all of the staff that I have encountered during my visits to Cook County Health. From the incredible Doctors to the support staff, including those working in the laboratory, the Pharmacy and as receptionists, they have all been caring and professional and helped me to feel confident in the care that I was receiving.

Many thanks for being there for me and those in need in the community.

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 through Cook County Health.

Sincerely,

Scott Mason


Electronic Testimonial Submission

No Reply - Cook County Health <WP-Notifications@cookcountyhealth.org>

Tue 9/8/2020 3:52 PM

To: Santana, Debbie <dsantana@cookcountyhhs.org>

Type of Message

Message

Message

As an educator and resident of the Town of Cicero, I support the Cook County Health Clinic located at Morton East High School. I am writing to urge you to keep the Cook County Health Clinic located at Morton East High School open.

The Cook County Health Clinic located at Morton East High School is an essential part of keeping the Cicero Community Healthy. Eliminating the clinic will only add another hurdle for the residents of Cicero to overcome. Our community, in particular, has been hit hard by COVID. I cannot begin to imagine how worse it could have been without the Cook County Health Clinic located at Morton East High School. The clinic provides essential services to students and families who otherwise may not have access to healthcare—eliminating the clinic would damage our communities' capacity to provided a healthy environment.

I understand the uncertain times we are in, but we bust protect our vulnerable students from the potential public health crisis that can occur. Closing the clinic will lead to a reduction in services available to Cicero residents. It will place an even more significant burden on the Town of Cicero's health clinic, and it will have a far-reaching impact on the community.

Health centers like the Cook County Health Clinic located at Morton East High School are the only place that many young people feel safe to turn to when faced with illness; Cook County Health Clinic located at Morton East High School provides quality care and the trusting relationship that this clinic has fostered has helped so many adolescents from Cicero, Berwyn, Stickney, Forestview, and Lyons. We are counting on you to do everything in your power to prevent the closure of the Cook County Health Clinic located at Morton East High School, so Cook County can continue to provide health care students in our community depend on.

Date of Meeting or Public Hearing

September 9, 2020

Name

Anthony Grazzini

Address

[Redacted Address]

Phone

[Redacted Phone]

Phone Type

[Redacted Phone Type]

Email

[Redacted Email]

September 7, 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,

There has never been a more critical time for addressing the health and housing needs of those experiencing homeless. I'm writing in my capacity as the Executive Director of Housing Forward, a non-for-profit organization whose mission is to transition people from a housing crisis to housing stability.

Housing Forward provides comprehensive programming for those who are homeless or at-risk of homelessness in suburban Cook County. We serve men, women and families through our prevention, crisis-response and stabilization services. Last year, we served 2,018 persons to address basic needs of food and shelter, assisted with financial assistance to mitigate an eviction, provided wrap-around services, and re-housed and stabilized over 400 household in with either rental assistance or permanent supportive housing across west and southwest Cook County.

Housing Forward's partnership with Cook County Health began in 2016 to address the intersection of housing and health. Why? Poor health is a major cause of homelessness. Without stable housing, sickness and chronic conditions worsen. Untreated symptoms mean a preventable disease can easily lead to a shorter life-expectancy for someone without a home. According to the National Healthcare Council for the Homeless "People who are homeless die on average 12 years sooner than the general U.S. population."

According to the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), individuals living in emergency shelters are more than twice as likely as the general population to have a disabling condition. At Housing Forward, 42% of our homeless clients have a physical disability, a chronic health condition, and/or a behavioral health disorder, conditions that are often co-occurring and exacerbated by the lack of access to proper care and resources. Because our clients do not have regular access to primary care, they tend to bounce from the emergency room to inpatient admission to readmission or institutionalization and back again – a costly, chaotic, and ineffective method of health care delivery that all but guarantees poor health outcomes.

Full recovery from a hospital stay requires extended access to a dedicated bed, adequate restroom facilities, nutritious food and clean water, and secure storage and/or refrigeration for medication. In other words, a stable housing situation. But when an individual who is homeless is discharged from a

[Type text]

[Type text]

[Type text]

hospital, they often have no choice but to turn to an emergency shelter or a place not meant for human habitation – a formula for readmission.

Pick a list of infections or ailments – diabetes, hypertension, COPD, kidney failure, liver disease, cancer – and all are impacted by homelessness. Insulin needs refrigeration, diets need regulation, treatment requires transportation, prescriptions need filling, and broken bones need healing. Couple any of these with a physical limitation or untreated mental illness and you quickly understand why health and housing are inextricably linked. Being homeless means addressing one's health comes at the expense of not having a home.

But there is hope. Hospitals like Cook County Health are listening, learning and understanding what it will take to fully address the needs of their patients. The Cook County Health system is looking beyond its institutional walls and creating a new paradigm of solutions for those without a home. Patients with stable housing are more likely to make it to their primary care and specialist appointments, more likely to stay on top of medications and keep their chronic conditions in check.

Cook County Health began partnering with Housing Forward in 2016, its first foray in addressing the housing needs of their patients who were also chronically homeless. Their partnership created 33 new units of Permanent Supportive Housing in suburban Cook County. A year later, we partnered again to house 31 more patients who were homeless. Today, Cook County Health is assisting Housing Forward with COVID testing as we provide temporary accommodations in hotels for those who have no other housing option.

Recognizing the value of stable housing and wanting to make a broader impact, last May, Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle announced that Cook County Health was committing \$1 million towards a Chicago and Cook County Flexible Housing Pool with the goal to rapidly house vulnerable homeless individuals and connecting them with housing and supportive services. Because Cook County Health treats 83% of the single adult homeless population in Chicago, they realize it's more effective to help fund a month of housing than to keep treating homeless patients in a revolving door of care.

For CCH, investing in housing means an investment in health. It is CCH's strategic investments, their commitment to health equity, their leadership and innovation that makes them a valued partner in Housing Forward's work to address homelessness at the intersection of health and housing.

Sincerely,



Lynda Schueler
Executive Director
Housing Forward

Electronic Testimonial Submission

No Reply - Cook County Health <WP-Notifications@cookcountyhealth.org>

Tue 9/8/2020 4:08 PM

To: Santana, Debbie <dsantana@cookcountyhhs.org>

Type of Message

Message

Message

To whom it may concern,

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 Morton East Adolescent Clinic. We are excited that we are able to refer people to a modern facility where they are treated with respect. Also, I enjoy collaborating with the social worker, who works with us on different Cicero collaboratives, on programs to better our youth.

On behalf of Corazón Community Services, I kindly ask you not to move the Morton East Adolescent Clinic. Thank you for taking care of my community. I look forward to working with your staff at the Morton East Adolescent Clinic.

Sincerely,

Vanessa Melgoza

Director of Health Programs
CorazónCommunity Services



Date of Meeting or Public Hearing

09/08/2020

Name

Vanessa Melgoza



9/7/2020

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Pam Vanderwall, and I work as a nurse case manager at SSPADS. My primary job is to bridge the gap between our guests affected by homelessness and vital medical providers/organizations. South Suburban PADS (SSPADS) is an interfaith organization working to prevent and end homelessness in south suburban Cook County. Over the past 29 years, the organization has provided emergency shelter and meals to enable over 18,000 people to survive homelessness. South Suburban PADS ultimately seeks to provide pathways home, and currently helps over 500 people to preserve or access affordable rental homes every year.

In March of 2020, SSPADS mobilized guests of our congregate shelters to the Baymont Inn in Calumet City. The goals of the move included reducing risk of COVID 19 spread to the high risk population and to continue meeting essential needs of guests. SSPADS guests at the Baymont Inn were provided PPE, COVID 19 infection control education, cleaning supplies, meals, case management, and supportive services as needed. Surveillance testing was vital as many of the SSPADS guests suffered from comorbid conditions and fear of asymptomatic spread was concerning. However, safe transportation of guests to testing centers and mobilization of that effort proved problematic. In May of 2020, CCH/CCDPH and SSPADS began a collaboration to test all SSPADS guests on site utilizing the CCH mobile testing unit. Through that effort 52 SSPADS guests including 12 children and 5 staff were tested for COVID on 7/8/20 by the CCH mobile unit. The CCH/CCDPH task force consisted of a highly competent and compassionate team, and the testing event ran smoothly thanks to their well- organized and efficient planning. The CCH/CCPDH staff included registration staff, medical residents, nurses, experts in women's health, infectious disease, pediatrics, lab personnel, and essential mobile unit operators. The bed side manner displayed by all of the CCH/CCDPH staff relaxed any fears of COVID testing for our guests. More importantly, the compassionate care displayed formed a trusting relationship with medical providers, where distrust of medical providers existed for some guests prior to testing. Dr. Ashlesha Patel personally called our guests with their results and answered their questions following the event. All guests praised the CCH/ CCHPD team, and our staff greatly appreciated all their planning, hard work, and evident commitment to their mission statement. It was a true pleasure working with the CCH/CCDPH team, and SSPADS looks forward to planning more testing and vital services of their team on a regular basis.

Sincerely,
Pam Vanderwall RN Case Manager SSPADS
414 West Lincoln Highway
Chicago Heights, IL 60411
708-332-7700 ext 141

Greetings,

My name is Andrea Lara, and I am a 2020 Morton East High school graduate. I'm writing on behalf of the Morton East SBHC, a clinic that offers much more than Band-Aids and packs of ice. 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 now a priority as more and more students need help during these stressful times. I benefited from the SBHC at my school. On August 16, 2019, my brother attempted suicide. He stabbed the left side of his chest three times, leading him to a perforated lung and accumulation of air in his heart. He only had a fifteen percent chance of surviving. I didn't have anyone to talk to about my situation. I went to school with two to three hours of sleep. I lost my appetite and motivation. My brother recovered, but I didn't. My parents separated, and my father blamed me for it. I decided to get help at the SBHC. The pandemic struck us, quarantine came around, and I couldn't escape from my depression, anxiety, and trauma. With the help of Ms. Rivera's thirty-minute therapy sessions, I was able to control my depression and anxiety, eat, sleep well.

Many students need this help, and what's better than having that help in the school they attend. With the guidance 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 life and school. We can't take away the only income of help to the students. I propose that our community and schools should receive the resources they need. Thank you.

Electronic Testimonial Submission

No Reply - Cook County Health <WP-Notifications@cookcountyhealth.org>

Tue 9/8/2020 5:06 PM

To: Santana, Debbie <dsantana@cookcountyhhs.org>

Type of Message

Message

Message

I was aware of the Cook County Clinic located inside of J. Sterling Morton East High School; however, I was unaware of the various services it provides. During my daughter's senior year of high school, she experienced psychological problems, and her school counselor and one of the school's social workers referred her to the clinic; I was able to meet with the staff, in particular with a nurse, who referred us to a Child Psychologist through Cook County - it is very difficult to find a child psychologist and to receive services, without having to wait for a long time. However, the nurse was able to assist us and help my daughter to receive the necessary help and to be able to graduate on time, continuing on to college to be successful in her endeavors. Thank you.

Date of Meeting or Public Hearing

Wednesday, September 9, 2020

Name

Pauline Vrettos

Address

[Redacted Address]

Phone

[Redacted Phone]

Phone Type

[Redacted Phone Type]

Email

[Redacted Email]

My name is Mabel M. Solis and I am a student at J. Sterling Morton East High school. Here at Morton East many students rely on our school-based health center (SBHC), and although it sounds like our typical nurses office, the SBHC provides much more. The Morton East Adolescent Ambulatory Community Health Center provides health care services to not only students but to our community here in Cicero. In addition to health care, they provide mental health care services too! Mental health care is just as important as more and more students begin to struggle with issues like depression, anxiety, or grief. These struggles could lead to failing grades, a bad attendance record, and if left untreated, it could lead to much worse. With the help of the Staff at Morton East SBHC, students and the community can receive treatment that would overall progress their health.

I myself struggle with depression and anxiety. When I was just six years old I lost my father who meant the absolute world to me. I distinctly remember the phone call, the screaming, the crying and the many many questions that are still left unanswered. I went years not knowing how to handle my emotions and by the time I was in sixth grade I was suicidal and was self-harming. Not only that, in 2015 I lost my grandmother at the age of 13. She was my best friend and to have her taken from me broke me more than ever. Being diagnosed with Covid-19 didn't necessarily help my mental health either. Now, in current events, I had heard and seen people being shot at, people stealing from neighbors, and someone who was speared in the shoulder. These are just some of the things that I have to think about on a daily basis. Not because I want to but because I'm still learning how to overcome these thoughts and emotions. I've been through more than one can handle but thanks to the Morton East SBHC, I've been able to learn how to properly manage these emotions and how to cope with the pain.

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.

Hi, my name is Amaya Vasquez. I am from Chicago, Illinois. The purpose of this conversation is for you to see how important the clinic in Morton East Highschool is to some people. This is important to me because if I lose my therapist I don't know what will happen. I don't trust or go to anyone else. The first time I had suicidal thoughts I was in fourth grade. my school social worker would not do anything so my mom took me to Diana. I went to her for about two years on and off and she has helped me with so much. I started going to her again after another attempt. I have been going to her ever since and it hasn't been easy but she has helped. My point is that if you close the clinic I won't have a therapist and I can't tell you what I may or may not do. If you do close the clinic though, you are leaving children without easy access to mental health care. Also if you do close the clinic you will be apart of the reason why the suicide rates in young adults and children are going up. So please do us a favor and don't close the clinic.

