

**WRITTEN TESTIMONY FOR FINANCE COMMITTEE BUDGET HEARINGS  
20-4595 - FY 2021 EXECUTIVE BUDGET RECOMMENDATION**

	Witness Name:	Organization (if any):	City/Town:
36.	Gail Shelton	New Moms	Oak Park
37.	Lisa Litberg	Concerned Citizen	Chicago
38.	Gerardo Nava	Rizoma Collective	Cicero
39.	Maria Gutierrez	Concerned Citizen	
40.	Destiny Cisneros	Concerned Citizen	
41.	Dr. Rosario Pesce	Health/Safety Cmte of the Cicero Community Collaborative	Cicero
42.	Delia Barajas	St. Frances of Rome Church	Cicero
43.	Mary Calderon	New Moms	Oak Park
44.	Morad Misleh	Concerned Citizen	Cicero
45.	Mohammad Misleh	Concerned Citizen	Cicero
46.	Georgia Hiotis	Morton Alternative High School	Cicero
47.	Bertha Simmons	Concerned Citizen	Chicago
48.	Brenda Jackson	Concerned Citizen	Chicago
49.	Carmen Vergara	Esperanza Health Centers	Chicago
50.	Darrel McKinney	Concerned Citizen	Chicago
51.	Dr. Angell Jones	Cook County Health	Chicago
52.	Dr. Jacqueline Harrison	Cook County Health	Chicago
53.	Dr. Mark Loafman	Cook County Health	Chicago
54.	Dr. Raymond Narh	Cook County Health	Chicago
55.	Kent Pointdexter	Concerned Citizen	Chicago
56.	Mary Galloway	Concerned Citizen	Chicago
57.	Milton Walker	Concerned Citizen	Chicago
58.	Rita Hemphill	Concerned Citizen	Chicago
59.	Shirley Cain	Concerned Citizen	Chicago
60.	Dr. Raymond Narh	Cook County Health	Chicago
61.	ER staff at provident hospital	Provident Hospital	
62.	Rodrigo Anzures-Oyorzabal	Concerned Citizen	Cicero
63.	Tara Chatteraj	Concerned Citizen	Oak Park
64.	Dian Palmer	SEIU 73	Chicago
65.	Glenn Spoolstra	Elim Christian Services	Crestwood
66.	Pia Kanoy	The Inner Voice, Inc.	Chicago
67.	Cindy Eigler	Chicago Torture Justice Center	Chicago
68.	Rosa Ruiz	Concerned Citizen	

#36

COMPLETE

**Collector:** Web Link 1 (Web Link)  
**Started:** Tuesday, October 27, 2020 12:59:06 PM  
**Last Modified:** Tuesday, October 27, 2020 1:03:06 PM  
**Time Spent:** 00:04:00  
**IP Address:** 73.45.101.99

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Page 1

## Q1

Please provide some basic information

Witness Name:	<b>Gail Shelton</b>
Organization (if any):	<b>New Moms</b>
City/Town:	<b>Oak Park</b>
State:	<b>IL</b>
ZIP:	<b>60302</b>

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## Q2

Written Statement? You can type or copy/paste any written statement you want included in the meeting record here. If this is not enough space, or you have other attachments for distribution, please email them to [cookcounty.board@cookcountyil.gov](mailto:cookcounty.board@cookcountyil.gov)

New Moms has been supporting pregnant and parenting teens from Morton East for over 7 years with a weekly support group, home visiting and parenting support. The Clinic has been a crucial entity that the moms have used for resources and support and by having it onsite made in easy for them to access. I feel that the school needs this type of support onsite not just for our moms but for the whole student body.

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## Q3

Acknowledgement of submitting written testimony only

**I understand that by submitting written comments here, I am not signing up to speak live (virtually) at the hearing. I am only submitting written comments to be posted online as part of the official record.**

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#37

COMPLETE

**Collector:** Web Link 1 (Web Link)  
**Started:** Tuesday, October 27, 2020 1:56:26 PM  
**Last Modified:** Tuesday, October 27, 2020 1:57:36 PM  
**Time Spent:** 00:01:10  
**IP Address:** 64.107.167.4

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Page 1

## Q1

Please provide some basic information

Witness Name:	Lisa Litberg
City/Town:	Chicago
State:	IL
ZIP:	60634

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## Q2

Written Statement? You can type or copy/paste any written statement you want included in the meeting record here. If this is not enough space, or you have other attachments for distribution, please email them to [cookcounty.board@cookcountyil.gov](mailto:cookcounty.board@cookcountyil.gov)

The clinic at Morton East is crucial to providing health care and mental health supports to a community that is drastically in need during this pandemic. I hope they will be able to continue their services.

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## Q3

Acknowledgement of submitting written testimony only

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#38

COMPLETE

**Collector:** Web Link 1 (Web Link)  
**Started:** Tuesday, October 27, 2020 3:03:06 PM  
**Last Modified:** Tuesday, October 27, 2020 3:11:14 PM  
**Time Spent:** 00:08:07  
**IP Address:** 73.110.134.233

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Page 1

## Q1

Please provide some basic information

Witness Name:	Gerardo Nava
Organization (if any):	Rizoma Collective
City/Town:	Cicero
State:	IL
ZIP:	60804

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## Q2

Written Statement? You can type or copy/paste any written statement you want included in the meeting record here. If this is not enough space, or you have other attachments for distribution, please email them to [cookcounty.board@cookcountyil.gov](mailto:cookcounty.board@cookcountyil.gov)

I write to express my concern about the possibility of closure of the Morton Clinic in Cicero it has played an important role in providing resources and a place for members of the community to seek medical support not just for members of the community but also to the students that attend District 201. The lost of this location as a community resource would cripple support that is needed for the community.

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## Q3

Acknowledgement of submitting written testimony only

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#39

COMPLETE

**Collector:** Web Link 1 (Web Link)  
**Started:** Tuesday, October 27, 2020 3:49:03 PM  
**Last Modified:** Tuesday, October 27, 2020 3:50:57 PM  
**Time Spent:** 00:01:54  
**IP Address:** 73.22.159.125

Page 1

Q1

Please provide some basic information

Witness Name: **Maria Gutierrez**

Q2

Written Statement? You can type or copy/paste any written statement you want included in the meeting record here. If this is not enough space, or you have other attachments for distribution, please email them to [cookcounty.board@cookcountyil.gov](mailto:cookcounty.board@cookcountyil.gov)

My name is Maria Gutierrez. I currently live in Cicero and have a daughter that goes to the Morton East school-based health center. My daughter's doctor recently moved, and the school-based health center is now the only place where my daughter can access care in my neighborhood. She has a really great relationship with the behavioral health provider there, Ms. Diana, and does not want to see any other provider. She puts all of her trust in Ms. Diana, and they have established a great relationship. Ms. Diana even visited my daughter when she was in a psychiatric hospital.

If Ms. Diana were no longer there to provide services to my daughter, it would be very hard on my daughter emotionally. It would be very frustrating, upsetting, and a really hard situation to deal with. It would be especially difficult because the pandemic is going on, and my daughter is already having a hard time adjusting to all of the changes. Ms. Diana has helped keep her depression from getting worse, and always has a new strategy or project to help her cope with everything that is going on.

For my daughter's sake, I ask that Cook County Health and Hospital System continue to operate the school-based health center at Morton East so that she can keep getting the care she needs from Ms. Diana.

