

Healthy Communities Cook County



HC3

Access Living – Cambiando Vidas

Access to Care

American Federation of State, County &
Municipal Employees (AFSCME)

Apna Ghar

Arise Chicago

Asian American Advancing Justice (AAAJ)

Brighton Park Neighborhood Council (BPNC)

Centro Autonomo

Centro de Trabajadores Unidos (CTU)

Chicago Coalition for the Homeless (CCH)

Chicago Irish Immigrant Support

Communities United (CU)

Community Wellness Program/St. Anthony
Hospital

ENLACE Chicago

Fight For 15!

Hanul Family Alliance

Heartland Alliance

Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee
Rights (ICIRR)

Korean American Community Services (KACS)

Logan Square Neighborhood Association
(LSNA)

Mujeres Latinas en Accion

National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)
Chicago

Northside Community Resources

Northeastern Illinois University-Undocumented
Student project

P.A.S.O- West Suburban Action project

Salud Sin Papeles

Service Employment International Union –
Health Care (SEIU- HealthCare)

Southwest Organizing Project (SWOP)

Young Invincibles

My name is Eric Arnaud Ekra and I am leader with Communities United formally known as Albany Park Neighborhood Councils.

I am a full time student at North Park University from the Ivory Coast and will be graduating this year with a degree in international business.

When I first came to this country, I was shocked to see how expensive it was to get an education and to have health care access. Especially since in my country, even with limited resources, free health care is provided to all of its residents. It was a cultural shock when I learned and still cannot believe that this great country would not provide free or affordable quality health care to all of their people.

Furthermore, it is hard for me and I am sure for other uninsured families, to know by not having access to health care you can lose everything and even go into bankruptcy from just one hospital bill. I haven't seen a doctor in years because at the end of month I rather pay for my education than my health. I know as a rule of thumb I should see a doctor once a year for physical however not having access to affordable health near me and cost of healthcare constantly prevents me from accessing care. When I get sick, I rather stay home and take home remedies and pray that it's nothing serious because I don't want to be like other uninsured families where I have to make a choice between paying my bills or a hospital bill.

Consequently, people like me that are uninsured live sicker, die younger and are always one health emergency from financial ruin.

Therefore, A coordinated managed care access program like HC3 would allow me to manage my health care through preventative care, while reducing the cost of care which means saving tax payers money. Having a task force that will bring all the important decision makers at the table to discuss how to make that a reality is a step in the right direction.

Because we will not have a healthy cook county until everyone has access to quality affordable health care. Our health care system is stronger when everyone has health care access.

I would like to introduce Dan Rabbits from Heartland Alliance. If the commissioners have any technical questions- for the Healthy Communities Cook Coalition and its members today, he will be answering them.