



Cook County Commissioners Finance Committee Public Hearing - Cook County Health and Hospital Systems' (CCHHS) Budget

Heidi Ortolaza-Alvear, Director - Child and Adolescent Health Initiative, EverThrive Illinois
November 6, 2017

My name is Heidi Ortolaza-Alvear, and I am the Director of the Child and Adolescent Health Initiative at EverThrive Illinois. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony. I am here to ask you to fully fund the Cook County Health and Hospital System's (CCHHS) FY18 budget, which includes the Morton East School Health Center (SHC).

EverThrive Illinois is a non-profit organization that has worked relentlessly over the past 29 years to improve the health of Illinois children, mothers, and families. We are devoted to promoting and implementing positive health care reform policies and strengthening Medicaid and other safety net systems in Illinois.

The CCHHS has been a tremendous partner in this work. Each year, the system serves approximately 300,000 patients operating two hospitals and a network of community health centers. It also provides healthcare to the detainees at Cook County Jail, serves a public health function for suburban Cook County, and continues to serve as the primary provider for the remaining uninsured and underinsured in Cook County. EverThrive Illinois is very concerned about potential cuts to the CCHHS budget. The system already operates on a lean budget and cuts would unavoidably have harmful ripple effects on the health and well-being of Cook County children, women, and families.

I want to speak more specifically about the Morton East SHC funded by CCHHS. This SHC has been in the community for over 21 years and currently receives **supportive funding from the Illinois Department of Public Health's School Health Grant Program**. The center is located in Morton East High School and provides primary care, behavioral health, and dental, nutrition, and prevention services to the student population and youth in the surrounding community. It serves the communities of Cicero, Berwyn, Stickney and Lyons.

While the SHC provides comprehensive services, it is important to highlight that approximately 30-40% of the youth accessing care are seeking mental health services, specifically. The Morton East SHC is a critical component to addressing the mental health needs of youth in the community.

The SHC minimizes barriers to care through its location in the school and commitment to see youth regardless of their ability to pay. At the same time, the health center accepts all participating insurance plans and managed care

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Chairperson

George R. Smith, Jr., EdD, MPH
Chicago State University

Secretary

Renee Friedman, JD
Katten Muchin Rosenman LLP

Treasurer

William Blum
Retired Finance Professional

Past Chairperson

Ellen Mason, MD
John H. Stroger, Jr. Hospital of Cook County

Jonah E. Anderson, MA
Crohn's & Colitis Foundation

Deanna Cardone, MBA
Abbott

Rashmi Chugh, MD
DuPage County Health Department

Betsy Covell, M.S.
Nokia

Mary Driscoll, RN, MPH

Mainza Lukobo-Durrell, DrPH
Jhpiego

Jennifer Hammonds, LCSW
Southern Illinois University-School of Medicine/Care-A-Van

Robin Hannon, MSN, RN
St. Clair County Health Department

Loretta Lattyak, RN, MEd
Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago

Jesse Meyer, MBA
Northwestern University's Feinberg School of Medicine
Northwestern Medical Group

Tamela Milan, MPPA
Access Community Health Network

Anita Chandra-Puri, MD
Northwestern Medicine
Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago

Michael S. Taitel, PhD
Walgreen Co.

Ariel Thomas, M.S.
Metropolitan Chicago Breast Cancer Task Force

Shaan K. Trotter, MSc
Robert H. Lurie Comprehensive Cancer Center of Northwestern University

Executive Director

Sessy Nyman

organizations contracted with CCHHS, and is a revenue-generating source for the system. The health center also minimizes costs. The SHC employs a lean but effective staff of four: A Nurse Practitioner; a Licensed Clinical Social Worker; a Medical Assistant; and a Clerk, and incurs no facilities costs, as the school provides the space.

EverThrive Illinois strongly supports the continued full funding of the Morton East SHC and the FY18 CCHHS budget. Through the technical assistance, training, and advocacy we provide to the 66 SHCs across the State, we understand the critical role the Morton East SHC plays in its community and the detrimental effects, especially on youth, if it were no longer located in the school.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony tonight, and I welcome any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

Heidi Ortolaza-Alvear
Director, Child and Adolescent Health Initiative
EverThrive Illinois
HOrtolaza-Alvear@everthriveil.org