Q3

Acknowledgement of submitting written testimony only

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#40

COMPLETE

**Collector:** Web Link 1 (Web Link)  
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**Last Modified:** Tuesday, October 27, 2020 3:54:14 PM  
**Time Spent:** 00:00:34  
**IP Address:** 73.22.159.125

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Page 1

Q1

Please provide some basic information

Witness Name: **Destiny Cisneros**

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Q2

Written Statement? You can type or copy/paste any written statement you want included in the meeting record here. If this is not enough space, or you have other attachments for distribution, please email them to [cookcounty.board@cookcountyil.gov](mailto:cookcounty.board@cookcountyil.gov)

My name is Destiny Cisneros, and I am a student at Morton East High School. At my school, a lot of students rely on our school-based health center (SBHC), and although that might sound like a nurse's office, it actually offers much more. The Morton East Adolescent Ambulatory Community Health Center provides health care services to students and community members in Cicero. It also offers mental health care. Mental health care is especially important as more and more students have problems with issues like depression, grief, or anxiety. These struggles can lead to bad grades, not going to school, or worse. With the help of the staff at Morton East SBHC, students and the community can receive treatment that will help them feel better and continue to succeed in school and life.

I don't have the opportunity to be able to get driven places and SBHC is walking distance from my house which is beneficial for me and my mother. I get my regular checkups there and all the things I need done there. They have helped me become a better person thanks to the therapy I receive there. They are immensely helpful to me and I appreciate SBHC for that.

The Morton East SBHC is an important part of our community, and preserving the mental, emotional, and physical health services provided at my school is vitally important. Especially now, when the ongoing stress created by the pandemic, has changed our lives. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of my SBHC.

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Q3

Acknowledgement of submitting written testimony only

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#41

COMPLETE

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**Started:** Tuesday, October 27, 2020 5:37:52 PM  
**Last Modified:** Tuesday, October 27, 2020 5:56:02 PM  
**Time Spent:** 00:18:09  
**IP Address:** 76.195.239.238

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Page 1

Q1

Please provide some basic information

Witness Name:	Dr. Rosario Pesce
Organization (if any):	Health/Safety Cmte of the Cicero Community Collaborative
City/Town:	Cicero
State:	IL
ZIP:	60634-2919

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Q2

Written Statement? You can type or copy/paste any written statement you want included in the meeting record here. If this is not enough space, or you have other attachments for distribution, please email them to [cookcounty.board@cookcountyil.gov](mailto:cookcounty.board@cookcountyil.gov)

I have been involved in the Cicero/Berwyn community for decades having worked at the J. Sterling Morton High School District #201 from which I retired in 2007. I remain an active member of the Cicero Community Collaborative's Health and Safety Committee. As a district school psychologist who worked with countless students and staff, I clearly remember the number of needs that the clinic quickly began to address when it first opened seeking to address health care access to the community, a community with many members who were uninsured. Prominent among these services were working with young parents, having children while still in high school. Because of the support received from the clinic, the drop-out rate of this population was significantly reduced, thus helping pave the way for these young parents to graduate and seek higher education. In time, services expanded as the needs of the community spanned a wider range of health and emotional needs. The clinic staff were always in tune with the needs of the community and advocated for increasing the scope of the clinic. Leaders of the clinic have been a part of the fabric of the coalitions formed over the years to meet the needs of children, youth and their families. The clinic is an important part of this vital community. I urge you to continue its support.

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Q3

Acknowledgement of submitting written testimony only

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#42

COMPLETE

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**Last Modified:** Tuesday, October 27, 2020 6:53:38 PM  
**Time Spent:** 00:33:02  
**IP Address:** 4.79.239.34

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Page 1

Q1

Please provide some basic information

Witness Name:	Delia Barajas
Organization (if any):	St. Frances of Rome Church
City/Town:	Cicero
State:	IL
ZIP:	60804

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## Q2

Written Statement? You can type or copy/paste any written statement you want included in the meeting record here. If this is not enough space, or you have other attachments for distribution, please email them to [cookcounty.board@cookcountyil.gov](mailto:cookcounty.board@cookcountyil.gov)

My name is Delia Barajas, I am a 30 year Cicero community member. My 6 children attended and graduated from Morton East High School. During this time I was concerned with the lack of medical resources for our community. I worked closely with other Cicero community members and Congressman Garcia to open the school based clinic. I became part of the first board to ensure the uninsured and under-insured students had medical resources available to them. Several students and their children have been able to receive medical services without missing school days. The Cicero based Clinic is the only clinic our students are able to utilize during school. Cicero, is a low income Environmental Justice community where our families are overwhelmed with pollution. This causes several health adverse impacts like asthma, cancer, COPD, and other illnesses. We live next door to the largest wastewater facility in the world. The Stickney Plant emits noxious gaseous odors everyday. Cicero, is also a hot spot for lead recently we learned that Cicero's drinking water has lead. There is no safe level of lead for our families lead can bring irreversible brain damage to our young children.

Now with the pandemic Cicero is a hot spot for COVID-19 with 15.48% positivity cases. Cicero, has the second highest COVID-19 cases in suburban cook county. This is not the time to eliminate resources for our low income communities during a pandemic. Our communities of color are racially impacted creating health injustices for our students. You must not shut down this clinic taking away health resources from are already vulnerable communities.

I propose the board utilize the \$1 million given to Cicero from the Cares Act to keep the clinic open. Where is the accountability from board members to the students of Cicero?

Regards,  
Delia Barajas

## Q3

Acknowledgement of submitting written testimony only

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#43

COMPLETE

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**Last Modified:** Tuesday, October 27, 2020 9:29:19 PM  
**Time Spent:** 00:14:18  
**IP Address:** 73.176.197.145

Page 1

## Q1

Please provide some basic information

Witness Name:	Mary Calderon
Organization (if any):	New Moms
City/Town:	Oak Park
State:	IL
ZIP:	60302

## Q2

Written Statement? You can type or copy/paste any written statement you want included in the meeting record here. If this is not enough space, or you have other attachments for distribution, please email them to [cookcounty.board@cookcountyil.gov](mailto:cookcounty.board@cookcountyil.gov)

Dear finance committee,

I am writing on behalf of keeping the Morton East School Based Health Center open and at the school. I am a community-based doula that provides free birth and postpartum doula services to pregnant and parenting students and young community members, in the cicero area. Many of the pregnant students I support through our social service agency, New Moms, attend Morton East high school, and the health clinic is integral in providing many of them prenatal care and quick access to medical providers should they need it during their school days. Many times the pregnant students have been able to quickly go to the health clinic when they have medical needs in leu of having to go to the ER or wait for an opening at their primary care doctors. Having quality medical care access within the school not only improves the health outcomes of the pregnant and non pregnant students, but it allows them to maintain their academic goals since they do not have to take a morning or day off from classes to attend routine or non routine medical appointments.

The Morton East SBHC is integral within the cicero community, and it helps preserve the mental, emotional, and physical health of everyone in the community, especially the students who attend the local schools. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of the school based health center.