My name is Diana Rivera, and I am the psychiatric social worker at Cook County Health Morton East Adolescent Health Center. I am glad to have this opportunity to share my testimony regarding why I feel that Morton East Adolescent Health Center/CCH should continue to provide vital services to Cicero and the surrounding towns.

I have worked with CCH since 2017. I started at the Cicero Health Center, and after two years, decided to go back to my passion, which is working with young people and their families. The ability to work in a setting where young people can receive mental health counseling, and have direct access to their PCP and school, is a very unique and integrated approach to supporting and healing.

Since March 2020, our patient's lives have turned upside down. COVID-19 has caused trauma reactions in our patients. Many young people lost supportive adults and recreational and social activities. Additionally, many families are struggling to meet their basic needs, including access to food, stable employment, ability to pay rent, feeling safe amid urban violence, managing stress related to the high levels of COVID-19 infection rates in people of color, and isolation. My calls do not start with the usual "how do you feel?" I need to ask, "Is there food in the home? Are you employed? Is anyone sick?" before I can assess their emotional status. Over the past several months, I've served as a link to any vital resource that the family needs.

As the research on Adverse Childhood Experience (ACEs) indicates, children that experience high levels of trauma before the age of 18 can experience long-term negative outcomes in adulthood, including physical health, mental health, and substance use issues, and other risky behaviors. Mental health and medical health access in a school setting is a preventive source of health care. I serve as a warm handoff when a young person scores high in the PHQ9 (depression scale), GAD -7 (anxiety scale), C-SSRS (suicide severity rating scale). I provide treatment for depression, anxiety, self-harm, grief and loss, complex trauma, and suicidal tendencies. When these challenges are addressed and treated, this is a preventive action to avoid the long term effects of ACEs.

CCH Morton East Adolescent Health Center has been embedded in the Cicero Community for almost 25 years. Our clinic is apart of the Cicero Community Collaborative, Morton East Resources team, and the Cicero Youth task force. We have worked hard to build trust and are committed to our CCH Community and CCH patients. We have supported the District 201 families for many years, and we need to continue providing the support and treatment that is necessary during this unprecedented time. Please consider this testimony while deciding the Cook County Health Fiscal 2021 budget.

Statement for hearing

Marti Smith <msmith@nationalnursesunited.org>

Tue 9/8/2020 5:38 PM

To: Santana, Debbie <dsantana@cookcountyhhs.org>

To Whom It May Concern:

As you are aware, Cook County Health and Hospital System is recently undergoing nursing reductions. Part of these reductions might include elimination of my position as a Registered Nurse from the North Riverside Health Clinic (formerly Cicero).

I believe that before cuts are made, the contributions of the nursing staff to ACHN should be reviewed. Nurses are on the frontline more than ever right now. They consistently reassure patients and families, most of whom are from underserved areas, that no matter what, doctors and nurses are still there for them during the pandemic. We cannot let these patients and families down now. Nurses are there to support the providers and to guide the flow of the clinic in a safe and secure manner. The progression of the clinics will be altered if nursing cuts are made.

Logistically, if nursing cuts are made, most clinics will be short staffed – most of which are already struggling to maintain a full workforce. During this COVID-19 pandemic, all nurses are essential – and by cutting back on these positions, you are only increasing the unemployment rate and contributing to our suffering economy.

I believe that I have unique skills that will sustain North Riverside Clinic/Cook County Health and Hospital System during this pandemic and beyond.

Thank you for taking the time to read and consider my request. If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to me.

Lydia Weber, RN
Cook County Health.

Marti Smith, RN
Midwest Director
NNOC/NNU
312-607-8619

Statement for hearing

Marti Smith <msmith@nationalnursesunited.org>

Tue 9/8/2020 5:39 PM

To: Santana, Debbie <dsantana@cookcountyhhs.org>

From Minister Jennifer Harris Goldsmith, RN

Google Dictionary : “**health disparity**” refers to a higher burden of illness, injury, disability, or mortality experienced by one group relative to another. A “**health care disparity**” typically refers to differences between groups in **health** insurance coverage, access to and use of care, and quality of care.

Decisions are being made to close yet again Hospitals on the Southside of Chicago being Provident Hospital and Mercy Hospital. This will lead to communities not having access to healthcare within their catchment areas. Being born and raised on the Southside of Chicago I can't help but think about how this will impact others in need of healthcare. It also is disconcerting to see this the closing of Hospitals here but nowhere else. Many services are no longer available on the Southside of Chicago and the closing of these two Hospitals will make it even worse especially during a Pandemic. Please reconsider keeping these Hospitals open which will allow the population of Black and Brown People to continue to have access to healthcare.

Thank You,

Minister Jennifer Harris Goldsmith R.N.

9-5-20

Marti Smith, RN
Midwest Director
NNOC/NUU
312-607-8619

Statement for hearing

Marti Smith <msmith@nationalnursesunited.org>

Tue 9/8/2020 5:40 PM

To: Santana, Debbie <dsantana@cookcountyhhs.org>

September 3, 2020

Dear Cook County Health Board,

It is distressing to hear of the elimination of services planned for the South areas of Cook County through the closure of the Woodlawn and Near South clinics and the reduction of services at Provident Hospital. The health disparities that exist within these communities has long been apparent by the Cook County Health System so I will not repeat the statistics and numbers which you should be more than aware. The challenges that influence these health disparities such as lower income level, poor housing, and lack of transportation are unresolved within these communities, and are not going to significantly improve within the near future. The reduction of convenient healthcare facilities in recent years such as Michael Reese Hospital and now Mercy Hospital, will negatively impact these communities which, in my opinion, will become increasingly evident in the coming years. I believe our goal as Cook County Health is to improve the public's health, not sabotage it by cutting needed services for a community in need. We are in the midst of a pandemic. These communities have been greatly impacted by COVID. This is a time when we, as a health system, are needed the most. Yet, diligent hard-working employees who put their lives on the line daily to provide CCH services have lost or at risk of losing their livelihood and the community residents who are in desperate need of services are going to face more hardship to obtain them. Reconsider the changes planned to services for the South areas of Cook County. Speak to the community. Speak to the employees. Let them tell you firsthand how these changes will hurt them.

Thank you,

Ms. Fatimah Shaheed, RN



Marti Smith, RN
Midwest Director
NNOC/NUU
312-607-8619

Statement for hearing

Marti Smith <msmith@nationalnursesunited.org>

Tue 9/8/2020 5:41 PM

To: Santana, Debbie <dsantana@cookcountyhhs.org>

To whom in my concern,

Right now we are in the middle of a Pandemic. This is the wrong time to be closing any health care facility. When people become lax that is when chaos seems to happen. My name is NAHSIS Davis I am a nurse That works for Provident hospital. My family lives on the South side of Chicago and they utilise Provident hospital, But more so I have 3 small children that go to provident hospital whenever needed. This is the wrong time to be closing a healthcare facilities such as province that actually Provides services to an underserved community. Setting down provident will take a toll on the community and all of the health care workers that provides services to patients in this community. I really don't understand how you can choose this hospital as one that you would like to close in the mean time the whole entire community will suffer . This hospital needs to stay open Continue to provide services to the underserved community especially at a time like this. Please understand this hospital is needed , you closing this hospital will be like you turning your back on thousands of people And let me ask you are you willing to take that risk.

Nahsis Davis, RN
Provident Hospital

Marti Smith, RN
Midwest Director
NNOC/NUU
312-607-8619

Statement for hearing

Marti Smith <msmith@nationalnursesunited.org>

Tue 9/8/2020 5:42 PM

To: Santana, Debbie <dsantana@cookcountyhs.org>

Akilah Muhammad



Dear CCH Board,

I urge you not to proceed with your plans to close the Woodlawn and Near South clinics. Doing so will be detrimental to the health of both communities served by these clinics.

The Woodlawn area has a population of approximately 22,500 of which 85 percent is African American. 40 percent of these residents have an income of less than \$20,000 a year. The Woodlawn clinic is one of the only medical access clinics in the neighborhood. The University of Chicago Hospital has clinics within the area but does not accept the HMO insurance provided to the majority of the population living in the Woodlawn area.

The Near South clinic services an area with a population of approximately 24,000 of which 7300 people are living below the poverty line. The people of this community is also serviced by Mercy Hospital that will be closing soon and leaving the area without access to health care. Only approximately 5,000 people within this community own and travel by car which also places limitations on their access to healthcare.

May I suggest a campaign to increase the volume of patients to these clinics as an alternative to their closures. The lives of the communities these clinics serve depend on the care that is provided by these clinics. Many of the people living within these communities are not utilizing the services of these clinics due to lack of knowledge and lack of information available to assist them. I ask that these clinic closures are reconsidered so that we do not make it harder to access healthcare in the communities that desperately need them.

Marti Smith, RN
Midwest Director
NNOC/NNU
312-607-8619

Statement for hearing

Marti Smith <msmith@nationalnursesunited.org>

Tue 9/8/2020 5:42 PM

To: Santana, Debbie <dsantana@cookcountyhhs.org>

My name is Consuelo Vargas and I am a RN at Stroger Hospital Emergency Department. While there is never a good time to close a hospital/clinic this is definitely the worst time. As you might not be aware many of our patients are in a fight for their lives and livelihoods. At a time when there is so much uncertainty the people of Cook County should not have to wonder if they will get the medical care they need. It is a daily occurrence where we have patients seeking care at CCHHS after being diverted from other facilities because they are uninsured or under insured. Closing clinics and Provident Emergency Services will only lead to more people crowding the Emergency Department at Stroger where it is already difficult to maintain social distancing. Wait times will increase because patients have lost their clinics and Provident ER. This is also not a smart way to save money when this will only increase the need for overtime. As of now the County is more than 50% over its budgeted overtime numbers for fiscal year 2020. We the RNs of CCHHS ask that you reconsider this decision that will in the end harm patients.

Consuelo Vargas, RN
Stroger Hospital ER
Chief Steward, NNOC

Marti Smith, RN
Midwest Director
NNOC/NUU
312-607-8619

Statement for hearing

Marti Smith <msmith@nationalnursesunited.org>

Tue 9/8/2020 5:43 PM

To: Santana, Debbie <dsantana@cookcountyhhs.org>

I have been a nurse for over twenty-five years and I am aware of what hardships our south side of Cook County residents will be made to endure. If there are closures of ACHN clinics and any loss of clinic experienced clinic nurses, the people who need medical services the most, will most likely receive delayed appointments and treatment. The pandemic of COVID-19 is still a major issue in the lives of our south side patients.

Sincerely,

Beatriz Chagoya, RN



Marti Smith, RN
Midwest Director
NNOC/NUU
312-607-8619

Electronic Testimonial Submission

No Reply - Cook County Health <WP-Notifications@cookcountyhealth.org>

Wed 9/9/2020 6:43 AM

To: Santana, Debbie <dsantana@cookcountyhhs.org>

Type of Message

Message

Message

Dear Board Members,

I have heard the news that the Morton School Clinic funding might be pulled and I would like to ask that you reconsider. For 18 years, I worked at Morton East High School and witnessed first hand how the clinic helped and saved lives just by existing and being available. Due to the number of students enrolled at our district, school counselors can't provide one on one counseling services to the students and we often referred them to get help in the school clinic. Students battling with mental, emotional and physical disorders were welcomed, helped and got the desperate assistance needed.

Entire families were able to learn to communicate better and learned how to resolve issues without violence thanks to the family counseling program.

Our pregnant teens got the prenatal care that otherwise may not have been received. Later their babies are also seen through the clinic and students don't have to miss an entire day of school because the clinic is located in the school.

Students received necessary shots, physicals and many services.

I would like to ask that you please reconsider and continue to help our Cicero/Berwyn community by keeping the clinic open.

Date of Meeting or Public Hearing

9/9/2020

Name

Erika Medina

Address

[Redacted Address]

Phone

[Redacted Phone]

Phone Type

[Redacted Phone Type]

Email

[Redacted Email]

Electronic Testimonial Submission

No Reply - Cook County Health <WP-Notifications@cookcountyhealth.org>

Wed 9/9/2020 12:11 AM

To: Santana, Debbie <dsantana@cookcountyhhs.org>

Type of Message

Message

Message

John H. Stroger Hospital of Cook County is a staple safety net hospital in Chicago. For decades, it has served and provided quality care to the uninsured, the underrepresented, those who face healthcare disparities.

For families and parents who are already facing multiple barriers, especially during the current pandemic, ensuring that their children have access to quality care is one less worry. This is exactly what Cook County Hospital provides. They know they can depend on bringing their children to Cook County Hospital, irrespective of any cultural background or financial circumstance. This is no small feat.

As a current Pediatric Resident, serving this population was one of the main reasons I wanted to work at Cook County Hospital. I cannot imagine how difficult it would be for these patients to receive proper care otherwise, especially during a pandemic. It would be devastating to discontinue Inpatient Pediatric services. Moreover, it would surely have a ripple effect throughout all Pediatric specialties.

I am imploring that the Inpatient Pediatric Wards stay open so we can continue serving our deeply loved pediatric patients and their families.

Thank you.

