



COOK COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
FY 2017 BUDGET PUBLIC HEARINGS
Second District Courthouse
October 24, 2016

Dear Chairman Daley and Finance Committee Members:

I am Joy Carol Wykowski, Chair Elect of the Suburban Primary Health Care Council Board. I am here to thank you for your continued support of the Access to Care program and to urge you to fund the program in the FY2017 budget at \$1,500,000.

The Suburban Primary Health Care Council, the not-for-profit corporation that administers the Access to Care program, was formed in 1988 by a confederation of the Community and Economic Development Association of Cook County, Inc. (CEDA), the Northwest Suburban Cook County Health Care Task Force, the Park Forest Health Department, and the Cook County Department of Public Health, funded through a grant from the Chicago Community Trust. In 1991 Cook County began providing funding for the Access to Care program to fill in the gap of the uninsured. Twenty-five years later this public private partnership is successful because of this shared mission.

The Access to Care program provides the connection between community minded physicians throughout Cook County wishing to give back to their neighborhoods in which they practice and local residents who need affordable primary care. The 600 private physicians who care for uninsured working poor patients in the Access to Care program are estimated to contribute \$5,000,000 in in-kind contributions. The Access to Care network across more than 130 sites has opened up the medical infrastructure to the uninsured and underinsured and increased access to medical services in the communities where they live.

Access to Care is the most cost-effective vehicle for Cook County to strengthen community based health care. In 2016, it costs \$786 for one person to receive an unlimited number of physician office visits, lab tests, x-rays and prescription medications for a whole year, through one of our primary care sites.

We had the honor of hosting Senator Dick Durbin for a visit at our largest single primary care site – the Loyola Center for Health on Roosevelt - earlier this month. Senator Durbin said he “was so pleased to learn about the work Access to Care and Loyola Medicine are doing to treat chronic diseases like diabetes and hypertension and to bring every-day health services to people in need in Cook County.” I have included a copy of the event press release along with my testimony.

We thank you for your continued commitment to Access to Care, and urge you to fund the program in the FY2017 budget at \$1,500,000.