Mary Calderon

Birth and Postpartum Doula at New Moms

## Q3

Acknowledgement of submitting written testimony only

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#44

COMPLETE

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**Started:** Tuesday, October 27, 2020 11:26:49 PM  
**Last Modified:** Tuesday, October 27, 2020 11:36:20 PM  
**Time Spent:** 00:09:31  
**IP Address:** 73.74.218.223

Page 1

## Q1

Please provide some basic information

**Witness Name:** Morad Misleh  
**City/Town:** Cicero  
**State:** IL  
**ZIP:** 60804

## Q2

Written Statement? You can type or copy/paste any written statement you want included in the meeting record here. If this is not enough space, or you have other attachments for distribution, please email them to [cookcounty.board@cookcountyil.gov](mailto:cookcounty.board@cookcountyil.gov)

The School Based Health Center should not have services interrupted as it will have a lasting impact on the school and community as a whole. I served as a Nurse's Aide for three years as a high school student between my sophomore and senior years. At first, I thought of it as a way to get ahead on homework, but I quickly realized the limited time I volunteered made a big difference. Many students in the school system are low income, and this may be their only access to healthcare (albeit a limited capacity). Whether I was helping run wheelchairs to an emergency injury in the gymnasium, or bringing patients in for their daily dose of medicine, I knew my service was being used for the greater good.

My experience with the School Based Health Center is one of the main reasons I am in pursuit of joining the healthcare field as a dentist. From these volunteer hours, I saw firsthand the health disparities in the community, which is something I hope to address as I progress throughout my academic career. When I was an aide, I worked under Nurse Rosie and Nurse Diana, both of whom were amazing caretakers. Their comfort with the current system should not be interrupted as it can negatively impact the future healthcare workers we so desperately need. Through them, I saw compassion and service at its highest form. Simply watching them partaking in their craft was a gift.

It would be a mistake beyond bounds to interrupt services at the School Based Health Center at Morton East. As it stands, the SBHC's services cannot be replaced, nor should they even be tampered with.

## Q3

Acknowledgement of submitting written testimony only

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#45

COMPLETE

**Collector:** Web Link 1 (Web Link)  
**Started:** Tuesday, October 27, 2020 11:39:02 PM  
**Last Modified:** Tuesday, October 27, 2020 11:43:58 PM  
**Time Spent:** 00:04:56  
**IP Address:** 73.74.218.223

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Page 1

## Q1

Please provide some basic information

Witness Name:	Mohammad Misleh
City/Town:	Cicero
State:	IL
ZIP:	60804

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## Q2

Written Statement? You can type or copy/paste any written statement you want included in the meeting record here. If this is not enough space, or you have other attachments for distribution, please email them to [cookcounty.board@cookcountyil.gov](mailto:cookcounty.board@cookcountyil.gov)

Hello, I hope this testimony finds you well. I am sending this statement in hopes that The Cook County Health Board decides to fund the Morton East School Based Clinic through Cook County Hospital without disrupting its current flow.

The clinic at Morton East is critical to the community and the school in general. Located in Cicero, Illinois one of the poorer towns in the state, the clinic helps serve students who may not be able to afford health insurance. The clinic can prevent costly emergency room visits and reduce the costs of healthcare for families all the while making health care more accessible for teens and students. Other benefits include being able to evaluate mental health, the Morton East clinic staff understand how to help students maintain or boost one's psychological state. The clinic is able to provide wellness policies and health programs that are able to put students on a path to a healthy life.

As a former student one year ago, the school based clinic impacted me in a tremendous way. I was able to volunteer in the Nurse's Office and Clinic at my time in Morton. Being able to experience the care and passion that the Morton nursing and clinical staff provided to patients/students inspired me to pursue a Bachelors in Science of Nursing. Being a member provided me with lasting connections which will/are benefiting me in college.

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## Q3

Acknowledgement of submitting written testimony only

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#46

COMPLETE

**Collector:** Web Link 1 (Web Link)  
**Started:** Wednesday, October 28, 2020 7:47:08 AM  
**Last Modified:** Wednesday, October 28, 2020 7:58:40 AM  
**Time Spent:** 00:11:31  
**IP Address:** 64.107.167.4

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Page 1

**Q1**

Please provide some basic information

Witness Name:	Georgia Hiotis
Organization (if any):	Morton Alternative High School
City/Town:	Cicero
State:	IL
ZIP:	60804

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## Q2

Written Statement? You can type or copy/paste any written statement you want included in the meeting record here. If this is not enough space, or you have other attachments for distribution, please email them to [cookcounty.board@cookcountyil.gov](mailto:cookcounty.board@cookcountyil.gov)

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing this testimonial on behalf of the Morton East School Based Clinic. This clinic has played a vital and integral role in the Morton community. As a social worker within in the District, I have often referred students for a multiple of reasons. Students are able to access a multitude of comprehensive medical care that includes and is not limited to:

- Treatment for acute illness and injury
- School and Sports physicals
- Immunizations
- Phlebotomy services
- Nutrition counseling
- Sexually transmitted disease testing and treatment
- Pregnancy testing
- Preventive Health

The clinic provides much needed psychosocial and emotional health needs for students. Often times, it is difficult for many students within the Cicero/Berwyn community to access psychiatric care due to the lack of psychiatrists that accept Medicaid. I cannot count how many times; I have referred students for psychosocial assessments and was relieved they were linked with the appropriate services.

For over 25 years, Morton East School Based Clinic has been a crucial part of the care and well-being of District 201 students and families and has provided unconditional support to Cicero community.

Morton East School Based Clinic, District 201 and Cicero community we all had worked assiduously in building this relationship of trust, commitment and support.

In kind regards,  
Georgia Hiotis

## Q3

Acknowledgement of submitting written testimony only

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#47

COMPLETE

**Collector:** Web Link 1 (Web Link)  
**Started:** Wednesday, October 28, 2020 9:55:42 AM  
**Last Modified:** Wednesday, October 28, 2020 9:57:00 AM  
**Time Spent:** 00:01:18  
**IP Address:** 162.217.184.230

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Page 1

**Q1**

Please provide some basic information

Witness Name:	<b>Bertha Simmons</b>
City/Town:	<b>Chicago</b>
State:	<b>IL</b>
ZIP:	<b>60628</b>

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**Q2**

Written Statement? You can type or copy/paste any written statement you want included in the meeting record here. If this is not enough space, or you have other attachments for distribution, please email them to [cookcounty.board@cookcountyil.gov](mailto:cookcounty.board@cookcountyil.gov)

Statement submitted by Caryn Stancik in an email to the Secretary of the Board.

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**Q3**

Acknowledgement of submitting written testimony only

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Cook County Commissioners  
Cook County Board of Commissioners  
118 N. Clark Street  
Chicago, IL 606022

**RE: Fiscal Year 2021 Cook County Health Budget**

Dear Cook County Board of Commissioners,

I am Bertha Simmons and patient at Cook County Health, more specifically at the Woodlawn Health Center. I also get my specialty care at Provident Hospital. I am grateful to you and Cook County Health for providing great health services to others and me in my community.

I write this letter as I am in support of Cook County Health's plan to consolidate the Woodlawn Health Center services into Provident Hospital. While I have been a patient at Woodlawn and Cook County Health since the early 1990's, I see the positive impact that this move will yield as one will be able to get x-rays, therapy and primary care all in one location.

I cannot say anything bad about the medical services that I receive from your physicians. My primary care doctors, Dr. Claudia Fegan and Ratna Kanumury, PA provide excellent caring treatment. I love them. My foot doctor at Provident, Dr. Burke is amazing. My cardiologist, Dr. Velez is excellent too. All these medical professionals have made my life better, and as such, I'm grateful. Finally, please make sure that nothing happens to the US Postal Service as I receive my medications from the Oak Forest Mail Order Pharmacy, which service is a godsend. I applaud the people who work in the Mail order Pharmacy as I always get my medications on time.