Date of Meeting or Public Hearing

9/9/20

Name

Oluwatobi Ariyo

Address

[Redacted Address]

Phone

[Redacted Phone]

Phone Type

[Redacted Phone Type]

Email

[Redacted Email]

Cook County Health

LETITIA HILLSMAN [REDACTED]

Tue 9/8/2020 7:38 PM

To: Santana, Debbie <dsantana@cookcountyhhs.org>

President, members of the board and to the Cook County community:

Please keep the Inpatient Pediatrics Unit at Cook County Health in Chicago, IL open. I am a member of the house staff working at Cook County Health System. We provide care to sick children who are living in poverty and uninsured. I humbly make this request for the faculty, residents and nursing staff as we face budget cuts related to healthcare policy. Our leadership (Drs. Akintorin, Altiveros, Davis, Arcia, Severin, Jacobs), have well over 40 years of experience (Neonatology, Newborn Nursery, Endocrinology, Hospital Medicine, Infectious Disease and Critical Care) in the care of sick children and continue to serve the most needy and vulnerable in the midst of urban violence, protests and COVID 19.

Kind regards,

Letitia E. Hillsman, MD

Near South hearing statement

Li, Jingpin <jingpin.li@cookcountyhhs.org>

Wed 9/9/2020 7:48 AM

To: Santana, Debbie <dsantana@cookcountyhhs.org>

Hello,

My name is Jing, a current 3rd year resident at Near South Health Center, and I'd like to submit a statement for the board of directors hearing tonight regarding my clinic. Dr. Wong forwarded your original email to me. Thank you for opportunity to participate!

Closing the Near South clinic would be a huge loss for Cook County. One of the things that drew me to do my residency training here was the commitment to serving all the underserved populations of Chicago, including the Chinese population, which is unique of the many programs I applied to in the Midwest. Though comparatively small in the general patient population of County, Chinese patients are the major minority group at Near South who speak – often exclusively – a non-English language, to the point that the lack of Chinese-speaking support staff has been keenly felt. Many of our patients live around Chinatown – many walk to clinic to come see us - and it is unlikely that they would be able to follow us to Provident, particularly given the COVID pandemic making the fear of buses, ridesharing and even going into a hospital at an all-time high. With Mercy closing as well, we leave these patients with few options for comprehensive, high quality care.

I don't know how to tell my patients that our system doesn't have the budget to continue to care for them anymore. I urge the Board to work towards a compromise that would continue to allow Near South to maintain a presence in this community.

~Jingpin Li



BE COUNTED. 

Be counted in the 2020 census. Visit www.cookcountyil.gov/census for more information.

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

I am mother of a Child diagnosed with HbSS few months after birth. The Specialty Pediatric Clinic; Hematology to be precise has been a safe haven for my child. It has be over 15 years now that my son has been receiving treatment at this clinic.

We live miles away but this is the only clinic that has been able to give my son the adequate health care he needs. We have been to other facilities but they do not have the expertise of the pediatrics hematologist we have here at Stroger. On two different occasions I almost lost my child because of lack of knowledge of the pediatricians at those hospitals. We were eventually transferred to Stroger.

Having Doctors that understand sickle treatment here at Stroger gets me peace of mind. And also as a low income earner it has been of great help.

Sincerely,

Christiana Thomas

To whom it may concern,

My name is David Ayodiran. I am writing to express how much of a disservice it would be if the Stroger Hospital Pediatrics Clinic were to be shutdown. I have been coming to the pediatrics clinic at Stroger Hospital since the age of 5, I am now currently 20. Over these years I have been to multiple other clinics and none have given me the same care and proper diagnoses for my sickle cell anemia and additional conditions. Other clinics have given me improper care which has put me in critical state at times. If the pediatrics clinic were to be shut down, I would truly not have anywhere better to go. The decision to shut down the pediatrics clinic could prove to be an awful resolution for Stroger Hospital and maybe even fatal for some of the patients currently seeking treatment by the clinic.

Date: 09/08/2020

To Whom it may concern:

My name is Tadeusz Kawalko and my son, Mateusz Kawalko , is just one out of many patients that attend this Pediatric Clinic. Ever since my son had been diagnosed as a Type 1 Diabetic, this was the clinic we got referred to and stayed at ever since. As soon as you walk in the staff automatically have smiles on their faces and give a very warm greeting. When I come in with my son not only do I feel welcomed but I also know that we are in great hands. This pediatric clinic has been around for some time and it has helped not only my son but as well as the whole entire community. These staff members are very hard-working, compassionate and respectful; they make sure that their patients receive the very best treatments. My first time in the clinic , I wasn't sure what to expect and what kind of news I may receive. However, leaving the building the staff gave me so much hope and shed light on the difficult path my son and family were going through. They were so committed in helping my son and I, it was beyond amazing and fantastic. These people are all very determined to treat every single patient that come through those doors. My family and I are more than thankful to have such ambitious people taking care of my son and the whole community

Please feel free to contact me if you require more information.

Tadeusz Kawalko





September 8, 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,

Corporation for Supportive Housing (CSH) is a proud collaborator of Cook County Health and CountyCare in the effort to increase stable, permanent, and supportive housing options for a complex and mobile group of patients within the County's health system. As the nation's only Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI) and Intermediary organization focused on drive systems change toward equitable investments in housing, health, and justice, we take pride in the investments of the County to shift the response to people who are homeless and touching health and justice systems.

We write in specific support of the investments of the County Budget into the Chicago Cook County Flexible Housing Pool (FHP) that expands access to supportive housing, street outreach, and care coordination for high need residents. This ground breaking work has leveraged nearly \$14 million in total investments from the City of Chicago, private health systems, and pending investments from other health plans and private philanthropy. The FHP supports a racial equity framework by ensuring that representation of those housed aligns with the population needs, and that people with Lived Experience are a part of the decision-making process.

A quote from a Lived Experience leader and FHP Tenant, Keisha, brings it home:

"Last year this time I was struggling, I was wondering, man, how am I gonna get through this. I knew I wasn't ready to die, but I knew life wasn't good the way it was. And just like that, things change."

Since March of 2019, 107 individuals with complex medical, co-occurring behavioral health, and long-term homelessness have moved into permanent housing with services, with 96% remained stably housed. Due to the investments from Cook County, this model will expand to families, and is able to respond to people in both Chicago and Suburban Cook County.

Thank you for all that Cook County Health does to help those in need, and for investing in social determinants of health.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Betsy Benito".

Betsy Benito
Director, Illinois Program
CSH
Via email: betsy.benito@csh.org

Electronic Testimonial Submission

No Reply - Cook County Health <WP-Notifications@cookcountyhealth.org>

Wed 9/9/2020 8:35 AM

To: Santana, Debbie <dsantana@cookcountyhhs.org>

Type of Message

Message

Message

As a Cicero resident and former student at Morton East High School, I am extremely shocked that there will be a discussion held by the Cook County Health Board to close the clinic at Morton East. The clinic has been a vital service to our students and community throughout the years. Our families will be greatly affected if this clinic were to close. We need the clinic now more than ever considering were in a pandemic.

Date of Meeting or Public Hearing

September 9, 2020 at 6:00pm

Name

Jennifer Jimenez

Address

[Redacted Address]

Phone

[Redacted Phone]

Phone Type

[Redacted Phone Type]

Email

[Redacted Email]

September 8, 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,

As the retired Director of Community Relations at Provident Hospital of Cook County, I am writing to provide my support of Cook County Health's plans to *Reimagine Provident Hospital*, which consists of constructing a new facility and enhancing programs and services for the South side.

I understand the current fiscal/budgetary challenges caused by COVID-19 and the effect of the pandemic on institutions and governments nationwide. I know this has led institutions such as Cook County Health to make tough choices based on data to achieve efficiencies in operations and programs. Having worked with local social service agencies, a community advisory board and particularly seniors within Provident's catchment area for 25 years, these groups have expressed to me several times that Provident remain open even as an ambulatory site to serve the residents of that area. They have no desire to travel outside of their community. I also know that the same day surgery case load at Provident increases annually, which will need the support of some observation and in-patient beds.

Provident Hospital is a cornerstone in the African American community in Chicago. It is important to keep the tradition of caring for patients on the South side going. Enhancing programs and services that address the chronic illnesses seen in the Emergency Department such as diabetes and hypertension are important. In order for Provident Hospital to be viable, retailoring the focus of operations is something that should be done to ensure future success. Cook County Health is showing its dedication to the community through its commitment to build a new facility and provide new services such as dialysis, diagnostics, and a Lifestyle center within the Provident campus. The proposed changes to the emergency room and intensive care units are aligned with the low census and it is more fiscally responsible to staff the beds correctly as well as repurpose adding staffing to the ambulatory component.

I am delighted at the merger of Near South and Woodlawn Clinics into Sengstacke/Provident. The County did not own those building and they were in need of great repair for years with poor parking. This merger will provide additional clinical staff to increase access and admissions staff to streamline the registration process of the Sengstacke Clinic. In addition, these employees do not have to be trained and can immediately roll up their sleeves.

I thank you so much for caring about our community.

Sincerely,

Deirdre Clayton


My name is Carol Best and I am an Assistant Principal at Morton East High School. At my school, a lot of students rely on our school-based health center (SBHC), because it offers way beyond what a nurse's office is able to do. 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.

I have worked as a social worker for 8 years and I am in my 5th year as an Assistant Principal at Morton East. I supervise student services and deal with the most complex cases in the building. Several times I have collaborated with the Clinic to help ensure safety for our students during incredibly difficult times including; Rape, onset of Schizophrenia, pregnancy decisions, diagnosis of Lupus, STI testing, homelessness, neglect, etc. In addition I have collaborated with the clinic to ensure sport physicals for first generation students can participate in IHSA sports that have helped lead them to college, school immunization compliance, etc. The clinic is especially valuable during a pandemic. Cicero has been hit very hard with positive cases and unemployment, to take a valuable trusted resource away from a venerable community at this time seems criminal.

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.



September 8, 2020

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

RE: Fiscal Year 2021 Cook County Health Budget

To the Cook County Health Board of Directors,

I am the President and Chief Executive Officer of All Chicago Making Homelessness History, a not-for-profit whose mission is to unite our community and resources to provide solutions that ensure and sustain the stability of a home. All Chicago proudly serves as the lead entity in collaboration with Chicago's Continuum of Care (CoC), in supporting a comprehensive plan to alleviate Chicago's endemic homelessness problem. We work to prevent and end homelessness through four signature approaches:

- Emergency financial assistance
- Community partnerships
- Data analytics
- Training and research

At All Chicago, we believe that Housing and Health are intertwined. Both vital life issues disproportionately affect our communities of color, and we must continue to address them as priority issues in parallel. We know if our community can provide someone access to a home, where they can live safely, it will have a positive impact on their general health. We believe in the CoC concept in which all our stakeholders are aligned in the Plan to End Homelessness. A key indicator of our collaborative efforts demonstrates that homelessness in Chicago has reduced by 22% since 2015.

To such end, we value the work of Cook County Health and the Housing initiatives that you are promoting. We also value the medical care that you provide to homeless individuals and your linkages to addressing issues of mental health which affect many in this community.

I know that it is difficult to reduce funding or eliminate programs, but I urge you to keep working, modifying yourself and ensuring that the programs that you plan and implement are

done well and supported by data. Cook County Health will continue to be an integral partner and have a positive impact in the community.

Many thanks to you, your doctors, and staff for the work that Cook County Health provides to improve the health of our neighbors and provide resources to end homelessness to those who need a home. I wish you excellent health, courage, and strength as we move forward together.

Sincerely,



Carolyn K. Ross
President & CEO

September 9, 2020

Dear Members of the Cook County Board Finance Committee,

My name is Jahangir Tai and I am one of the ER physicians at Provident Hospital and members of Doctors Council. Like others, I am disappointed to hear about the plans to downgrade the emergency room to an urgent care center. As we know, this year has been unlike any other due to the pandemic. To make such drastic changes that will affect the community for years to come during this critical time does not seem like the right solution.

A few months ago, I along with 10 members of the ER staff contracted COVID-19 while on the job, which we may now be laid off from. We all recovered and quickly came back to work because we knew this community needed the Provident ER up and running, as statistics have shown how disproportionately our patient population has been affected by COVID-19 compared to others. Projections show this pandemic is only going to escalate in the coming months when combined with flu season. With nearby Mercy Hospital also closing, we would be abandoning our underserved patients in the middle of a crisis, essentially cutting off their access to healthcare. Rather than looking at Mercy's closure as an opportunity to bring thousands of new patients into the County system by increasing services at Provident, we are doing the exact opposite. We need to hold ourselves accountable and be there for the communities we serve when they need it the most.

As far as our current population goes, we see over 30,000 walk-in patients during a typical year. For many of these patients, Provident is the only hospital that they and their families have gone to for generations. Regardless of whether the sign outside says "Emergency" or "Urgent Care," sick patients will still show up at our doors and some of them will be matters of life or death. In the last month alone, I have seen the following cases:

- a cardiac arrest patient who I pulled from her daughter's car and resuscitated for two hours
- a full-term pregnant teenager with no prenatal care in active labor
- an unresponsive heroin overdose patient found in the parking lot
- an angioedema patient requiring intubation in the middle of the night
- a violent psychotic patient who pushed me and threatened to kill me and my staff, requiring chemical sedation and physical restraints

How will an urgent care handle these situations? These are just a few examples in my recent memory and I am sure my fellow colleagues can give you several of their own.

Our patients make a choice to come to Provident; they are not brought by ambulance. Countless times patients have said they waited several hours in another waiting room only to leave and come to the Provident ER where they were seen in a timely manner. Patients also say they were turned away from other hospitals for lack of insurance, and we often hear the heartfelt phrase, "I have nowhere else to go."

