

I am John Squeo, a member of the Board of Directors of the Access to Care program. I am also the Chief Innovation and Strategy Officer for Thorek Memorial Hospital, a community hospital serving many of the underserved patients in the Wrigleyville, Lakeview, and Uptown neighborhoods of Chicago. I firmly believe that it is in the mutual interest of all residents of IL to help their fellow residents in need of care. Getting care for those who cannot pay maintains the health of the community socially, economically and is a critical key to raising healthy children and controlling communicable diseases that all residents can be exposed to. I am here to thank you for funding the Access to Care program in the past and to urge you to reinstate funding for Access to Care in the 2018 budget.

Access to Care has been part of the delivery system of primary health care since 1991 when Cook County began providing funding. Access to Care serves the uninsured working poor throughout suburban Cook County. We use private physicians who give care to uninsured people in their own offices for \$68 per person per year and the patient's \$5 co-payment per visit. Access to Care has no overhead or capital expenses for these visits, nor for the diagnostic laboratory tests, x-rays, or prescriptions that the program also covers. The Access to Care program operates completely in the private sector of medicine.

The private sector gives discounts and in-kind contributions that would not be available to Cook County if it approached them directly. The nearly 600 private physicians who care for uninsured working poor patients in Access to Care are estimated to contribute \$3,000,000 in in-kind contributions.

Access to Care patients have been cared for in the private sector through the Access to Care program. We have opened up the medical infrastructure to a new group of people, the uninsured, and actually increased access.

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 discounts from the private system.

Access to Care is the most cost-effective vehicle for Cook County to reach people who live far from public facilities. It cost about \$750 this year for one person to receive a whole year's worth of health care services including prescription drugs. If you think of your own health insurance costs, that is extremely cost-effective.

Access to Care members are very often chronically ill and often with multiple chronic disease states. The most frequent diagnoses are diabetes, hypertension and other cardiovascular disease, depression and anxiety. Without treatment, these conditions

worsen and require much more expensive intervention often at Stroger's emergency room. With Access to Care these patients are able to remain productive and take care of their families.

We thank you for your past commitment to Access to Care and urge you to continue that financial support in 2018. Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

John Squeo