I know that these Coronavirus times are difficult, but please note that we are grateful to have a comprehensive health system that provides for us. I pray that all of you remain healthy.

Many thanks for being there for us in the community.

Sincerely,

Bertha Simmons



#48

COMPLETE

**Collector:** Web Link 1 (Web Link)  
**Started:** Wednesday, October 28, 2020 9:58:33 AM  
**Last Modified:** Wednesday, October 28, 2020 9:59:15 AM  
**Time Spent:** 00:00:42  
**IP Address:** 162.217.184.230

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Page 1

**Q1**

Please provide some basic information

**Witness Name:** Brenda Jackson  
**City/Town:** Chicago  
**State:** IL

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**Q2**

Written Statement? You can type or copy/paste any written statement you want included in the meeting record here. If this is not enough space, or you have other attachments for distribution, please email them to [cookcounty.board@cookcountyil.gov](mailto:cookcounty.board@cookcountyil.gov)

Statement submitted by Caryn Stancik in an email to the Secretary of the Board.

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**Q3**

Acknowledgement of submitting written testimony only

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Cook County Board of Commissioners  
118 N. Clark Street  
Chicago, IL 60602

**RE: Fiscal Year 2021 Cook County Health Budget**

Dear Cook County Board of Commissioners,

I am Brenda Jackson and a patient at Cook County Health, more specifically at Provident Hospital. I am grateful to you and Cook County Health for providing great health services to me and others in my community.

I suffer from heart failure, and for the past year, I have been going to Provident Hospital to receive blood tests to ensure I am getting the correct dosage of medication. Before going to Provident, I was experiencing extreme shortness of breath, and I could not walk more than a few feet without stopping to catch my breath. It was awful being stuck inside my home.

Dr. Victor Pelaez, who is my cardiologist at Provident Hospital, has been very thorough with my care. Initially my medication was not working, and Dr. Pelaez knew how to monitor my dosage to ensure my symptoms were under control. I no longer experience shortness of breath. I'm able to go for walks in my neighborhood and walk around the grocery store. My treatment and services at the hospital are great and I feel that my life is improving as I am taking care of my health and becoming healthier.

I know that you will keep making positive changes to Provident Hospital in Chicago's south side and I look forward to the day when I can visit the new Provident facility, which I hope can still be built.

Many thanks for being there for us in the community.

Sincerely,

Brenda Jackson

#49

COMPLETE

**Collector:** Web Link 1 (Web Link)  
**Started:** Wednesday, October 28, 2020 10:02:23 AM  
**Last Modified:** Wednesday, October 28, 2020 10:03:06 AM  
**Time Spent:** 00:00:42  
**IP Address:** 162.217.184.230

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Page 1

**Q1**

Please provide some basic information

Witness Name:	Carmen Vergara
Organization (if any):	Esperanza Health Centers
City/Town:	Chicago
State:	IL

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**Q2**

Written Statement? You can type or copy/paste any written statement you want included in the meeting record here. If this is not enough space, or you have other attachments for distribution, please email them to [cookcounty.board@cookcountyil.gov](mailto:cookcounty.board@cookcountyil.gov)

Statement submitted by Caryn Stancik in an email to the Secretary of the Board.

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**Q3**

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Cook County Board of Commissioners Budget Hearing 10/20/2020

Testimony of Carmen Vergara, RN, MPH  
Chief Operating Officer  
Esperanza Health Centers  
[cvergara@esperanzachicago.org](mailto:cvergara@esperanzachicago.org)

My name is Carmen Vergara, I am a Registered Nurse and serve as the COO of Esperanza Health Centers, a Federally Qualified Health Center serving Chicago's West and Southwest Sides. I am writing to offer my support of the CountyCare health plan and the important funding allocated to the Cook County Health system.

Esperanza is one of 14 safety-net providers that comprise the MHN ACO, an accountable care organization that works closely with CountyCare. Our MHN ACO organization is owned by 11 Federally Qualified Health Centers and 3 Health Systems, spanning Cook County.

At our each of our four locations, located in what have been medically under-resourced and predominantly Latino communities, Esperanza delivers culturally appropriate primary care that is close to home. Our relationship with CCH, CountyCare, and the MHN ACO has been a catalyst to advancing our mission and to better serving our community. Over the course of our 7-year partnership, Esperanza has worked tirelessly to advance our comprehensive care model and today Esperanza is a national leader in healthcare quality, having earned a prestigious National Quality Leader Award from the Health Resources and Services Administration for the fourth time this year since 2016.

I have seen our communities grow and change. I grew up in Little Village and now have the privilege to continue to work in the area, and more importantly, to see the impact our work has on health outcomes in our community. At Esperanza, we deliver compassionate, quality care every day to patients who are ineligible for health care coverage, in many cases, these individuals rely on the excellent team at CCH for any specialty needs we cannot meet in the primary care setting. These services are truly life-saving.

Esperanza also serves almost 9,000 patients that are beneficiaries of the CountyCare health plan. These individuals from our community, rely on the CountyCare health plan for coverage and the dignity that comes with access. In many ways, CountyCare is the most progressive Medicaid insurance plan in the State and the one that is making the greatest impact on improving the relationship between patients and primary care – improving outcomes and reducing the cost of care. Through our partnership with CountyCare and MHN ACO, Esperanza has advanced patient care through practice level programming. As an RN, I have worked with patients firsthand that are looking for guidance, support, and someone who will listen to their concerns

and accommodate their unique needs. From families with Asthma concerned about the COVID-19 crisis, to patients requiring emergency care after serious accidents, I have had the privilege of working with CountyCare patients to connect them to the right care at the right place—and to work with them to get the resources they need and deserve. This dignity is one of the primary successes of CountyCare and it ties perfectly to our mission which is to deliver health and hope for Chicago's often overlooked communities.

Together, through our work with the MHN ACO, we have made great strides in improving the relationship between patients and primary care, improving outcomes, and reducing the overall costs of patient care. Through our partnership in MHN ACO, Esperanza has contributed to the approx. \$50million in earned savings, shared between the health plan and the ACO providers. This model also promotes strong patient relationships; today, MHN ACO has 34% more primary care visits and 24% higher member retention than the rest of the CountyCare health plan. Together, we are leading the charge in transforming into a system that works for our shared service population.

As a leader who has also put in the work, I can see the patient outcomes as a result of the relationships care teams are developing with their patients – and I have been able to build programs and processes that better serve our patients. Thanks to CountyCare, Esperanza has been able to embark on true journey to Practice Transformation – better serving our patients and our community.

I'd like to close with a patient story that exemplifies the value of the partnership between Esperanza and the CCH system. J, a 40 y/o patient with County Care, was diagnosed with HIV in February. His Esperanza care team promptly referred him to the CORE Center for treatment, but in April, he lost stable housing after a conflict with his partner. As the city responded to the global pandemic, and many services became difficult to access, J did not have a safe place to stay and was struggling with limited cellphone service. Stefany Campos, J's Care Manager, responded with thoughtful outreach and helped J sign up for a free phone, and coordinated efforts between care teams at Esperanza and the CORE Center. J was connected with safe housing and meals during the pandemic and has been able to continue his treatment and regular care through telehealth and in person visits at CORE and Esperanza. County Care and the CCH system made that possible.

We at Esperanza are grateful for this transformative partnership and to the commissioners of Cook County for seeing the value of our partnership and of the CountyCare plan.