I have always been proud to be able to serve this community. Downgrading the Provident ER would be an injustice to our patients. Despite some limitations, we in the Provident ER do everything we can to ensure patients get the appropriate care they deserve.

In closing, as an essential worker, I felt the need to express just how essential the Provident ER is to its community. I hope you will take what I have said into consideration. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,
Jahangir Tai, D.O.

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
Dr. Nirmla Verma
Dr. Jon Tottleben
Dr. Alvi Saad
Dr. Michelle Sergel
Dr. Padma Kudaravalli
Dr. Ramez Haddadin
Dr. Brenda Taylor
Dr. Nicole Baltrushes Hughes
Dr. Ameena Khan
Dr. Elma Augustine
Dr. Leszek Balla
Dr. Maia Feigon
Dr. Lillian Holloway
Dr. Jordan Moskoff
Dr. Vishwanath Agrawal
Dr. Carmen Adams
Dr. Rajesh Dudani
Dr. Paul N. Severin
Dr. Jacek Ubaka
 Dr. Nuzath Hussain
Dr. Kimberly Dixon
Dr. Sadhana Dharmapuri
Dr. Mary Arlandson
Dr. Harold Fuentes
Dr. Aisha Wright
Dr. Dhara P. Amin
Dr. Robert Feldman
Dr. Alessandra Tachauer
Dr. Sheila Badri
Dr. Hector Vydas
Dr. Yaveen Santhiraj
Dr. Abed Rahman
Dr. John Case
Dr. Carmella Barrett-Perry
Dr. Ruhi Shariff
Dr. Erik Ligas
Dr. Ioana Haratau

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

- Dr. Michael Giovingo
- 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

Electronic Testimonial Submission

No Reply - Cook County Health <WP-Notifications@cookcountyhealth.org>

Wed 9/9/2020 9:47 AM

To: Santana, Debbie <dsantana@cookcountyhhs.org>

Type of Message

Message

Message

Hello, My name is Patricia Menges and I am one of the school counselors at Morton East High School. I cannot express in words the impact that the School Based Clinic has had on our students and staff at East! Since my very first day as a counselor at EAST I have relied on the clinic as one of the most vital resources available to our students. The clinic is there for day to day maladies, as well as each and every crisis that we may encounter. Our students and staff count on the clinic for medical, mental health, physicals, vaccines, pre-natal care, well baby care, and so much more. We are all aware that Cicero is a community plagued by poverty and all of the issues that revolve around poverty. COVID has struck this community with a vengeance and now is certainly NOT the time to be taking away a VITAL resource such as the School Based Clinic from these people. We have so many families that are facing insurmountable problems and to remove a source of stability such as the clinic will have tremendous trickle down effects for them. Please DO NOT close the clinic that is housed at Morton East High School. This clinic provides services for our students and community that are not available to many of them. Our students and families need more resources, not less resources. During these trying times, it would be a travesty to close this clinic.

Date of Meeting or Public Hearing

September 9, 2020

Name

Patricia Menges

Address

[Redacted Address]

Phone

[Redacted Phone]

Phone Type

[Redacted Phone Type]

Email

[Redacted Email]

September 9, 2020

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

RE: Testimony: FY 2021 Cook County Health Budget

AFSCME Council 31 represents some 1,250 employees of the Cook County health system who work in a wide variety of roles in nearly all healthcare programs and locations, including patient navigators, epidemiologists, administrative assistants, financial counselors and many other technical, professional and clerical positions.

AFSCME strongly opposes the layoffs, facility closures and cuts to healthcare services contained in Cook County Health's FY 2021 budget proposal. This budget plan is neither sensible nor responsible. The proposed downgrading of the Provident Emergency Department to an urgent care center and the closure of both the Near South and Woodlawn clinics will have an extremely disruptive impact, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. It will make healthcare less accessible on the City's South Side and disproportionately affect communities of color.

In the current public health crisis, ready access to healthcare is more critical than ever. Forcing residents of South Side neighborhoods to travel farther to access such care at a time when many have lost their jobs and cannot afford the additional transportation costs is particularly objectionable.

We firmly oppose any plans to lay off County healthcare workers. Especially given the unparalleled public health and economic crisis facing this country, all efforts should be made to avoid any job loss at this time. It is particularly disturbing that the County would plan to lay off healthcare employees when so many have been working for months now caring for COVID patients in extremely high risk environments—putting their own health and that of their families in jeopardy. Are pink slips the way they are to be rewarded for the dedication they have shown?

AFSCME also wants to voice our concern over the lack of communication and engagement with employees and their unions regarding the Health System restructuring and closures being proposed in this budget.

AFSCME does want to take this opportunity to highlight Cook County Health's decision to hire full-time contact tracers rather than contracting out this vital service to a private entity. Contact tracers are a key component of the County's public health infrastructure to help reduce the spread of COVID-19 in our community.

The budget reductions being considered by the Cook County Health System's Board are the wrong way to approach the vital role of the health system. Cook County Health System should be expanding health care services instead of cutting services to underserved communities. AFSCME stands ready to help support efforts to identify needed resources for the health system during these unparalleled times.

Martha Merrill
Director of Research and Employee Benefits
AFSCME Council 31

Mi nombre es Mavis de la Rosa y soy sobreviviente de Cancer de seno por soy madre de 2 hijos de 15 y 12 de yo recibo tratamiento en el hospital del Condado, yo no califico para ningun tipo de Seguro medico y tampoco tengo dinero suficiente para pagar los tratamientos que necesito, yo les pido que por favor continuen dandole recursos para apoyar a personas como yo que no podemos pagar y necesitamos Cuidado medico.

Toda mi familia mis hijos y mi esposo estamos muy agradecidos por toda esta ayuda que tengo por parte del hospital del condado de Cook

Vivo en Pilsen y mi esposo trabaja por mas de 10 años en un restaurante pero aun asi no calificamos para Seguro medico. Muchas Gracias Mavis de la Rosa

My name is Mavis de la Rosa and I am a survivor of breast cancer. I am the mother of two children ages 15 and 12. I receive treatment t the County's hospital and do not qualify for any type of medical insurance and I do not have sufficient income to pay for the treatments needed. I ask that you continue proving resources to help those people like me who cannot pay, but need medical services.

My whole family, my children and my husband are extremely grateful for all this help provided by the hospital of Cook County.

I live in Pilsen and my husband has worked for more than 10 years in a restaurant, but even so, we still do not qualify for medical insurance.

Many thanks,

Mavis de la Rosa

Mi nombre es Eugenia Silverio vivo en el vecindario de la Villita, Tengo 59 años. Soy sobreviviente de cáncer de seno. En octubre de 2018 solo fui a una cita de rutina, y es en esa cita que me di cuenta, gracias a que por medio de mi mamografía, se detectó un tumor a muy buen tiempo y un mes más ya me estaban operando el tumor. Yo acudi al Hospital Cook, por que no tengo seguro médico, y aplique para el.

Card-Link, Gracias a Dios ahí me han apoyado desde mi cirugía, tratamiento de Quimioterapia y radiación. El 2019 me la pasé en mis tratamientos.

Ahora estoy asistiendo a mis citas con mis doctores (Oncólogo, cirujana y radióloga) cada 3 meses, para asegurarse que siga bien, también tomo Tamoxifen, un medicamento que ayuda a que el cáncer no regrese, lo debo tomar por 5 años.

Sería muy malo que quitaran los fondos de ayuda para éstos programas por que tengo 3 hijos, no tendría dinero para pagar por mis citas y medicamentos y como yo, he conocido muchas compañeras por la misma situación.

My name is Eugenia Silverio and I live in the Little Village community. I am 55 years old. I am a survivor of breast cancer. In October 2018, I went to a routine appointment, and thanks to that appointment, through a mammography, a tumor was detected in a timely basis and a month later, they were operating it at Cook Hospital. Since I do not have medical insurance, I applied for CareLink. Thanks to God, I have received much help and support since my surgery, chemotherapy treatments and radiation. In 2019, I spent the whole year in treatments.

Now, I am going to the appointments with my doctors (Oncology, Surgery, and Radiology) every three months to ensure that I am going well. Also, I take Tamoxifen, a medicine that ensures that cancer does not come back. I have to take it for 5 years.

It would be very bad if the funds that help establish these programs are taken away as I have three children and I would not have money to pay for my appointments and medicines and like me, I know many women in my same situation.

Buenos Días mi nombre es Maribel Cordero
yo vivo en Pilsen en Chicago yo tengo 2 hijos y
tengo 53 años, yo siempre trabaje mucho desde
que llegue a Chicago hace mas de 20 años y
un dia me enferme y ya no pude trabajar porque
me diagnosticaron Cancer de seno y despues muchas
enfermedades, gracias a Dios y al hospital del condado
yo he podido recibir tratamiento y seguir con mis hijos
que son ciudadanos Americanos y que ahora los 2
estudian y trabajan, pero desafortunadamente ninguno
de ellos ni mi esposo ganan lo suficiente para
pagar un Seguro medico para mi. Yo necesito la
ayuda del hospital stroger para seguir viva y mi familia
me necesita. Yo hago y ayudo en todo lo que puedo
en mi comunidad para pagar de alguna forma toda
la ayuda que necesito. Muchas Gracias Maribel Cordero

Good day. My name is Maribel Cordero. I live in Pilsen in Chicago. I have 2 children and am 53 years old. I always worked a lot since I got to Chicago more than 20 years ago and one day I became sick and could not work any more as I was diagnosed with breast cancer. And after many sickness, and with the grace of God and the County Hospital, I have been able to receive the treatment and be with my children who are US citizens. And now that both of them study and work, but unfortunately neither of them nor my husband earn enough to pay for my medical insurance. I need the help of Stroger Hospital to keep being alive and my family needs me. I do and help with everything that I can in my community to pay in some sort of way the help that has been given to me.

Many thanks,

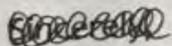
Maribel Cordero

Gracias a las promotoras de la salud de la organización de Enlace Chicago que muy amablemente me apoyaron en todo el proceso y logre contactar a la señorita Patricia Hernandez quien me ^{tambien} ayudo a solicitar beneficios del programa de Carelink para continuar los tratamientos necesarios en terapia física para recobrar mi salud . Gracias a la señorita Patricia Hernandez y Enlace . Tambien pude solicitar asistencia legal a través de la asociación entre Cook County Health y Legal Aid Chicago , quienes me están asesorando a tramitar una Visa "U" . Cook County Health y Carelink han sido una gran ayuda ,ya que tengo doctores de confianza a los que ouedo ir cuando me enferme .Gracias a Dios , mis hijos tienen Medicaid y estarán seguros .

Yo se que los tiempos son difíciles , pero eso no significa que hay que recortar programas , especialmente los cuales ayudan a las personas a recuperarse y ser miembros productivos de nuestra sociedad . los exorto que sigan expandiendo este tipo de programas de Carelink y que sigan abogando por nosotros y que las demás instituciones hagan conciencia en cuidar mas a su prójimo .

Sinceramente

Jorge R Rivera .



Thanks to the health promoters at the organization Enlace Chicago who have supported be through the entire process, I was able to be put in touch with Ms. Patricia Hernandez who also helped me apply for the benefits of the Caelink to continue the physical therapy treatments to improve my health. Thanks to Ms. Patricia Hernandez and Enlace. I was also able to apply for legal assistance through the association between Cook County health and Legal Aid Chicago, who are providing advice on submitting a "U" Visa. Cook County health and Carelink have been of great help as I have doctors that I can trust and see since I became ill. Thank God, my children have Medicaid and are secure.

I know that these are difficult times, but that does not mean that you have to cut programs, especially those help people recover and be productive members of society. I urge you to keep expanding programs like Carelink and that you keepdoing more for us and ensuring that other health institutions do more to take care of theirneighbors.

Sincerely,

Jorge R Rivera

El día de ayer me llegó la noticia de que hay poco presupuesto para el Hospital del condado, Stroger Hospital. Esto me tiene muy preocupada, ya que en lo personal gracias a Dios y a los que hacen esta ayuda posible, me he visto muy beneficiada con el Programa CareLink por lo cual he podido salir adelante el día a día, gracias a que he podido recibir las atenciones médicas que una persona con enfermedades crónicas tanto necesita. Desafortunadamente, en el 2011 fui diagnosticada con diabetes, y gracias al programa de CareLink yo presentemente recibo las atenciones y referidos necesarios para ser atendida en especialidades que el Médico de Cabecera considera para mí. Yo agradecería mucho que este programa continuará para mí y para todas las personas que no podríamos sobrevivir sin esta ayuda.

Gracias.

Beneficiario de CareLink,
Anónimo

Yesterday , I received the news that there is little budget for the County's Hospital, Stroger Hospital. This has me very worried, since personally thanks to God and those who make this help possible, I have been greatly benefited by the CareLink Program for which I have been able to get ahead day by day, thanks to the fact that I have been able to receive the medical care that a person with chronic diseases so badly needs. Unfortunately, in 2011, I was diagnosed with diabetes, and thanks to theCareLink, I presently receive the necessary care and referrals to be served in specialties that my PCP considers for me. I would really appreciate that this program will continue for me and for all the people that we could not survive without this help.

Thank you.

CareLink beneficiary,

Anonymous

Electronic Testimonial Submission

No Reply - Cook County Health <WP-Notifications@cookcountyhealth.org>

Wed 9/9/2020 11:18 AM

To: Santana, Debbie <dsantana@cookcountyhhs.org>

Type of Message

Message

Message

As a counselor for Youth Crossroads working with Morton West students, there are many times I refer students to the Morton East clinic. The clinic provides a unique resource for our students, many who would be unable to receive the same care without its existence. The closing of the clinic would be a tremendous loss to our community, which is already facing many challenges amidst the COVID-19 pandemic.

