

October 29, 2018

Good morning. I am Dr Maurice Lemon, Chairman of the Board for the Access to Care program. I have served on the ATC Board for over 20 years --nearly as long as the 26 years I worked at Cook County and then Stroger Hospital, serving as Hospital Medical Director and in other roles. I am here today to thank you for your support of the Access to Care program and to urge you to continue that support in the 2018 budget.

The need for high quality primary health care for residents of Cook County persists despite the recent changes in Medicaid and commercial insurance availability, through the Affordable Care Act. A recent study from the Kaiser Family Foundation found that, after implementation of the Affordable Care Act, there are still about 500,000 uninsured in Cook County- 300,000 in the City and 200,000 in suburban Cook County. From my admittedly biased experience, CCHHS does a heroic job in delivering care to ~~those in need~~ ^{the uninsured} ~~those in need~~, but it can't meet the demand for care from all those in need. And so ATC was formed to deliver primary care to ~~at least~~ a portion of the uninsured population -- particularly in those parts of the County that don't have convenient access to primary care services through CCHHS or charitable sources.

As you may know, ^(CCHHS) the way Access to Care works is by contracting with local primary care providers who, for very little remuneration, essentially volunteer their time to serve Access to Care members. Because of their volunteerism, we are able to assign members of Access to Care to a primary care physician in their own community. In addition, ATC members can receive multiple office visits to their Access to Care doctor for a \$5 co-pay. They are also able to get a range of ~~routine~~ lab tests and x-rays for a \$5 co-pay and prescription medications for \$15-\$40 co-pays. Recently, we have added access to counseling and outpatient behavior health for many of our members.

Access to Care is very cost efficient. Our yearly outside audits have repeatedly found that the vast majority of funds are used in direct support of patient services. Because of that we are able to provide a physician office visits, lab tests, x-rays and prescription drugs for about \$650 a year per person. We successfully leverage the impact of Cook County and other funds. ^{last} Last year, Access to Care received donated services and discounts amounting to over \$5,000,000.

We work closely with CCHHS as well as other health care systems to provide an avenue to care for our members who develop subspecialty care needs. We also work closely with Cook County townships and social service agencies so that persons in need of primary care services may sign up at any of 57 locations throughout Cook County. Members may download an application and enroll by mail or sign up at any number of local events that Access to Care staff attend.

The members of Access to Care must be ^{low income} uninsured and ineligible for public ^{Medicaid} insurance ---- or they may have insurance but with huge deductibles. ^{as is} ^{increasingly} ^{the case,} Our members ^{are} ^{all} ^{Medicaid} ^{all}

have one or more chronic diseases--- like diabetes, hypertension and other heart disease, and need regular medical followup. As a primary care physician myself, I know that this care can provide the support necessary to manage and control their illness. By keeping members healthy and out of the emergency room, they can continue to work and take care of their families. *Contribute to the wellbeing of our country*

We urge you to continue your support for ^{Account 67} the members and I thank you for the opportunity to speak here today.