Sincerely,



Carmen Vergara, RN, MPH  
Chief Operating Officer  
Esperanza Health Centers

#50

COMPLETE

**Collector:** Web Link 1 (Web Link)  
**Started:** Wednesday, October 28, 2020 10:03:28 AM  
**Last Modified:** Wednesday, October 28, 2020 10:03:49 AM  
**Time Spent:** 00:00:20  
**IP Address:** 162.217.184.230

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Page 1

**Q1**

Please provide some basic information

**Witness Name:** Darrel McKinney  
**City/Town:** Chicago  
**State:** IL

---

**Q2**

Written Statement? You can type or copy/paste any written statement you want included in the meeting record here. If this is not enough space, or you have other attachments for distribution, please email them to [cookcounty.board@cookcountyil.gov](mailto:cookcounty.board@cookcountyil.gov)

Statement submitted by Caryn Stancik in an email to the Secretary of the Board.

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**Q3**

Acknowledgement of submitting written testimony only

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Cook County Board of Commissioners  
118 N. Clark Street  
Chicago, IL 60602

**RE: Fiscal Year 2021 Cook County Health Budget**

Dear Cook County Board of Commissioners,

For over 10 years, I have been a patient of Cook County Health. I have always had a great experience with the medical care that I have received both at Provident Hospital and the Englewood Health Center. My doctors have taken very good care of me and for that, I am extremely grateful.

I would recommend my doctors at Provident to anyone and everyone. Dr. Winston Burke has helped me greatly as my podiatry doctor. I also have diabetes, which is now under control and am looking forward to the future opening of the Provident Lifestyle Center. Some of my other conditions, now under control, include high blood pressure and heart problems. Taking care of my health and monitoring it properly could not have been achieved without the help of my primary care doctor at the Englewood Health Center, Dr. Alexandra Albanese.

As I am on a path to becoming healthy, much of this could not have been achieved without health insurance. I have CountyCare, which is great. I use the rewards program which partially encourages me to keep my visits as I get rewards. But overall, having CountyCare helps me avoid the mental stress of not knowing how to pay for my medical care.

I want to thank Cook County Health and my doctors at Provident Hospital and Englewood Health Center for taking care of me, making me healthier and helping me take care of myself.

Sincerely,

Darrel McKinney

# #51

COMPLETE

**Collector:** Web Link 1 (Web Link)  
**Started:** Wednesday, October 28, 2020 10:04:13 AM  
**Last Modified:** Wednesday, October 28, 2020 10:05:00 AM  
**Time Spent:** 00:00:47  
**IP Address:** 162.217.184.230

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Page 1

## Q1

Please provide some basic information

Witness Name:	<b>Dr. Angell Jones</b>
Organization (if any):	<b>Cook County Health</b>
City/Town:	<b>Chicago</b>
State:	<b>IL</b>
ZIP:	<b>60615</b>

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## Q2

Written Statement? You can type or copy/paste any written statement you want included in the meeting record here. If this is not enough space, or you have other attachments for distribution, please email them to [cookcounty.board@cookcountyil.gov](mailto:cookcounty.board@cookcountyil.gov)

Statement submitted by Caryn Stancik in an email to the Secretary of the Board.

---

## Q3

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Cook County Board of Commissioners  
118 N. Clark Street  
Chicago, IL 60602

**RE: Fiscal Year 2021 Cook County Health Budget**

Dear Cook County Board of Commissioners,

My name is Anngell Jones MD FACS, Director of Surgical services at Provident Hospital. I am a board-certified General Surgeon and Breast Oncology Surgeon at Provident Hospital for Cook County Health. I joined Cook County Health in July 2019 because of its mission to provide high-quality, state of the art care for the most vulnerable communities regardless of a patient's ability to pay.

As a surgeon who specializes in diagnosing and treating women with breast cancer, it is important to be able to provide the latest diagnostics and surgical services directly to patients where they live. Having patients travel out of their communities to receive this care is neither fair nor safe.

Breast cancer death rates in the U.S. are 40% higher among black women than white women. Black women are more likely than white women to get triple-negative breast cancer, a kind of breast cancer that often is aggressive and comes back after treatment.

It is critical for Cook County Health to be able to provide a fully comprehensive program for breast disease in our Black and Brown communities. We need to be able to provide ongoing breast cancer screenings, diagnostics, and treatments right in the community. Establishing a clinic at Provident has helped to facilitate that outreach.

At Provident, we have a breast imaging center with the latest digital mammography equipment. We are trying to offer more comprehensive services such as stereotactic and ultrasound guided breast biopsies. I currently perform benign breast surgeries at Provident but would like to expand that to surgeries for malignancy. This would entail adding on site radiologists who would perform breast mass localization procedures to facilitate lumpectomies. This would also include expansion of nuclear medicine capabilities to enable sentinel lymph node biopsies. Our goal is to provide the same excellent oncologic care that is provided at our main hospital, John H. Stroger, Jr. Hospital. Currently there is an abundance of resources and potential at Provident hospital. We need your support to expand and continue that success.

Thank you, President Preckwinkle, Cook County Commissioners and Cook County Health leadership, for understanding the great need to offer these services at Provident.

Sincerely,

Dr. Anngell Jones  
Breast Cancer and General Surgeon

#52

COMPLETE

**Collector:** Web Link 1 (Web Link)  
**Started:** Wednesday, October 28, 2020 10:05:24 AM  
**Last Modified:** Wednesday, October 28, 2020 10:05:50 AM  
**Time Spent:** 00:00:25  
**IP Address:** 162.217.184.230

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Page 1

## Q1

Please provide some basic information

Witness Name:	Dr. Jacqueline Harrison
Organization (if any):	Cook County Health
City/Town:	Chicago
State:	IL
ZIP:	60615

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## Q2

Written Statement? You can type or copy/paste any written statement you want included in the meeting record here. If this is not enough space, or you have other attachments for distribution, please email them to [cookcounty.board@cookcountyil.gov](mailto:cookcounty.board@cookcountyil.gov)

Statement submitted by Caryn Stancik in an email to the Secretary of the Board.

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## Q3

Acknowledgement of submitting written testimony only

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Cook County Board of Commissioners  
118 N. Clark Street  
Chicago, IL 60602

**RE: Fiscal Year 2021 Cook County Health Budget**

Dear Cook County Board of Commissioners,

I am Dr. Jacqueline Harrison and I am an attending Colon and Rectal surgeon at Stroger Hospital. I worked previously at Provident Hospital of Cook County for 7 years.

Colorectal cancer is the second deadliest cancer in the U.S. and disproportionately affects the Black community. African Americans are 20% more likely to get colorectal cancer and about 40% more likely to die from it than most other groups.

This disease is ravaging the Black community and it is as important as ever that everyone have access to recommended screenings so we can prevent the disease or find it at an early, more treatable stage.

We are grateful for the commitment to Provident Hospital by investing in the campus, programs and services and particularly the commitment to starting a colon cancer program.

African Americans experience greater obstacles to cancer prevention, detection, treatment and survival including systemic racial disparities that are complex and go beyond the obvious connection to cancer. We need to remove any obstacles that prevent our patients from the care they deserve and need.