Date of Meeting or Public Hearing

9/9/2020

Name

Lauren Gestes

Address

[Redacted Address]

Phone

[Redacted Phone]

Phone Type

[Redacted Phone Type]

Email

[Redacted Email]

Electronic Testimonial Submission

No Reply - Cook County Health <WP-Notifications@cookcountyhealth.org>

Wed 9/9/2020 11:20 AM

To: Santana, Debbie <dsantana@cookcountyhhs.org>

Type of Message

Message

Message

On behalf of the Board of Directors, staff and 2,000 youth that utilize the services of Youth Crossroads, Inc. annually, I want to express my deepest concerns of changes being considered for the Morton East High School Based Clinic. Since 1996, the Clinic has served thousands of low-income, minority students who have no health insurance.

The clinic has and continues to provide much-needed services not readily accessible to local vulnerable student populations in the Cicero and Berwyn communities. Services include:

- Treatment for acute illness and injury
- School and Sports physicals
- Immunizations
- Phlebotomy services
- Nutrition counseling
- Sexually transmitted disease testing and treatment
- Pregnancy testing
- Preventive Health
- Mental health counseling and behavioral health treatment

Morton East School Based Clinic has been one of the few School Based Clinics that remained available to our population during this COVID-19 Pandemic, Morton School Base Clinic and CCH leadership acted quickly with strategies as how we would continue proving services - Telehealth appointments for Medial and Psych Social Services remained available to our patients - as Cicero community and District 201 continued needing services and by following state's guidelines, Morton East School Based Clinic reopened its doors late June, currently we continue offering Telehealth and In-Person appointments for Medical and Psych Social Services.

For over 25 years Morton East School Based Clinic has been a crucial part of the care and well-being of District 201 students and families and has provided unconditional support to Cicero community.

Morton East School Based Clinic, District 201 and Cicero community we all had worked assiduously in building this relationship of trust, commitment and support.

Please consider this testimony while deciding the Cook County Health Fiscal 2021 budget.

Date of Meeting or Public Hearing

9.9.2020

Name

David Terrazino

Address



Electronic Testimonial Submission

No Reply - Cook County Health <WP-Notifications@cookcountyhealth.org>

Wed 9/9/2020 11:25 AM

To: Santana, Debbie <dsantana@cookcountyhhs.org>

Type of Message

Message

Message

Dear Board Of Directors,

I have been informed that there is potential for the School Based Health Clinic at Morton East High school to lose funding and be relocated. If this were to happen, it would profoundly impact the pregnant and parenting students that attend the local high schools. I am a community-based birth and postpartum doula that offers free, supportive doula services as well as, parenting and educational-goal coaching to the students. Doula support ensures much healthier outcomes for pregnant and birthing women, and it is a huge asset and need to have the school based health clinic provide prenatal care and counseling for the pregnant students. The staff at the clinic have provided a sense of security, safety and trust to the students and they are integral in them receiving quality prenatal care, and thus contribute to much healthier outcomes for the young women when they go into labor and deliver their babies. Many times pregnant students have reached out to me, while at school, wondering if they should go to the ER for their health concerns, and it has been a beacon of light to be able to encourage them to go to a healthcare worker at the clinic before having to resort to heading straight to the ER. The health clinic at Morton High School provides a place for the students to get good, compassionate care in lieu of receiving substandard care that often plagues some of the larger hospitals or understaffed clinics in the area. Losing the health based clinic would be detrimental to the health and safety of the students and the community in Cicero. Please consider allowing the clinic to stay and operate out of Morton East High School. Thank you for your time,

Mary Calderon, CD/PCD (DONA)
Doula at New Moms Oak Park

Date of Meeting or Public Hearing

September 9, 2020

Name

Mary Calderon

Address

[Redacted Address]

Phone

[Redacted Phone]

Phone Type

[Redacted Phone Type]

Email

[Redacted Email]

The Crisis

The Cook County Health System is facing both a financial and a moral crisis. To address its financial deficit, it must accomplish several goals: to reduce operational cost, to increase the number of County Care insured patients using County Care facilities, ultimately increasing the ratio of insured patients vs. uninsured patients within the Cook County Health System.

In an effort to reduce operational cost, one of the recommendations is to suspend inpatient pediatric services. Though it is true the advances in pediatric care have reduced the demand for inpatient services, it has far from eliminated the need. The utilization example provided in the budget looks at the census from July 2019 through June 2020, completely ignoring the fact that the Covid-19 pandemic has decreased the use of pediatric hospital services universally.

The reality is that women and children services has systematically been diminished in black and brown communities, forcing a migration of care of tens of thousands of patients. It has recently been shown that obstetrical care for minority patients has improved outcomes when care is received within their communities. The reduction of women and children services within the County Health System, only furthers the disparity of health care within these communities.

The fact is that financial growth and expansion of women and children's services are not mutually exclusive. It is well documented that the matriarch in the household is typically the health decision-maker. Providing quality maternal-child health care will lead to the extended family receiving care from the same providers. Our lack of commitment to maternal-child health ignores its potential for increasing utilization of County Care insured patients seeking services within our own Health System. We do not need to abandon the most vulnerable to meet the financial demands of the institution, this is a false narrative. There is a place for all of our patients with no one left out.

George W. Paul, MD, FAAP, FACEP
Chair, Div of Pediatric Emergency Medicine
Department of Emergency Medicine
Cook County Health and Hospitals System

September 8, 2020

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Dr. Charmonique Tims.
NMD

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 Beulah Brent, the Chief Executive Officer of Sisters Working It Out (SWIO) and a former Manager in the department of Radiology/Mammography at John H. Stroger Hospital. My work at Stroger Hospital and at other healthcare organizations helped to fuel my passion for breast cancer and community health awareness. These lived experiences strongly influenced my decision to take on the important work of CEO at SWIO to help African American women experiencing breast cancer to improve their survival rates.

Throughout its 19-year history, SWIO has worked tirelessly to address the many barriers contributing to high breast cancer mortality rates for African-American women, such as lack of health information, mistrust of providers and health systems, and limited access to primary care and breast cancer screening through services like mammograms and clinical breast exams. Across the United States survival rates for early stage breast cancer are close to 100%. Yet, African American Women in Chicago are 40% more likely to die from this disease.

Part of the mission of Sisters Working It Out is accomplished through providing programs to educate and empower women of color as well as connect them to quality preventive health services. With Provident Hospital's long-standing history on the South Side of Chicago, SWIO refers African American women living in the area for breast cancer screening and mammograms. We are grateful to Cook County Health for the addition of the modern Mammography studios that were added a few years ago at Provident Hospital and help women who visit there to feel more at ease. These services, in conjunction with the great primary care provided at the Sengstacke Health Center within the hospital, help people better their health in a holistic way.

The staff in the department of Radiology/Mammography at Provident Hospital make a difference every day in the lives of their patients and I look forward to working with you on the plans for the future new Provident Hospital which is in the works.

Thank you for your consideration,

Beulah Brent
Chief Executive Officer
Sisters Working It Out (SWIO)



4150 S. King Drive
Chicago, IL 60653-2616
Tel: (773) 373-5700

Fax: (773) 373-0063

www.cnh.org

Christa Hamilton
CEO/
Executive Director

Sokoni Karanja
Founder

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COA Accredited

September 8, 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,

As a longtime community partner, Christa Hamilton, CEO & Executive Director of Centers for New Horizons, Inc., I am writing to provide my support of Cook County Health’s plans to *Reimagine Provident Hospital*, which consists of constructing a new facility and enhancing programs and services for the South side.

I understand the current fiscal/budgetary challenges caused by COVID-19 and the effect of the pandemic on institutions and governments nationwide which lead institutions such as Cook County Health to make tough choices based on data to achieve efficiencies in operations and programs to best serve everyone.

Provident Hospital is a cornerstone in the African American community in Chicago. As many firsts happened at our hospital, it is important to keep the tradition of caring for patients on the South side going. In order for Provident Hospital to be viable, retailoring the focus of operations is something that should be done to ensure future success. Cook County Health is showing its dedication to the community and the improvements for Provident Hospital by building a new facility and providing new programs and services. We are happy to have new dialysis, diagnostics, and Lifestyle center within the Provident campus this year and next year. The proposed changes to the emergency room and intensive care units are aligned with the low census and it is more fiscally responsible to staff the beds correctly as well as refocus services.

Centers for New Horizons has been a community staple for the last 49 years, and has been a close partner to Provident Hospital, since the doors were reopened in 1993. As a social service organization, we serve nearly 6,000 families with critical safety net supportive services. Provident has been intentional about listening to community voice and inviting partners to the table, such as Centers, to meet the evolving needs of the local residents.

Many thanks for keeping the history of Provident Hospital alive and making sure that its legacy grows into the future through proper planning and enhancement of services that directly help patients and the community.

Sincerely,

Christa A. Hamilton
CEO and Executive Director
Centers for New Horizons, Inc.
4150 S. King Drive, Chicago, IL
Christah@cnh.org
773-373-5700

My name is Elida and I was a student from Morton East High School, Graduated 2018. At my school, a lot of students rely on our school health center (SBHC), and although it may 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.

I've always struggled with mental and physical problems, and since 2015, the Morton East clinic has helped me. I've gone to many other clinics and hospitals for years trying to figure out what was wrong with my body, and other places couldn't figure out my problem. Since 2012 when I went to the Morton East clinic, they figured it out fast, and diagnosed me with Polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS), offering me medications to help with my hormones anytime I got sick. I would go there and they would help me and figure out my problems. I have stopped going to other clinics since 2015 because I enjoyed being a patient at the SBHC so much. This clinic is well needed, and without it, I don't know how bad mentally and physically I would have been if I had never gone there. They gave me the best therapist and doctor I've ever had. I'm now 20 and hope to keep going here until I'm no longer able to since the age limit is 21. I'll sadly have to find another place, even though I wish to stay there as a permanent patient, but the staff at the clinic have assured me that they will help me transition to another cook county clinic to continue my care. Thank you.



Cook County Board of Commissioners Preliminary Budget Hearing September 09, 2020

Testimony of Dan Fulwiler
President and CEO
Esperanza Health Centers
dan@esperanzachicago.org

My name is Dan Fulwiler, and I'm the President and CEO of Esperanza Health Centers, a Federally Qualified Health Center serving Chicago's West and Southwest Sides. We are one of 13 non-profit investors (a first-generation equity partner) of MHN ACO, an accountable care organization that works with CountyCare. Our MHN ACO organization is owned by 10 Federally Qualified Health Centers and 3 Health Systems, spanning Cook County. I am writing to offer my support of the CountyCare health plan and the CCH system.

At our each of our four locations, located in what have been medically under-resourced and predominantly Latino communities, Esperanza delivers culturally appropriate primary care that is close to home. Our relationship with CCH, CountyCare, and the MHN ACO has been a catalyst to advancing our mission and to better serving our community. Over the course of our 7-year partnership, Esperanza has worked tirelessly to advance our comprehensive care model and today Esperanza is a national leader in healthcare quality, having earned a prestigious National Quality Leader Award from the Health Resources and Services Administration for the fourth time this year since 2016.

Esperanza serves almost 9,000 patients that are beneficiaries of the CountyCare health plan. For many of our patients, the fact that they have quality healthcare coverage that allows them to access the services they both need and deserve has instilled in them a sense of dignity and value. This dignity is one of the primary successes of CountyCare and it ties perfectly to our mission which is to deliver health and hope for Chicago's often overlooked communities.

In many ways, Esperanza's relationship with CCH and CountyCare has been one of our most progressive community health system and Managed Care partnerships—promoting a true provider-led, integrated model of care. Together, through our work with the MHN ACO, we have made great strides in improving the relationship between patients and primary care, improving outcomes, and reducing the overall costs of patient care. Through our partnership in MHN ACO, Esperanza has contributed to the approx. \$50million in earned savings, shared between the health plan and the ACO providers. This model also promotes strong patient relationships; today, MHN ACO has 34% more primary care visits and 24% higher member retention than the rest of the CountyCare health plan. Together, we are leading the charge in transforming into a system that works for our shared service population.

Our partnership has also afforded Esperanza the opportunity to build innovative programming that puts patients and their families at the center. Through the CCH eConsult initiative, Esperanza has been able to digitally connect with specialty services at CCH John J. Stroger Jr. Hospital to deliver comprehensive care right here, in our community. We have used this service more than 500 times to the benefit of our CountyCare members, linking directly with specialists at CCH from the comfort of our primary care clinics and coordinating appointments for those patients who need to see a specialist face-to-face at Stroger. In one instance, this service led to the expedient identification of a carcinoma that had not yet metastasized through a dermatological eConsult. High demand services like dermatology can typically take months for Medicaid beneficiaries. In this case, the access to timely, quality care through CCH may have literally saved this patient's life.

We at Esperanza are grateful for this transformative partnership and to the commissioners of Cook County for seeing the value of our partnership and of the CountyCare plan.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'DF', with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

Dan Fulwiler, MPH
President & CEO
Esperanza Health Centers

My name is Alba Hernandez 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.

