

I am Ron Bean, Adjunct Professor at Governors State University, Chairman of the Board for CEDA, a member of the District 162 School Board and a long time Board member for Access to Care. First, I want to thank you for supporting Access to Care.

Access to Care has been serving the uninsured and under-insured working poor in for 28 years and has been part of the Cook County health care delivery system since 1991. Access to Care provides a medical home to uninsured or under-insured patients in their own communities where they may see their Access to Care doctor an unlimited number of times for a \$5 co-payment. They may also get unlimited lab tests, x-rays and prescriptions drugs through Access to Care.

It is a very efficient program because it relies on existing infrastructure and donated and heavily discounted services. Last year, Access to Care received nearly \$5,000,000 in donated services. Access to Care has always been an efficient, cost-effective public-private partnership where County dollars go further because they are used by a charity to get donated and discounted services from the private system.

The implementation of the Affordable Care Act has helped a great many people get coverage who did not previously have coverage but, one in 15 of Cook County residents remain uninsured. Access to Care is here to help these people who remain in need. I would like to briefly share the story of one Access to Care member who dramatically illustrates the benefits of the work we do. At a recent Access to Care event, a Latina woman who looked to be about 60 years old approached Access to Care staff. She was asked if she was familiar with the program. She smiled very warmly and said that she was not only familiar with Access to Care but, was very grateful and indebted to us. Prior to joining Access to Care she had not seen a doctor regularly for 27 years, when she left Mexico. She pointed out that she walked with a limp and explained that she had severe diabetes that cost her foot 5 years prior. The diabetes had begun to affect her eyesight as well. She told us that in the two years that she has been an Access to Care member, her health has improved dramatically. She is getting the care and attention she needs and feels that Access to Care has saved her life. She then told us that her husband, who has anxiety, is also a member of Access and has been going for regular doctor visits that have also helped with his health issues. She thanked us and told us that Access to Care has been a blessing for her and her husband. She offered her hand which she pointed out was missing digits due to complications with diabetes.

Not all Access to Care clients have medical histories quite this severe but, the majority have chronic illness, diabetes and hypertension being the most common. Access to Care helps these people manage their illness before it progresses to more extreme results. If this woman had Access to Care years ago, perhaps she would not have lost her foot and fingers. The need for Access to Care is great, thousands of people remain uninsured.

Thank you for the opportunity to be heard here today.

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