Provident Hospital is more important than ever given its location on the near South Side of Chicago, an area where the safety net network is in danger. We take care of a number of patients seen at Sengstacke outpatient clinic at Provident, diagnosed with cancer there, or who are initially seen there and who undergo further workup, followed by treatment at Stroger. These are patients whose care is facilitated by being able to have their care provided closer to home. One patient we recently treated first went to an outside emergency room on the South Side. Because he was uninsured at that time, he was referred to Provident, where he was diagnosed with colon cancer at the age of 46. He subsequently had treatment and is in remission. This patient illustrates the type of work that we do for this underserved community. Provident Hospital of Cook County understands this community and is committed to continuing serving it.

Sincerely,

Dr. Jacqueline Harrison  
Attending Physician, Division of Colon Rectal Surgery  
Stroger and Provident Hospitals for Cook County Health

#53

COMPLETE

**Collector:** Web Link 1 (Web Link)  
**Started:** Wednesday, October 28, 2020 10:06:12 AM  
**Last Modified:** Wednesday, October 28, 2020 10:06:48 AM  
**Time Spent:** 00:00:36  
**IP Address:** 162.217.184.230

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Page 1

## Q1

Please provide some basic information

Witness Name:	Dr. Mark Loafman
Organization (if any):	Cook County Health
City/Town:	Chicago
State:	IL
ZIP:	60615

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## Q2

Written Statement? You can type or copy/paste any written statement you want included in the meeting record here. If this is not enough space, or you have other attachments for distribution, please email them to [cookcounty.board@cookcountyil.gov](mailto:cookcounty.board@cookcountyil.gov)

Statement submitted by Caryn Stancik in an email to the Secretary of the Board.

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## Q3

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President Toni Preckwinkle & Cook County Commissioners  
Cook County Board of Commissioners  
118 N. Clark Street  
Chicago, IL 606022

**RE: Fiscal Year 2021 Cook County Health Budget**

Dear President Preckwinkle and Commissioners,

As Chair of the Department of Family and Community Medicine for Cook County Health, I am responsible for leading the family medicine physicians who care for patients of all ages. Our physicians care for patients at all but one of the community health centers across the health system. Ensuring that our patients receive quality care and an excellent patient experience is the highest priority we have as a Department.

I understand and support the plan to transition our Near South patients to the Sengstacke Health Center at Provident Hospital. I welcome the opportunity our patients will have to relocate their medical home from an outdated, operationally challenged facility with limited ancillary services to the larger Sengstacke health center with a full array of diagnostic testing, specialty services, on site pharmacy and urgent care services, and ample, low-cost parking. This is the right decision for our patients and our institution. Providing holistic service in a better facility with dignity and respect helps support a patient's overall health.

When the plan to stop providing services at Near South was first proposed, I had some concerns about the impact this will have on our predominately African American and our small but loyal Asian American population. The plan to relocate the medical home at Provident Sengstacke has been very reassuring. We have been actively involved with the leadership there in some very thoughtful planning, and the advantages as I previously noted, will ultimately enhance our patients clinical experience.

As such, I wholeheartedly support the plan to relocate the Near South Health Center, integrating the medical home fully into Provident Hospital's Sengstacke Health Center. As a Cook County Health leader, I will also ensure that the institution does right for our patients and that no one is left behind.

Sincerely,



Dr. Mark Loafman  
Chair, Department of Family and Community Medicine

#54

COMPLETE

**Collector:** Web Link 1 (Web Link)  
**Started:** Wednesday, October 28, 2020 10:14:30 AM  
**Last Modified:** Wednesday, October 28, 2020 10:14:58 AM  
**Time Spent:** 00:00:28  
**IP Address:** 162.217.184.230

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Page 1

## Q1

Please provide some basic information

Witness Name:	Dr. Raymond Narh
Organization (if any):	Cook County Health
City/Town:	Chicago
State:	IL
ZIP:	60615

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## Q2

Written Statement? You can type or copy/paste any written statement you want included in the meeting record here. If this is not enough space, or you have other attachments for distribution, please email them to [cookcounty.board@cookcountyil.gov](mailto:cookcounty.board@cookcountyil.gov)

Statement submitted by Caryn Stancik in an email to the Secretary of the Board.

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## Q3

Acknowledgement of submitting written testimony only

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President Toni Preckwinkle & Cook County Commissioners  
Cook County Board of Commissioners  
118 N. Clark Street  
Chicago, IL 606022

**RE: Fiscal Year 2021 Cook County Health Budget**

Dear President Preckwinkle and Commissioners,

I am Dr. Raymond Narh an internal medicine physician at the Woodlawn Health Center. I am writing this letter in support of the proposed consolidation of my practice at Woodlawn into Provident Hospital's Sengstacke Health Center.

The proposed consolidation, as part of the Fiscal Year 2021 budget, makes perfect sense as many of my patients already go to Provident Hospital to receive their diagnostic and specialty care. Woodlawn Health Center is less than 2.5 miles away from Sengstacke Health Center.

Provident Hospital is also a convenient 1-stop place for patients to obtain all medical services. I send my patients there to get their X-rays and lab work, as these services are not available at Woodlawn. In addition to Provident's pharmacy services, the Hospital's lifestyle and future dialysis center will help patients with their overall care. It is much more convenient to be able to see my patients at Sengstacke where they can get their complete work up in one location and one visit and where I can discuss outcomes and diagnosis with my colleagues.

I have been affiliated with Cook County Health since my residency years from 1999-2002. Even though after my residency I worked at different institutions, I came back to CCH and have been at the Woodlawn Health Center and Stroger's General Medicine Clinic since 2018. While I love my clinic, I recognize that the consolidation will yield better health results and increased efficiencies for our patients.

Thank you for always supporting our mission of providing care to everyone regardless of their ability to pay as everyday, I see the positive impact that we have on the health of my patients and our communities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Raymond Narh, MD". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Dr. Raymond Narh  
Internal Medicine Physician  
Woodlawn Health Center

#55

COMPLETE

**Collector:** Web Link 1 (Web Link)  
**Started:** Wednesday, October 28, 2020 10:15:29 AM  
**Last Modified:** Wednesday, October 28, 2020 10:15:51 AM  
**Time Spent:** 00:00:21  
**IP Address:** 162.217.184.230

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Page 1

## Q1

Please provide some basic information

Witness Name:	Kent Pointdexter
City/Town:	Chicago
State:	IL
ZIP:	60615

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## Q2

Written Statement? You can type or copy/paste any written statement you want included in the meeting record here. If this is not enough space, or you have other attachments for distribution, please email them to [cookcounty.board@cookcountyil.gov](mailto:cookcounty.board@cookcountyil.gov)

Statement submitted by Caryn Stancik in an email to the Secretary of the Board.

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## Q3

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Cook County Board of Commissioners  
118 N. Clark Street  
Chicago, IL 60622

**RE: Fiscal Year 2021 Cook County Health Budget**

Dear Cook County Board of Commissioners,

I am Kent Pointdexter and am a patient at Cook County Health, more specifically at the Woodlawn Health Center. I am grateful to you and Cook County Health for providing great health services to others and me in my community.

I write this letter as I am in support of Cook County Health's plan to consolidate the Woodlawn Health Center services into Provident Hospital. I live just a few blocks from the Woodlawn facility, therefore this location cannot be more convenient for me. I can say that originally, I was skeptical of the plan, but now I see the positive impact that this move will have as one will be able to get more services in a bigger and improved location.