I started going to the clinic mid my junior high school year, at that time I was feeling really stressed and unmotivated about things, including school. I personally did not trust anyone to talk about my problems because I was worried, I would be judged or seen as weak. My regular doctor recommended me to make an appointment, once I started going I started feeling better because I was able to finally talk about the problems going on at home with someone that I trusted. I slowly started to feel more motivated to keep doing the things that I love, I was able to recognize the problem that I had with overeating, I started working on it to better myself. Currently I feel so much better and I am also able to control my feelings.

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.

The Pediatric Diabetes and Endocrinology team at Stroger hospital care for children and adolescents with endocrinology and diabetes (Type 1 and Type 2). Many of our patients come from minority, low income, and /or immigrant families. These children and families need comprehensive support and teaching especially during the initial days to help with insulin management. Diabetes management by the patient requires dedicated hours of learning including insulin dosing calculation based on meal intake and insulin administration, with support from dietitian, diabetes educator and endocrinologist in a supervised setting to ensure accuracy of medication administration by the family as they learn diabetes survival skills. This needs to be done in an inpatient setting as many of our families have low literacy and language barriers, and will need all the help they can in education. Small errors in insulin doses by the parents, can lead to costly mistakes and hence it is of utmost importance that we provide strong foundations of diabetes management as inpatient.

This is the cornerstone of diabetes management in children, who as we all know are not little adults. We treat many black and brown children in whom Type 2 diabetes is presents in alarming numbers. These patients need to have a place to be admitted for hyperglycemia, diabetes education and management of complications. Because if we don't see them in their crises when they need inpatient support, we will likely loss them as outpatients.

We follow our patient closely and see them about 4-8 times a year. Many of our patients, come to consider Stroger and diabetes clinic, as their main medical home. They rely on us for not only their specialty care, but for guiding them to resources for all their care. Last week for example, we saw patients in clinic for cellulitis, pregnancy and surgery for an ovarian mass. All of home received their care here at Stroger. The ability to admit a patient for evaluation and management is the primary obligation and requirement of any clinical doctor, and ignoring their issues or sending them away to another facility can almost be equated to neglect of our patient.

In keeping with the mission of the hospital, we serve everyone with dignity regardless of their race, nationality, immigration status, education status, primary language or their ability to pay. However most of our patient are insured and many have been with us for over 10 years even when their station in life has improved and they have gotten private insurance.

But many of our low income families lack transportation to take them downtown to larger children's hospitals and many of them complain to us that they cannot afford to pay for even the subsidized parking at these other facilities. Navigating a health system can be extremely difficult to the best of us in the best of times. Some of our patients with a chronic disease, who have to be seen at a different hospital, often feel uncomfortable without their own doctor and feel that their concerns have not been heard. They feel comfortable receiving their care here.

Let us not make it worse for those already vulnerable patients by shipping them off in their worst of times. We need to be able to serve them to our fullest capacity as their medical providers in the Cook county Health System.

Vanessa Davis, MD

September 8, 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,

As a former medical director who worked at Provident Hospital of Cook County, I am writing to provide my support of Cook County Health's plans to *Reimagine Provident Hospital*, which consists of constructing a new facility and enhancing programs and services for the South side.

I understand the current fiscal/budgetary challenges caused by COVID-19 and the effect of the pandemic on institutions and governments nationwide which lead institutions such as Cook County Health to make tough choices based on data to achieve efficiencies in operations and programs to best serve everyone.

Provident Hospital is a cornerstone in the African American community in Chicago. As many firsts happened at our hospital, it is important to keep the tradition of caring for patients on the South side going. In order for Provident Hospital to be viable, retailoring the focus of operations is something that should be done to ensure future success. Cook County Health is showing its dedication to the community and the improvements for Provident Hospital by building a new facility and providing new programs and services. We are happy to have new dialysis, diagnostics, and Lifestyle center within the Provident campus this year and next year. The proposed changes to the emergency room and intensive care units are aligned with the low census and it is more fiscally responsible to staff the beds correctly as well as refocus services.

From 1998-2015 I served as the Chief Medical Officer/Medical Director of Provident Hospital and am keenly aware of the healthcare challenges and disparities that the underserved communities which Provident services face on an ongoing basis. I dedicated my time and efforts during my tenure to trying to bring about the change that is currently envisioned in the Board's plan to *Reimagine Provident Hospital*. The consolidation of the three Ambulatory centers aims to make available a comprehensive menu of diagnostic and specialty services along with a lifestyle center needed in the community while minimizing any potential negative impact of such a move. Improved access to these and other services will predictably improve the healthcare indicators and outcomes for these communities. I am extremely proud that the Board has decided to move in this direction and strongly support its' efforts.

Many thanks for keeping the history of Provident Hospital alive and making sure that its legacy grows into the future through proper planning and enhancement of services that directly help patients and the community.

Sincerely,

Aaron Hamb, M.D.

Aaron Hamb, M.D.,



Testimony from Susana Avila and Linda G. Coronado, Co-conveners of the 7th District Health Task Force

To: Finance Committee of the Board of Directors of the Cook County Health and Hospitals System

Date: September 9, 2020

It is the mission of the Cook County Health system to care for all in need, regardless of their ability to pay. These are challenging times to be sure, making it incumbent on us all to get this right.

We cannot threaten the system and the health of the people who count on it by continuing to make quick decisions to change governance, continue the approach of cuts and layoffs and continue cutting the County allocation to the health system.

The United States is the only industrialized country in world not assuring universal access to health care. We are in the midst of a pandemic which has laid bare the total inadequacies of our health care system.

The County Health System needs to immediately call for a convening of a blue-ribbon group to examine regional health care needs in light of the closing of Mercy which is just the tip of the iceberg - more closings will continue because of pressures of the market AND the impact of Covid-19.

We can no longer ignore the structural deficit in the overall Cook County budget. One critical way to do that is by changing our tax policies. We need to talk about the inequity in the tax laws and move to correct the structural inequities enshrined in past policy decisions.

A recent paper published in June 2020 [The Assessment Gap: Racial Inequalities in Property Taxation](#) included an analysis of the Cook County property tax structure. The study concluded that the inequities in our structure benefit those with money. This conclusion is supported by Assessor Fritz Kaegi in a recent interview with the Austin Weekly where he noted that "We should always remember that all these structural determinants that create segregation and disparity in values are embedded in them."¹

The tax system and our budgets are moral documents. The decisions we make about taxes make concrete what we value — they reflect who we are and who we want to be as a society. Taxes fight fires. Taxes educate our kids and prepare us for jobs. Taxes build our roads and bridges. Taxes protect our food and our water. Taxes heal our poor and elderly. When they are properly allocated, taxes build healthy communities.²

As we examine the issue of charity care, this Board needs to ask why it is possible that our sister public tax supported hospital, the University of Illinois does not care for those without medical insurance and does not believe it needs to provide charity care.

I would encourage the Board to analyze other ways of closing the budget gap. We cannot cut our way out of a deficit. Eliminating patient care programs will only create greater disparities among the residents of the County of Cook. We must stay true to our mission to provide health care services for all the vulnerable residents in our County.

¹ Austin Weekly News August 7 2020 [https://www.austinweeklynews.com/News/Articles/8-7-2020/New-paper:-Black-and-Brown-homeowners-overtaxed-by-at-least-\\$300-a-year-/](https://www.austinweeklynews.com/News/Articles/8-7-2020/New-paper:-Black-and-Brown-homeowners-overtaxed-by-at-least-$300-a-year-/)

² Public Health Awakened: Transforming the Narrative on Taxes March 2018



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

RE: Cook County Health Budget Hearing

September 8th, 2020

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

I am writing to express my support for the Ruth M. Rothstein CORE Center (CORE Center). Esperanza Health Centers is a federally qualified health center that serves over 30,000 primarily Spanish-speaking patients annually on Chicago's south and southwest side. The CORE Center has been a great partner to us. For example, due to immigration status and financial barriers, many of our patients are not eligible for public insurance and do not have enough income to purchase private insurance. While we are able to see these patients as a medical home, easily coordinating specialty care can become difficult. The CORE Center helps us bridge the care gap, quickly and efficiently, for those patients who need specialty care and ensure our most vulnerable patients have the care they need. And, while the CORE Center is primarily known for HIV/AIDS services, our patients also benefit from their expertise in hepatology. In fact, 73% of our referrals to the CORE Center over the last year were related to liver concerns. Access to this resource is important because according to the US Department of Health and Human Services, the Hispanic population's chronic liver disease rate is two times higher than non-hispanic white individuals, and chronic liver disease was the seventh leading cause of death for the US Hispanic population in 2018.

Additionally, the CORE Center team are always available and help us close the loop quickly whenever we need to troubleshoot a challenge. They continue to cultivate relationships with our practice level staff and are always patient-centered.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ted Hufstader", with a horizontal line extending to the right.

Ted Hufstader, MPH

Director, Quality & Practice Transformation
Esperanza Health Centers
2001 S. California Ave., #100
Chicago, IL 60608
tel: 773.299.7940
email: thufstader@esperanzachicago.org
www.esperanzachicago.org

Statement for the Finance Committee CCH Board:

I'm Dr. Marjorie Fujara, CCH Child Abuse Pediatrician and member of Doctors Council. I am writing to express my strong opposition to the reduction in pediatric services found in the Cook County Health's proposed FY2021 budget. I would like to specifically address the CCH's plans to identify an "alternative model or sponsor" for the medical clinic at the Chicago Children's Advocacy Center (CCAC).

The medical clinic housed at the CCAC is a critical part of a collaborative team that responds to victims of child sexual abuse . As Child Abuse Pediatricians, we consult with our partners in DCFS, CPD, the Cook County State's Attorney's Office and Family Advocacy with each and every patient we see before the patient is ever discharged from the clinic.

The comprehensive evaluation performed in the medical clinic is often the child's first step in healing. Our patients and their families benefit from a range of high quality services, that cost the CCH nothing because they are provided by the CCAC non-profit. The CCAC generously provides our clinic office space, free transportation, advocacy services by experienced, masters-level social workers in dealing with the dynamics of sexual abuse, interpreter services for patient visits that often last more than an hour, Child Life services for every patient and even some quality time with the CCAC's therapy dog, Mac.

Many of the families we see are in need of a medical home, subspecialty care for chronic health conditions and most urgently, a referral to a child psychiatrist & psychologist. While the waiting lists to see a child psychiatrist at our two closest children's hospitals are months long, we are able to get them into our clinic at Stroger within a week or two. Many of the families seen at the CCAC live on the West Side, making Stroger especially convenient for them. The challenges faced by our families are overwhelming. By keeping the location of important services close

and waiting times to see providers short, the CCAC make this life altering crisis more manageable.

It's important to note that we could change the CCAC clinic from an "expenditure driver" to an additional revenue source by beginning to bill the insurance carriers for our patient visits. When the CCAC opened its doors in 2001, billing a survivor of sexual assault was prohibited under Illinois law, as it is now. At some point, CCH decided that in order to avoid billing uninsured patients, they would not bill to any of our patients, regardless of their insurance status. The landscape change in 2006, when the ALL KIDS Health Insurance program was enacted, which made it possible for all pediatric patients in Illinois to be covered by health insurance. A simple change in billing practices could transform the position of the CCAC clinic in the budget.

By keeping the CCAC medical clinic as part of the ACHN, CCH could continue to fulfill its mission to serve Cook County's most vulnerable patients in a trauma-informed, state-of-the-art, healing environment. I would respectfully ask that the members of the Finance Committee oppose any proposed changes to the CCAC medical clinic.

From the members of Cook County Health Department of Pediatrics and Members of Doctors Council & Associates

While it is true that advances in preventive care have led to a decreased need for inpatient pediatric beds, having access to inpatient pediatrics remains a necessity for the communities that CCH serves. Inpatient care is an integral part of the comprehensive care that our families have come to depend on. The benefits of a health system providing inpatient pediatric services goes beyond helping the admitted patient. The presence of a pediatric inpatient unit sharpens the skills of ancillary service providers such as respiratory therapists, phlebotomists, and radiologists to competently care for patients across the lifespan.

The recent trend of reduced inpatient pediatric services throughout Cook County threatens access to comprehensive health care, particularly for communities of color on the West and South Sides of Chicago^[D2]. It increases the stress for families needing to commute long distances to a pediatric tertiary care center, even for an uncomplicated 1-2 day stay for asthma or bronchiolitis. The spirit of the CCH mission is to provide services without creating additional obstacles or barriers for an already vulnerable population.

The breadth of pediatric expertise in our department is wide and diverse. The work of our internationally renowned Trauma Center continues on the pediatric inpatient unit as patients are assessed by Child Psychiatry for PTSD and depression, as well as by Child Family Wellness who assess for inflicted injuries. This also creates a warm hand-off for these patients and their families to be followed in our outpatient clinics. Further, our Pediatric Floor Team continues the medical care to discharge and ensures that our patients have a medical home to return to. Our Pediatric Oncologists are part of the National Children's Oncology Group, they care for children with leukemia and cancer. The outcomes for these patients meets national standards. Their

patients and their families love their providers and appreciate the convenience of receiving their care at Stroger.

We are also charged with training the next generation of primary care providers for children through our Pediatric and Family Medicine Residency Programs. Suspending inpatient pediatric care will have an adverse impact on the quality of education these residents receive. Becoming competent in managing routine pediatric hospital care for problems like asthma, bronchiolitis, and dehydration is essential for future Pediatricians and Family Practitioners.

Inpatient Pediatric care is a critical part of the wide range of services we offer our patients. Disrupting this service would negatively impact all of the other services we provide. We strongly urge the members of the Finance Committee to oppose the closure of Pediatric Inpatient Services at Stroger Hospital.

