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COMPLETE

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Q1

Please provide some basic information

Witness Name:	Dian Palmer
Organization (if any):	SEIU Local 73
City/Town:	Chicago
State:	IL
ZIP:	60607

Q2

Tell us which meeting you wish to be recorded as a witness. If you don't know the meeting or date, we can help at 312.603.6398 or cookcounty.board@cookcountyil.gov. You can also look up using the County Calendar or the Forest Preserve Calendar. Please fill out a separate form for each meeting at which you wish to speak.

County Health and Hospitals Committee Public Hearing 9/20/2021 230p

Q3

Tell us the File ID number (example 17-0000) of the item on which you are registering your position. If you don't know the number, we can help at 312.603.6398 or cookcounty.board@cookcountyil.gov. You can also look it up using the County Calendar or the Forest Preserve Calendar

general written comment

Q4

What do you want to do?

PROVIDE WRITTEN COMMENT FOR INFORMATION ONLY (You may add written comments below)

Q5

Written Statement? You can type or copy/paste any written statement you want included in the meeting record here. If this is not enough space, or you have other attachments for distribution, please email them to cookcounty.board@cookcountyil.gov

Dear Commissioners,

My name is Dian Palmer and I am the president of SEIU Local 73. We represent 28,000 primarily public sector workers across the state of Illinois and northwest Indiana. Nearly 1,800 of these members work for Cook County Health and 1,200 who work for various other County departments. I am writing today on their behalf to strongly encourage you to take advantage of the current moment to open more school-based health centers (SBHCs) throughout Cook County to address the mental and medical needs of our most vulnerable. The time to expand access to this critical care is now as the County and potential partners, such as municipalities and school districts, finalize their annual budgets and determine how to use the American Rescue Plan Act funds.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, between March and May of last year, hospitals across the country saw a 24% increase in the number of mental health emergency visits by kids aged 5 to 11 years old, and a 31% increase for kids 12 to 17. There will not be a "post"-pandemic environment. There will only be a living with COVID-19 environment for our children henceforth as we have already entered the third consecutive school year disrupted by this one disease. New SBHCs operated by Cook County Health could connect adolescents with Skilled Cook County Health staff to meet the mental & medical health needs of adolescents dealing with the repercussions of the pandemic and long-standing health inequities primarily impacting communities of color. SBHCs can help address adolescent behavioral and mental health needs to also reduce violence in communities, disrupt the school to prison pipeline, improve academic outcomes, decrease emergency room use and hospitalization, and link adolescents with a medical home they may not already have.

I am glad to see our Cook County Commissioners seeking guidance, data and feedback through these quarterly reports on our region's mental health needs. I strongly encourage them to consider opening new SBHCs as soon as possible as part of the solution.

I thank you for your time commissioners and am available at any time to discuss this opportunity further.

Sincerely,

Dian Palmer
President, SEIU Local 73

Q6

Submitting written testimony only

Please Indicate if you are only submitting written testimony or if you wish to address the Committee live (virtually) at the meeting.

Q7

Respondent skipped this question

If requesting to address the Committee live (virtually), please provide an email address and phone number (This is required to receive and an invitation to the virtual meeting).