The Woodlawn Health Center is full of great staff, specially my medical staff. My primary care doctors, Dr. Claudia Fegan and Ratna Kanumury, Physician Assistant provide excellent caring treatment. I love them. I am grateful that they guide me through my health choices and thankful that due to their care, I am healthy and have not had to see many specialists. I know that if I were to need other medical services, I will be able to receive them at Provident Hospital.

I know that these times are difficult, but please know that we are grateful to have a comprehensive health system that provides for us. I pray that all of you remain healthy.

Many thanks for being there for us in the community.

Sincerely,

Kent Pointdexter

#56

COMPLETE

**Collector:** Web Link 1 (Web Link)  
**Started:** Wednesday, October 28, 2020 10:16:07 AM  
**Last Modified:** Wednesday, October 28, 2020 10:17:07 AM  
**Time Spent:** 00:00:59  
**IP Address:** 162.217.184.230

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Page 1

### Q1

Please provide some basic information

**Witness Name:** Mary Galloway  
**City/Town:** Chicago  
**State:** IL

---

### Q2

Written Statement? You can type or copy/paste any written statement you want included in the meeting record here. If this is not enough space, or you have other attachments for distribution, please email them to [cookcounty.board@cookcountyil.gov](mailto:cookcounty.board@cookcountyil.gov)

Statement submitted by Caryn Stancik in an email to the Secretary of the Board.

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### Q3

Acknowledgement of submitting written testimony only

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Cook County Board of Commissioners  
118 N. Clark Street  
Chicago, IL 60602

**RE: Fiscal Year 2021 Cook County Health Budget**

Dear Cook County Board of Commissioners,

In 2010, I became a patient at Cook County Health. I lost my job and insurance but Provident Hospital provided me with medical care. I was linked to County Care and other resources through staff. I suffered a TIA stroke in 2011 and Provident Hospital treated and care for me again. The medical care that I have received at Provident Hospital has been exceptional. The folks there have really taken care of me and treated me with respect.

My mostly recent experience at Provident Hospital was on August 28, 2020 for a Covid-19 test. On August 31, 2020, I returned to the hospital for a colonoscopy. I was very nervous but the professionalism exhibited by the staff gave me a sense of calm. The bedside manner was state of the art by my doctor. The admitting clerk, nursing staff, and transportation staff all contributed to this wonderful experience before, during, and after my procedure.

Thank you to all the great staff at Provident Hospital for the wonderful care and patient experience.

Sincerely,

Mary Galloway

#57

COMPLETE

**Collector:** Web Link 1 (Web Link)  
**Started:** Wednesday, October 28, 2020 10:18:07 AM  
**Last Modified:** Wednesday, October 28, 2020 10:18:34 AM  
**Time Spent:** 00:00:27  
**IP Address:** 162.217.184.230

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Page 1

## Q1

Please provide some basic information

Witness Name:	Milton Walker
City/Town:	Chicago
State:	IL
ZIP:	60636

---

## Q2

Written Statement? You can type or copy/paste any written statement you want included in the meeting record here. If this is not enough space, or you have other attachments for distribution, please email them to [cookcounty.board@cookcountyil.gov](mailto:cookcounty.board@cookcountyil.gov)

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---

## Q3

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Cook County Board of Commissioners  
118 N. Clark Street  
Chicago, IL 60602

**RE: Fiscal Year 2021 Cook County Health Budget**

Dear Cook County Board of Commissioners,

I am Milton Walker age 62 and former Pace/CDT employee. I am currently a resident of Englewood and a patient at Provident Hospital.

I lost medical coverage during the termination of my job while dealing with a number of health conditions. I am very thankful to Cook County for the creation of the CountyCare Health Plan, which is a godsend as it has provided me with healthcare coverage when I had none. As I recently spoke to the public at a Press Conference sponsored by Senator Dick Durbin, the Affordable Care Act/Obamacare helps all people, especially those who need care. I am a prime example of this benefit and now I'm happy to be tackling the health issues which impaired my ability to retain my job.

I am thankful to you, as I actually almost lost my toe due to lack of medical care and coverage. Dr. Burke has provided me with great podiatry care and made sure that I didn't become an amputee. I'm grateful that I was able to receive treatment and become a patient at Provident Hospital. I have received nothing but great service at Provident Hospital from the cafeteria staff, 4 Men Only Health Fair, and the nursing staff.

I thankful to be able to go to my primary care doctor and not to an Emergency Room to receive care. I feel that Provident Hospital is such an asset to the community and the services there should be expanded. . Please don't cut any of the services at Provident Hospital, but expand them, as it is an institution and asset to the African American community. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Milton Walker

#58

COMPLETE

**Collector:** Web Link 1 (Web Link)  
**Started:** Wednesday, October 28, 2020 10:19:06 AM  
**Last Modified:** Wednesday, October 28, 2020 10:19:25 AM  
**Time Spent:** 00:00:19  
**IP Address:** 162.217.184.230

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Page 1

**Q1**

Please provide some basic information

**Witness Name:** Rita Hemphill  
**City/Town:** Chicago  
**State:** IL

---

**Q2**

Written Statement? You can type or copy/paste any written statement you want included in the meeting record here. If this is not enough space, or you have other attachments for distribution, please email them to [cookcounty.board@cookcountyil.gov](mailto:cookcounty.board@cookcountyil.gov)

Statement submitted by Caryn Stancik in an email to the Secretary of the Board.

---

**Q3**

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Cook County Board of Commissioners  
118 N. Clark  
Chicago, IL 606022

**RE: Fiscal Year 2021 Cook County Health Budget**

Dear Cook County Board of Commissioners,

I am Rita Hemphill and patient at Cook County Health, more specifically at the Austin Health Center. I also get my specialty care at Stroger Hospital. I am also a CountyCare member. I am grateful to you and Cook County Health and CountyCare for providing great health services to others and me in my community.

I write this letter as I am in support CountyCare and Cook County Health. CountyCare is a great Medicaid Plan. Staff is always attentive and especially the care coordination team helps me navigate the System to receive the care that I need. They are always attentive when I call. I am able to go to appointment and not wait for a long time. I especially love the Rewards Program as it incentivizes me to see my doctors and do the yearly screenings that I need.

My primary Care physician at the Austin Health Center is amazing. Dr. Norlock is really good and she takes care of me. I also go to Stroger Hospital for specialty care, including seeing doctors for my knee. I also see a nutritionist at Stroger as I am trying to become healthy.

I want to thank you for the CountyCare Health Plan and the doctors of Cook County Health. I receive great treatment from everyone and as such, I am grateful.

Many thanks for being there for us in the community.

Sincerely,

Rita Hemphill

#59

COMPLETE

**Collector:** Web Link 1 (Web Link)  
**Started:** Wednesday, October 28, 2020 10:19:53 AM  
**Last Modified:** Wednesday, October 28, 2020 10:20:16 AM  
**Time Spent:** 00:00:22  
**IP Address:** 162.217.184.230

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Page 1

**Q1**

Please provide some basic information

**Witness Name:** Shirley Cain  
**City/Town:** Chicago  
**State:** IL

---

**Q2**

Written Statement? You can type or copy/paste any written statement you want included in the meeting record here. If this is not enough space, or you have other attachments for distribution, please email them to [cookcounty.board@cookcountyil.gov](mailto:cookcounty.board@cookcountyil.gov)

Statement submitted by Caryn Stancik in an email to the Secretary of the Board.

