

## Cook County Health (CCH) System – Annual Meeting Report 2023

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, An HIV-AIDS clinic, and 12 community health centers throughout the county.

It also provides health care at the Cermak Jail, the Juvenile Temporary Detention Center and through its Managed Care Insurance Plan. It reported that over 600,000 were served in 2022 including a surge of migrants needing health screening and services. The System's 2023 budget increased to just over \$4 billion including its Managed Care Insurance Plan at \$2.6 Billion.

### **Let's turn to Challenges:**

Between increased emphasis on Public Health, serious staffing shortages, initiating new upgrades and services at Provident, AND a strong mandate for more health equity throughout the county, the System will need to stretch its tight resources in order TO:

- 1) Continue to Serve *Uninsured* patients regardless of citizenship status – The System now provides health services to undocumented adults age 42 and over 40% of the entire Cook County pool of charity care patients. This percentage came down during the COVID years as the Federal Government passed down more Medicaid money to cover the formerly non-eligible.
- 2) Increase the budget and staff of the Public Health Department to meet today's and future needs of its County suburban residents. The Department just released its 2023-25 Strategic Plan - "*Putting the Public in Public Health.*"
- 3) Providing services as the primary health care provider for recent asylum seekers coming to Chicago. The Belmont Cragin Center is the primary service location.
- 4) To keep more of its Managed Care patients from going to other providers and convert its current Medicaid patients to Medicare when eligible.
- 5) Serve as a top tier provider for all patients by eliminating two-standards of care.

### **The League's Activities in 2022-23**

Our Interest group's topics of focus include:

- 1) Financial Transparency and Stability of the system
- 2) Quality of care and services at the hospitals and centers
- 3) Outsourcing of Services – particularly Nursing positions.
- 4) The System's Managed Care Program "County Care".

In October of 22, the CCH Interest Group held an informal Zoom meeting discussion with retired Inspector General, Patrick Blanchard. He offered several suggestions for monitoring including the Procurement practices and the loss of CCH middle management.

- In the summer of 2022, we met virtually with CCH Budget leaders for a presentation of its proposed 2023 budget of just under \$4 billion dollars. We questioned the estimated cost of the State requirement to provide Medicaid coverage for not only 65+ undocumented seniors, but now those age 42 to 65 are also eligible.
- We also requested that this and future annual budgets include three years of historical data as context; asked if/when the System **will** separate the Managed Care Budget from the system-wide budget; and again, urged that future budget hearings with the League also include other good government organizations in the same meeting.
- We observed all monthly board meetings, several committee meetings, and Town Hall meetings. We also observe the monthly Cook County Commissioners' Health & Hospital Committee's monthly meeting for updates from the System's Management Team including the Public Health Department. And at the end of the year, we observe the Cook County's Finance Committee's Annual Budget Hearings which includes Cook County Health.
- And we are working with the Civic Federation on issues of mutual interest such as more transparency and in-depth policy discussion at board meetings such as a robust debate and decision to cancel or go forward with replacing the old Provident Hospital.
- After 4 years of League and Civic Federation advocacy for live streaming and taping, the Board started live streaming on YouTube during COVID, and has agreed to continue to do so once in-person board and committee meetings begin this month. They have also agreed to post taped videos to You-Tube as a resource for the public, the staff, and good government observers. **OK, COVID and a new management team helped – but we were ever persistent!!!**

Interest Group: Diane Edmundson, Chair; Susan Avila, Susan Kern, Peg Moster, Michele Niccolai, Lisa Slankard

May 5, 2023