



**LOYOLA
MEDICINE**

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TESTIMONY ON BEHALF OF ACCESS TO CARE

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Paul O'Keefe, MD

Thank you for the opportunity to speak here today. I am Dr. Paul O'Keefe, Chairman of the Department of Medicine at the Loyola University Medical Center. For many years, Loyola University Medical Center has operated a primary care clinic serving patients who are enrolled in the Access to Care Program. I am also one of the physician providers in the Access to Care program at the Loyola University Medical Center. In addition, I serve on the Access to Care Board of Directors. Thank you for the opportunity to speak here today and thank you for your support of the Access to Care program.

As a provider in the Access to Care program at our Medical Center, I have witnessed the enormous benefits of the program. For our patients, Access to Care has been an incredibly valuable resource. The majority of our patients are Spanish speaking and do not have access to other primary care providers in the community. Many are undocumented. We have incorporated Access to Care into our Internal Medicine and Medicine/Pediatrics continuity ambulatory clinic programs and are able to provide continuous primary care for wonderful hardworking patients who live in communities surrounding our medical center. Without Access to Care, they would have no care at all. I am asking you to please reinstate funding to Access to Care at the same level as the past few years.

Without "Access to Care", patients will wait until their condition has advanced to the point that they must go to the nearest emergency room adding to the burden of uncompensated care for the hospitals.

Others among the uninsured, if possible, will go to Stroger Hospital, which will impose a larger burden on Cook County government than a visit to their Access to Care doctor.

Thank you for your consideration of this request. We need Access to Care.