Cook County Health Pediatricians

Members of Doctors Council & Associates

Byung Ho Yu, Allergy & Immunology
Sadhana Dharmapuri, Adolescent Medicine
Kenneth Soyemi, Correctional Health Service, JTDC
Simon Piller, Internal Medicine-Pediatrics
Nirma Vermla, Pediatrics
Asneha Iqbal, Pediatric Hematology-Oncology
Andrew Altiveros, Assistant Residency Director, Pediatrics
Salman Khan, Pediatrics
George Paul, Chair, Pediatric Emergency Medicine
Chinedu Oranu, Pediatrics
Rosibell Arcia, Director of Inpatient Pediatrics & Pediatric Residency
Paul Severin, Chair of Pediatric Critical Care
Vishakha Nanda, Neonatology

Dipti Dighe, Pediatric Hematology-Oncology
Tabitha Watts, Pediatric Emergency Department
Alisa Seo-Lee, Stroger Pediatrics Interim Lead Physician
Marjorie Fujara, Acting Chair, Division of Child Family Wellness
Amir Kagawalla, Pediatric Gastroenterology
Lubov Romantseva, Pediatric Neurology
Vanessa Davis, Pediatric Endocrinology
Swati Bhobe, Pediatrics
Harini Kolluri, Pediatric Endocrinology
Tatyana Kagan, Pediatric Emergency Department
Nicole Johnson, Child Family Wellness
Debbie Matek, Child & Adolescent Psychiatry
Karen Simpson, Adolescent Medicine
Annie Torres, Child Family Wellness
Rajeev Kumar, Neonatology
Abayomi Akintorin, Pediatric Critical Care & Pediatric Anesthesia
Patty Hoyos, Child & Adolescent Psychiatry
Rajesh Dudani, Neonatology
Zahra Naheed, Pediatric Cardiology
Janardhan Mydam, Neonatology
Christian Castillo, Neonatology
Ghanshyam Agarwal, Neonatology
Pamela Botchway, Neonatology
Omar LaBlanc, Stroger Hospital Perinatal Administrator
Ellen Chiocca, PNP, PhD, Child Family Wellness
Shipra Sharma, Pediatrics
Manhal Khilfeh, Neonatology
Shou-Yien Wu, Neonatology
Jacek Ubaka, Neonatology
Ra-id Abdulla, Pediatric Cardiology
Dipika Patel, Allergy & Immunology
Irma Rodriguez, Administrative Assistant for Sections of Critical Care, Hematology-Oncology
Karen Ray-Williams, Pediatric Residency Coordinator

9 de Septiembre 2020

La Salud es lo mas importante que el ser humano tiene que valorar y enseñarles a nuestros hijos a cuidarse de los pies a la cabeza porque todo es importante de nuestro cuerpo y organismo.

Las clínicas son importantes. Las clínicas nos ayudan a quienes no tenemos seguro médico y no trabajamos. Algunas de nosotras no trabajamos y algunas no encontramos buenos trabajos por el ingles, educación, y transporte. No alcanza el dinero y nuestra prioridad es la renta, biles, y comida. No alcanzamos para curarnos. Pagamos la renta o nos curamos. No queremos ser alojadas de nuestra vivienda juntos con nuestros hijos. Necesitamos recursos para las clínicas. No quiten las clínicas, necesitamos los fondos para todas las familias de bajos recursos y para curarnos y poder cuidar de nuestros hijos.

Ma Eugenia Rodriguez

September 9, 2020

Health is the most important thing that human beings have to value and teach our children to take care of themselves from toes to head because everything is important to our body and being. Clinics are important. The clinics help us who do not have health insurance and do not work. (Speaking in female form) Some of us don't work and some of us don't find good jobs because of our English, education, and transportation. Money is not enough and our priority is rent, bills, and food. We do not have enough to heal ourselves. We pay the rent or we get cured. We do not want to be housed with our children. We need resources for the clinics. Don't take away the clinics, we need the funds for all low-income families and to heal and take care of our children.

Ma Eugenia Rodriguez

September 8, 2020

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

From: The Provider Staff of the Michael Reese Research and Education Foundation's Care Program

RE: Cook County Health Budget Hearing

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

The Michael Reese Research and Education Foundation's Care Program is a Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH)-funded program on the near South Side, with clinic space at Mercy Hospital and Medical Center. The Care Program provides services to persons living with and vulnerable to HIV. The Care Program serves a largely Black population affected by poverty and low health literacy, with high rates of trauma and violence. Over the past two years, the Care Program has partnered with the Ruth M Rothstein (RMR) CORE Center for specialty referrals that are not available at Mercy Hospital for patients with Medicaid and Medicaid Managed Care Organization (MCO) insurances or patients who are uninsured. We have referred patients for a variety of specialty needs, filling a crucial lack of access to services for our patients who need specialty services that can be paid for by Medicaid and MCO insurance plans.

Particularly, Mercy does not have a dermatology service that takes Medicaid insurances. The RMR CORE Center dermatology clinic accepts patients from our clinic and provides outstanding services, going above and beyond in providing stellar patient care. We have even known Dr. Joerg Albrecht to call insurance companies advocating for resources for our patients, calling patients to schedule appointments, providing personalized, welcoming and professional care. Our patients always speak very highly of their experiences when they are seen by Dr. Albrecht in the dermatology clinic.

We have also referred patients to psychiatry services, as there is a dearth of available resources for psychiatry providers at Mercy in our Intensive Outpatient Program (IOP). We have one patient who was impacted by substance use issues for many years who found a good fit with a provider at the RMR CORE Center and recently celebrated her one year anniversary of being substance-free. This patient's recovery has also impacted her ability to remain engaged in care for the management of her other medical needs as well, promoting her overall health and wellness.

We rely heavily on our ability to refer our patients to these crucial specialty services, and without the availability of these very important services, our patients would experience a great loss that would impact their ability to thrive in their communities. Our patients would be devastated if we did not have the ability to refer our patients to these very important specialty resources. Please assure that these important resources continue to be available to our underserved and very deserving patients.

Respectfully,

Arthur Moswin, MD
Norma Rolfsen, APRN
Sarah Williams, APRN
John Parisot, MSN, RN

Statement to be read during the Board Meeting

Arcia Diaz, Rosibell <rarciadiaz@cookcountyhhs.org>

Wed 9/9/2020 12:00 PM

To: Santana, Debbie <dsantana@cookcountyhhs.org>

This is a statement from the Pediatrics Residency Leadership team regarding the planned suspension of the Pediatric Inpatient Unit at John H Stroger Hospital of Cook County.

The Inpatient Unit at Stroger provide comprehensive care to children and adolescents in need of inpatient care. Most of these patients have respiratory issues (like asthma), infectious diseases and trauma or surgical related issues. attention away from Some have issues of neglect like failure to thrive which needs to be investigated further.

We do know that the families we serve suffer because of health disparities, we can not turn our backs to them. So many families are suffering and already their health access is being diminished with other hospitals in the south and west closing.

The Pediatric Residency Program has been training pediatricians since 1912. The main goal of the Residency is to provide quality education and clinical experience to the residents. The major focus of our program is to train pediatrician who will be proficient in caring for children especially those who are underserved and maginalized; we teach residents about advocacy, health disparities and trauma-informed care .

Pediatrics and Family Medicine residents provide care for these patients and they learn to manage common pediatric problems. Both Residencies need to have general pediatrics inpatient experience as part of their training requirements. Pediatric residents require 5 (4 week blocks in their 3 years of training while family medicaine require at least 1 each).

Many of our residents are minority who go practice in medically-underserved and/or minority communities either immediately after residency or during their fellowship training. In fact many of the attendings working in pediatrics and family medicine in Cook County Health completed their training at our institution.

We urge you to reconsider this decision . Many underserved families and patients need our services , please do think about the children that we treat . They are our future ,

The Pediatric Residency Leadership team

Rosibell Arcia MD

Program Director, Pediatrics

Director of Inpatient Pediatrics

Department of Pediatrics



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,

Provident Hospital taught me so much, but more importantly the doctors, nurses and every staff personnel, we worked together as a team and learned from each other, that's something that's lacking right now at Provident, need more educational meetings, departments need to cross train, so if a department is short staff they is help within the facility. I worked and supervised in communication department, but I learned how to pitch in within other departments, we were TEAM players. I assisted patients and listened to them, we need more of that, LISTEN. Provident combined with Woodlawn and Near South is Great. The community need this Facility.

Sincerely,

Linda Swaney

Good evening,

Once again, thank you for the opportunity to present this statement. In the last one week, in fact on the very day of the board meeting last week, the pediatric trauma team was called in for emergency surgery to treat a bad case of vicious dog bites on the face, the arms and the body a small child. The child was a victim of attack by two stray dogs that were not known to the family. This was, indeed the worst case of dog bite I have seen in a 35 year career. Her treatment was going to be primarily surgical (countless stiches on the face and the body), pain control and intravenous antibiotic treatment to prevent infection in the immediate period.

It's peds trauma, needed **pediatric inpatient unit** care only. If pediatric inpatient was "suspended" or closed, thie child (and the family) would not have received that care or we would have been forced to start looking to transfer her in the middle of the night

Do you all get the point? This case came in when the ink has hardly dried on the letter submitted (to support keeping peds inpatient unit open rather than "suspending" it).

This case illustrates why that plan in the preliminary budget to "suspend peds inpatient" but "keep PICU for peds trauma and burn" doesn't add up. It's contradictory to our stated mission, artificial and doomed to fail a patient like this one (as well as many more like her). I respectfully submit that the way this works is to:

KEEP AND SUPPORT PEDIATRIC INPATIENT SERVICE AT CCH STROGER HOSPITAL!

Please, our leaders - listen to those on the frontline!

Thank you.

Dr. Abeyome Akintorin



Chicago Defender Charities Inc.

3509 S. King Drive Suite #203 CHICAGO ILLINOIS 60653 OFFICE: 773-536-3710
Email: info@defendercharities.org Website: www.budbillikenparade.org

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

September 3, 2020

RE: Fiscal Year 2021 Cook County Health Budget

Dear Cook County Health Board of Directors,

My name is Myiti Sengstacke-Rice, President and CEO of the Chicago Defender Charities, Inc., we produce the 91 year old Bud Billiken Parade and Festival. Our relationship to Provident Hospital Cook County goes as far back as its founding. The Chicago Defender Newspaper has been a community supporter and advocate of Provident for several decades.

My grandfather John H.H. Sengstacke who served as the hospitals board chair and worked tirelessly advocating for million of dollars to reopen the hospital in an effort to improve the rights of the local black communities access to proper healthcare, especially nearby emergency healthcare. Even now, each year we collaborate with Provident Hospital Cook County doctors, nurses and staff who devote their time and professions to support the annual Bud Billiken Parade.

Provident Hospital Cook County hands down is one of the most important relationships to our longstanding institution and community. The Sengstacke family continues to remain humbled by the naming of the John Sengstacke Health Center and are excited about the new outpatient dialysis center, and the new lifestyle center for patients with diabetes and other chronic diseases and an expansion of surgical procedures at Provident. The sustainability of Provident Cook County is crucial as it is necessary for the continued wellbeing of the community it serves. This is why we understand how impactful the new the integrated care plan for Provident is to the local community as it will reduce the number of Provident patients having to travel to the Stroger campus for services not currently provided on the Provident campus.

Without Provident Hospital Cook County, our community is extremely vulnerable from basic health services that the hospital has provided for decades. Please take the time to consider keeping our community safe and healthy by keeping the great institution of Provident Hospital Cook County viable.

Best regards,

Myiti Sengstacke-Rice
President and CEO
Chicago Defender Charities, Inc.
msengstacke-rice@defendercharities.org
312-718-2690

Save pediatric floors

Byrd, Allison <allison.byrd@cookcountyhhs.org>

Wed 9/9/2020 12:01 PM

To: Santana, Debbie <dsantana@cookcountyhhs.org>

Good morning,

My name is Allison Byrd and I'm a PGY3 pediatric residency. I would like to make a statement in favor of keeping the pediatric floor open. Closing the floor would be a disservice to the pediatric and family medicine residents that work and learn there. Most importantly it would be disservice to our patients. For many patients Stroger is not only their preferred hospital it is the only hospital they can afford to go to. I think keeping the peds floor open will ultimately benefit the hospital and the community.

Best regards,
Allison Byrd, MD

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Be counted in the 2020 census. Visit www.cookcountyil.gov/census for more information.

Administrative Offices

600 W. Fulton Street
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www.achn.net

Donna Simmons

Chairman

Donna Thompson

Chief Executive Officer

September 9, 2020

President Toni Preckwinkle
County Board President

Re: Cook County Health Budget Hearing

Dear President Preckwinkle and the Cook County Health Board of Directors,

On behalf of Access Community Health Network (ACCESS), it is my pleasure to provide this letter of support to the Ruth M. Rothstein Core Center. ACCESS has had the pleasure of collaborating with the Ruth M. Rothstein Core Center for more than 20 years to provide critical coordinated care for patients living with HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis C. Our partnership and the services that the Core Center provides are critical to ensuring that vulnerable populations have access to life saving care and treatment.

