

# COOK COUNTY HEALTH & HOSPITALS SYSTEM

Toni Preckwinkle

President

Cook County Board of Commissioners

John Jay Shannon, MD

Chief Executive Officer

Cook County Health & Hospitals System



COOK COUNTY HEALTH  
& HOSPITALS SYSTEM  
**CCHHS**

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November 3, 2014

Anne Scheetz, MD, FACP  
2417 West Medill Avenue  
Chicago, IL 60647

Dear Dr. Scheetz,

This is in response to your inquiry regarding the 'closing of four County public health clinics and the planned closure of the TB control clinic'. Thank you for the obvious passion you bring to your profession and advocacy.

Please understand that we are not eliminating any services rather transitioning them from one CCHHS department to another. Over the course of the past several years, CCHHS has focused on creating a medical home model to provide our patients with a primary care team and access to needed specialty and ancillary services in a coordinated fashion. Providing patients with comprehensive services under the guidance of a team of providers is the right thing to do for patient care particularly as we move into a mandatory managed care environment in Illinois. But let me be clear-we think it is the right approach for all, insured or not.

The Cook County Department of Public Health (CCDPH) provided a number of clinical services including family planning, sexually transmitted disease clinics, dental, WIC and immunization clinics over the years. In 2011, the Health System began transitioning stand-alone clinics out of courthouses and into our sixteen ambulatory health centers in the Ambulatory and Community Health Network, and the Ruth M. Rothstein CORE Center.

The planned transition of Sexually Transmitted Infection (STI), Family Planning, and immunization clinics this year is the final step transitioning CCHHS funded services. It is important to note that there will be no reduction in funding, services or employees. The funding (\$2M), services and 23 employees are simply moving within CCHHS from public health to ambulatory. This transition aligns with the principles of a medical home model and eliminates the fragmented way in which patients receive care.

Patients have been notified and instructed on how to access these CCHHS clinics. As we do with all patients, we will conduct a financial screening to determine eligibility for Medicaid or our charity care program, CareLink (see <http://www.cookcountyhhs.org/patient-services/billing-financial-assistance/assistance-programs/>). It is anticipated that these public health patients, particularly those without insurance or the means to pay, will remain in our system eliminating the need for them to see non-CCHHS 'over-burdened providers (who) may be stuck with uncollectable medical debt.' **It is important to understand that at no time will any patient be denied services because of his or her inability to pay.**

The mission of the Cook County Health & Hospitals System is to provide high quality, safe care to all regardless of one's ability to pay. We believe that this plan accomplishes both dimensions of that mission statement.

Sincerely,



John Jay Shannon, MD  
Chief Executive Officer  
Cook County Health & Hospitals System

cc: Toni Preckwinkle, President, Cook County Board of Commissioners  
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