

Cook County Health System - LWVCC ANNUAL MEETING 5/18/2021

Background: The Cook County Health System has been providing patient care to the residents of Cook County for over 180 years. Locations include Stroger Hospital, Provident Hospital, and the Cermak Jail Center as well as 15 ambulatory health locations.

Since 2008, it has been governed by an independent board of eleven members. In November 2019 the board unanimously voted **not** to extend CEO, Jay Shannon's contract, and in December of 2020, Mr. Israel Rocha, Jr. was hired as the new CEO. The Ordinance governing the Independent board was changed in 2020 to provide more financial and management oversight by the Cook County President and Commissioners. A worrisome trend is board turnover. Three board members were replaced at the end of their terms in 2020 and another four members' terms are expiring in June 2021, including the board chair.

Challenges:

- Managing the COVID crisis at the Public Health Department and Hospitals/Care Centers.
- Attracting a new CFO, Managed Health Care's CEO, and Public Health Chief.
- Getting hospitals in CC to pick up more charity patients – CCH serves between 45 and 50%.
- Maintaining the ability to guarantee patient care regardless of ability to pay.
- Deciding to cancel or go forward with replacing the old Provident Hospital.
- Instilling a system-wide belief that CCH must grow to survive:
 - @ Keep more of its Managed Care patients from going to other providers
 - @ Change the culture and patients' willingness to recommend
 - @ Convert its current Medicaid patients to Medicare when eligible
 - @ Marketing the 2020 partnership with *More Care*, a new Medicare Advantage health plan, which has not yet met expectations in terms of members and revenue

The League's Role - Observe, Educate, and Advocate:

- ❖ Met virtually with CCH Budget leaders for a presentation of the 2021 budget. We questioned the estimated cost of the new State requirement to provide Medicaid coverage for Undocumented Seniors 65+.
- ❖ Observed all monthly board meetings and several committee meetings. We welcome observers to cover board meetings which are held during the day.
- ❖ Added observing the monthly Cook County Commissioners Health & Hospital Committee's monthly meeting for Covid updates from the Public Health Department.
- ❖ CCH Board and Staff interviews were put on hold due to Covid-19's "all hands on deck".
- ❖ Worked with the Civic Federation to again press CCH to commit to live streaming and video-taping board and committee meetings beyond its current accommodation to virtual meetings via Facebook. A letter and testimony statement was sent to the Board and read at its October meeting. We will continue to follow up on this good governance transparency issue.
- ❖ Continued our follow up with the CC-CFO on the CCH Management audit that was requested by the CC Commissioners and due by July 2020. It has been on hold due to COVID and the new CEO

- ❖ The 2020 tour of Provident Hospital is still on hold due to COVID-19 as is the tour of the old Stroger Hospital.

Diane Edmundson, Chair Cook County Health Interest Group