ACCESS shares your commitment to ensuring that all residents of Cook County have access to health care services, regardless of ability to pay. The mission of ACCESS is to partner with patients at all points of care, providing high quality, patient-centered health services accessible to all in their own communities. ACCESS has been serving the Chicago area's most underserved communities of color for nearly three decades and would not be able to effectively address the great inequities that affect our patient population without collaborations such as with the CORE Center and Cook County Health.

Most recently our teams have collaborated to ensure that patients with Hepatitis C receive timely fibro scans so that they can begin treatment. Without our partnership, individuals would have delayed or limited treatment that could be detrimental to their health and impede their ability to be cured from this terrible disease. We are committed to working with the Core Center to give our patients and communities the best quality care.

Sincerely,



Donna J. Thompson
Chief Executive Officer

Kimberly Smith



Today I am submitting an ask directly to the decision makers. A Hospital and the healthcare providers it employs have taken an oath to care for ALL PEOPLE. So don't take part in the closure of Provident as it proves poor decision making. This is a clear form of Genocide as it will deny access to healthcare for majority Black and Brown people.

I write this from my own personal experience as a Child of God, Patient Care Technician, a Black Woman, also a born and current resident of the south side of Chicago. My first ask is where will over 30,000 black and brown people go for care? Does this even matter to anyone? I am watching as well as being directly affected with these decisions. My family , friends and myself reside in these communities. This also affects the people in so many ways. What about the workers inside the hospital. I have been a patient in the ER on several occasions due to emergency situations. I am grateful for their care as I still stand here. You don't know where you will be when things happen. To not be afforded the right to get care because of the color of your skin and where you live. This does nothing more than fuel this beast of racism and continue to attack poor people.

There is so much more I want to say but I will close with this. Black and Brown people matter. We vote in hopes of putting people in place that will take an oath to protect us. To ensure our voices don't go unheard. That being said I come to you with a humble ask not to close Provident. The loss of Metrosouth, Holy Cross and soon Mercy is already a travesty. Please don't allow them to continue to make the south side of Chicago a Healthcare desert. Help save the lives of the people you swore to make changes for.

Sincerely,
Kimberly Smith a Black Woman

Diane Wilder

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

I am writing today to urge you to keep Provident's ER open so people on the South Side have access to important healthcare services. I live on the South Side in Chicago Heights and so do many of my friends and family members. I also work as a secretary at Roseland Community Hospital so I see the racial disparities in healthcare access at work and at home. Every day I see patients who have to come all the way across town to come to the hospital because they don't have services in their neighborhoods. Not long ago I had a patient from the South Side who had to get services at Roseland because it was not something any hospital on the South Side offered. That made it harder for that patient's family members to be there with them. Even worse, this patient ended up back in the hospital even sicker because they weren't able to get follow-up care, they needed close to home. These are the kind of things that lead to worse outcomes for patients. I see this sort of thing happen over and over again to patients from the South Side. We've heard a lot on the news about how racial disparities in healthcare made the COVID-19 pandemic far more deadly for Black and Brown people. This pandemic is still raging, and these same people are still dying in higher numbers from all kinds of other diseases too – like diabetes, heart disease, and strokes – how does it make any sense to close a hospital that serves a majority of Black & Brown community. The South Side has already lost Metro South, Holy Cross, and will lose Mercy Hospital too. Where are the almost 30,000 people treated at Provident's ER each year going to go? How many people are going to die because they can't get to an ER in time?

The closing of Provident's ER would result in a higher death rate in the community that it serves. I ask that you take the community into consideration before closing Provident's ER.



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Cook County Health Board of Directors
Budget Hearing September 09, 2020

Testimony of Robert J. Urso
President and CEO
PCC Community Wellness Center
14 Lake Street
Oak Park, IL 60302
rurso@pccwellness.org

My name is Bob Urso, and I'm the President and CEO of PCC Community Wellness Center, a Federally Qualified Health Center serving Chicago's West and Northwest Sides and the near west suburbs. We are one of 13 non-profit investors (a second generation equity partner) of MHN ACO, an accountable care organization that works with CountyCare. Our MHN ACO organization is owned by 10 Federally Qualified Health Centers and 3 Health Systems, spanning Cook County.

For over 25 years, PCC has been providing accessible, affordable, and quality health care in underserved communities. PCC is comprised of 13 sites that offer primary care and integrated behavioral health and oral health care. We continue to expand our innovative services and programs to meet the varied needs of our patients. PCC opened a walk-in clinic for non-urgent care at West Suburban Medical Center. The clinic is open to patients for 13 hours each day, 365 days a year. PCC also established Illinois' first freestanding birth center where women can experience natural birth in a home-like setting.

Today, PCC serves over 49,000 patients. Of these, over 14,000 are CountyCare patients. Since 2014, PCC has been collaborating with CountyCare and our MHN ACO partners to improve health care for Cook County residents. PCC views Cook County Health as an essential partner in the delivery of high quality, culturally competent care. Both CountyCare and CCH have been a valuable resource in enhancing PCC's programming. Through CCH's eConsult services, PCC's providers can virtually access specialty services at CCH John H. Stroger Jr. Hospital such as orthopedics, cardiology, and endocrinology. PCC has been one of the highest utilizers of this service, bridging the specialty care gap in our community while getting patients who need it most connected to in-person services at CCH. Through MHN ACO, PCC also has access to retinal cameras whereby diabetic retinopathy screening can take place in our offices. We take images of the retina and transmit them digitally through eConsult. A CCH ophthalmologist interprets the images and sends back a report.

During the COVID-19 health crisis, PCC has continued our history of service to our members, quickly pivoting our operations to adopt digital healthcare services for our members; to be a resource in our communities for testing; and to use technology to identify our members most at-risk due to physical and social factors to proactively reach out to work on education, offer testing when necessary, and mitigate any barriers to sheltering in place. The tools and staffing to make this type of high-touch, digitally-informed crisis response possible are available to PCC through our strategic partnership with MHN ACO and CountyCare. Our robust care management and care coordination infrastructure has been established to work with CountyCare patients so we can continue to proactively identify barriers, manage chronic illnesses, and be ready and responsive when situations and needs evolve.

Care Centered Around You

Eleven health centers in Berwyn, Chicago, Melrose Park, and Oak Park

www.pccwellness.org

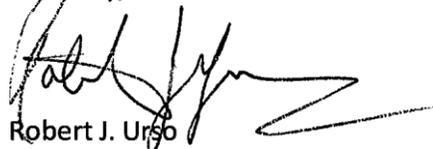
Nearly one-quarter of our patient population receives their Medicaid Managed Care through MHN, allowing us to provide this type of enhanced care coordination and care management services to a large portion of our patients. In doing so, we continue to see the impact of the collaboration between CCH, CountyCare, and health care providers through integrated services provided by an interdisciplinary team—Particularly during this extremely difficult time.

For example, a patient in our program who is stratified as high-risk due to multiple hospitalizations in 2019 (stemming from a heart condition) had a much-needed procedure in January of 2020, before the emergency pandemic declaration. Due to the pandemic he was unable to follow up with any of his specialists, he had a difficult time reaching offices, coordinating appointments, and coordinating transportation. At one point, he unfortunately arrived for a much-needed follow-up appointment only to learn the appointment had been canceled. In the meantime he underwent multiple re-hospitalizations as one of his underlying health issues exacerbated. Needless to say, this patient's experience, and very health, was suffering due to the circumstances and environment created by the pandemic.

Thankfully, PCC's care management team was able to get ahold of this patient and coordinate easy-to-access services for him via a combination of telemedicine and smartly scheduled in-person appointments. His Care Manager & PCC primary care provider worked together and telephonically engaged 3 different specialists to virtually "huddle" and develop a treatment plan. Through the dedication of the PCC care team, the patient was ultimately able to secure an appointment for a follow-up procedure in early September. The patient benefitted from additional CountyCare benefits like First Transit and home-delivered meals during his intra-hospitalization periods.

Stories like this represent the best of integrated and collaborative care. PCC greatly appreciates our relationship with CountyCare and with Cook County Health. Through this partnership, we are improving health outcomes for our patients and providing more efficient, more personalized, cost-effective care. I want to express my deep gratitude to the Cook County Board for your ongoing support of the CCH System and the CountyCare insurance plan—both of which are strengthening our mission and positively impacting the delivery of care for underserved communities. Thank you.

Sincerely,



Robert J. Urso
President and CEO

September 9, 2020

Dear Members of the Cook County Board Finance Committee,

My name is Michael Escoto and I am one of the emergency Medicine Physicians at Provident Hospital and a member of Doctors Council. I am writing to you today to hopefully persuade you to reconsider downgrading our Emergency Room into an Urgent Care Center.

I started my career with Cook County after I graduated from residency. I first worked at Oak Forest Hospital of Cook County. We all know how that facility has since been closed. What you might not be aware of is what happens when an Emergency Room changes into an Urgent Care Center. On paper it sounds like a pretty smooth transition and you can still give quality care to our patients. However, what they don't tell you is the details of what happens, of which I have first-hand experience since I helped transition the Oak Forest Hospital Emergency Department to an Urgent Care Center before moving to Provident Hospital. Once the ER switched to an Urgent Care Center, you no longer have Emergency Medicine Services. What does that mean? It means we take all life-saving equipment out of the department, including crash carts, difficult airway tools, most life saving medications. Once you are an Urgent Care Center, you are required to call 911 for any life-threatening emergencies, have to wait for the fire department and paramedics to get there and transport them to the closest emergency room. You no longer have emergency medicine capabilities. Now that you're an Urgent Care Center, theoretically a person comes in with a life-threatening emergency, you have to call, wait, then paramedics arrive have to transport to another facility. This whole process takes at least 30-45 minutes. In a true-life threatening emergency, 5 minutes is too long to wait, let alone 30-45 minutes.

What about all the clinic patients and surgical patients that might have complications? Where do they go when an emergency happens? It would be the same process. Stroger is too far away to transfer emergency patients. Without an ER to stabilize them, all of our patient would have to be transferred to University of Chicago since they are the closest hospital when we call 911. Our patients choose Cook County. But with the closure of Provident Hospital and Emergency Room, our sickest patients would be forced to go outside of Cook County health.

I myself was born and raised on the south side of Chicago. I understand the importance of Cook County Health not only from working for Cook County as an Emergency Medicine physician but as a life-time Cook County resident. I have been blessed to be fortunate enough to be able to work and take care of my fellow Cook County residents that I have had the pleasure to live with my entire life. My family and I love the CCH provides so much that I have family that continues to get their care here. Provident Hospital is a vital Cook County, especially the residents on the south side where Provident Hospital is much closer than Stroger Hospital for many of our patients to get to. I still see many of my patients from the old Oak Forest Hospital at Provident because it is much closer to them and we can still provide excellent care to them.

We care for the most underserved communities of need in Cook County. We are able to give them quality care and if for some reason they need a higher level of care than Provident has, we can stabilize them and get them to Stroger in a timely and SAFE and stable manner rather than having to call 911 and send our patients to other hospitals and potentially put their lives at risk.

I really hope you all please consider this statement when deciding whether to turn the Provident Hospital Emergency Department into an Urgent Care Center. We are a vital hospital to the community, and I hope to be there for many more years to come.

Thank you all for your time and consideration,

Sincerely,

Michael Escoto DO

Emergency Medicine Physician

Provident Hospital of Cook County

My name is Rocio Vargas-Garcia, and I am the Site Coordinator at Morton East Adolescent Health Center. I am grateful to have this opportunity to express my testimony about why Morton East and CCH should continue being part of Cicero community and District 201 students and families.

I had been working at Morton East Adolescent Health Center for over a year and half, since day one I at the clinic I felt at home, and as days passed by I noticed that our patients had the same impression.

Morton brings to our Adolescent population and Community more than a medical/Psych SW service, we bring preventive measures by helping and educating our Adolescents to take charge of their health!

Moreover, Morton is not only a School Based Adolescent Health Center – we are their refuge and their voice - we advocate for them!

For our Adolescents we are that “place” where no one would judge their decision to become sexually active, or if they want start the process to reveal their sexual orientation to their parents and don’t know how their reaction would be, or when patient comes for “regular” appointment and provider has gained that trust so patient reveals that has been abused, or when patient comes for counseling and Psych SW needs to call ambulance because patient is about to commit suicide, or when a family t just came from their native country and kids need to start school but there’s all these requirements to fulfill in order for kids to start school – someone gave to those parents our name “Morton Clinic”.

Morton might appear to CCH as an expense, however to our Adolescents and Community we are their safe-haven, where our Adolescents feel cared, not judged, we are a place where we just understand their needs and help them heal physically and emotionally.

I know that this is a very difficult decision, yet I wish CCH could see “Morton Clinic” in the same way our Adolescent population and Community had seen us for the past 20 years – a “clinic” where our Adolescent students can receive fundamental and preventive services – with companionate care.

Respectfully

Rocio Vargas-Garcia

Electronic Testimonial Submission

No Reply - Cook County Health <WP-Notifications@cookcountyhealth.org>

Wed 9/9/2020 12:20 PM

To: Santana, Debbie <dsantana@cookcountyhhs.org>

Type of Message

Message

Message

Please keep the Morton East school clinic open, it is a vital public health resource in Cicero where we have poor health due to our local government. We have high levels of water and air pollution, high rates of covid, and poor working conditions in our local businesses. The local clinic is hugely helpful for our community.

Date of Meeting or Public Hearing

09/09/2020

Name

Rodrigo Anzures-Oyorzabal

Address

[Redacted Address]

Phone

[Redacted Phone]

Phone Type

[Redacted Phone Type]

Email

[Redacted Email]