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**Q3**

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Cook County Board of Commissioners  
118 N. Clark Street  
Chicago, IL 60622

**RE: Fiscal Year 2021 Cook County Health Budget**

Dear Cook County Board of Commissioners,

Hello my name is Shirley J. Cain,

I am patient at Provident Hospital where I receive cardiology, neurology, and mammogram services. Each of these services have been instrumental in maintaining my health and life. I feel important and treated as a priority as a patient at Provident Hospital Cook County. I had a stroke November 1, 2017 so the customer service has been so important to me. The staff and doctors demonstrate so much patience's when caring for me. This is why Provident Hospital is so important to the community as it provides access for people like me. I even refer my family members because of the excellent care I receive. My experience is that the staff go above and beyond for me. They genuinely show compassion to me which means a lot because I feel like they actually care about me. They see me and others as human beings despite anyone's ability to pay. In today's world Provident Hospital of Cook County is being inclusive of every resident. I appreciate all the care and services and will always advocate for the medical intuition. This hospital is truly a blessing to me and other Southside residents.

Sincerely,

Shirley J. Cain

#60

COMPLETE

**Collector:** Web Link 1 (Web Link)  
**Started:** Wednesday, October 28, 2020 10:20:42 AM  
**Last Modified:** Wednesday, October 28, 2020 10:21:27 AM  
**Time Spent:** 00:00:45  
**IP Address:** 162.217.184.230

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Page 1

## Q1

Please provide some basic information

Witness Name:	Dr. Raymond Narh
Organization (if any):	Cook County Health
City/Town:	Chicago
State:	IL
ZIP:	60615

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## Q2

Written Statement? You can type or copy/paste any written statement you want included in the meeting record here. If this is not enough space, or you have other attachments for distribution, please email them to [cookcounty.board@cookcountyil.gov](mailto:cookcounty.board@cookcountyil.gov)

Statement submitted by Caryn Stancik in an email to the Secretary of the Board.

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## Q3

Acknowledgement of submitting written testimony only

I understand that by submitting written comments here, I am not signing up to speak live (virtually) at the hearing. I am only submitting written comments to be posted online as part of the official record.

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#61

COMPLETE

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**Started:** Wednesday, October 28, 2020 10:26:47 AM  
**Last Modified:** Wednesday, October 28, 2020 10:31:02 AM  
**Time Spent:** 00:04:14  
**IP Address:** 162.217.184.193

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Page 1

Q1

Please provide some basic information

Witness Name: **ER staff at provident hospital**

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Q2

Written Statement? You can type or copy/paste any written statement you want included in the meeting record here. If this is not enough space, or you have other attachments for distribution, please email them to [cookcounty.board@cookcountyil.gov](mailto:cookcounty.board@cookcountyil.gov)

Hi,

There are so many rumors going around with regards to the future of Provident Hospital. President Preckwinckle keeps saying provident is here to stay, but her actions say otherwise. What does STAND BY ER mean?? Can someone please care to explain that?? Also they are cutting down so many fellow nursing from the ER??

Please be honest and transparent. It is the least we deserve.

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Q3

Acknowledgement of submitting written testimony only

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#62

COMPLETE

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**Last Modified:** Wednesday, October 28, 2020 11:03:48 AM  
**Time Spent:** 00:18:42  
**IP Address:** 73.22.72.224

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Page 1

## Q1

Please provide some basic information

Witness Name:	Rodrigo Anzures-Oyorzabal
City/Town:	Cicero
State:	IL
ZIP:	60804

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## Q2

Written Statement? You can type or copy/paste any written statement you want included in the meeting record here. If this is not enough space, or you have other attachments for distribution, please email them to [cookcounty.board@cookcountyil.gov](mailto:cookcounty.board@cookcountyil.gov)

Please keep the Morton East clinic open at its current funding level. The clinic not only services our students but is also open to our entire community. Our community suffers from a high rate of COVID, respiratory issues, and environmental pollution. The long term effects of this pandemic will affect us for years to come and we must maintain as many community health services as possible. We are especially vulnerable and need your support in this trying time.

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## Q3

Acknowledgement of submitting written testimony only

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#63

COMPLETE

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**Started:** Wednesday, October 28, 2020 11:24:00 AM  
**Last Modified:** Wednesday, October 28, 2020 11:37:39 AM  
**Time Spent:** 00:13:39  
**IP Address:** 64.107.167.4

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Page 1

Q1

Please provide some basic information

Witness Name:	Tara Chatteraj
City/Town:	Oak Park
State:	IL
ZIP:	60304

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Q2

Written Statement? You can type or copy/paste any written statement you want included in the meeting record here. If this is not enough space, or you have other attachments for distribution, please email them to [cookcounty.board@cookcountyil.gov](mailto:cookcounty.board@cookcountyil.gov)

Dear Cook County Board of Commissioners,

The Morton East School-Based Clinic makes essential healthcare available to hundreds of children who are otherwise unable to receive immunizations, STI testing, therapy, or preventative health care. Community healthcare access is a boon to these children, and reduction or interruptions of services will certainly have negative consequences for these children. It is not these children's fault that their families are highly underinsured, and they should still receive the healthcare necessary to participate in the community and receive an education.

The current pandemic and economic struggles many families are facing make it even more necessary to maintain services. These children need access to preventative care for COVID-19 comorbidities such as diabetes or immunizable diseases. Moreover, as families lose employment and/or income, their healthcare options have become increasingly limited, and they need accessible services. Finally, the emotional impact of the stay-at-home restrictions and higher family death rates mean that therapy services are essential to continue.

I understand this is not an easy time financially for any of us, but as a Cook County taxpayer, I believe now more than ever is when we need to support our community's most vulnerable children, and these are the services I hope my taxes, however indirectly, continue to support.

Thank you for your time,  
Tara Chatteraj

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**Q3**

Acknowledgement of submitting written testimony only

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#64

COMPLETE

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**Last Modified:** Wednesday, October 28, 2020 3:55:53 PM  
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Page 1

**Q1**

Please provide some basic information

Witness Name:	Dian Palmer
Organization (if any):	SEIU 73
City/Town:	Chicago
State:	IL
ZIP:	60607

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**Q2**

Written Statement? You can type or copy/paste any written statement you want included in the meeting record here. If this is not enough space, or you have other attachments for distribution, please email them to [cookcounty.board@cookcountyil.gov](mailto:cookcounty.board@cookcountyil.gov)



Dian Palmer

President

SEIU Local 73

Statement to Cook County Board on October 29, 2020

I write today with strong reservations concerning the Cook County budget. Budgets are about choices – choices based on morality and financial capability. Often we need to evaluate the budget as a whole and determine our priorities before we make decisions.

First, I would like to address savings resulting from the Clerk's Office and Recorder's Office merger. The voters want this merger, but they also did not want front line employees laid off and did not want service reductions. The Clerk's office submitted a budget savings of \$1.45M this year. However, those numbers do not add up. In Fiscal Year 2020, the Recorder's Office has a salaries budget of \$7.625 Million. If the intent of the Clerk is to transfer over 60-65 frontline employees; then the salaries cost would be \$3,705,000 for unionized personnel. If the Clerk's Office, as they mentioned in testimony last week intends to keep only 5 of the 28 non-union employees; then the salaries cost would be at maximum \$700,000. The Fiscal Year 2021 costs for Recorder salaries in the Clerk's Office would be \$4.305 Million.

The reduction from \$7.625 Million in employee salary costs to \$4.305 Million in employee salary costs would save Cook County \$3.320 Million in Fiscal Year 2021.

Clerk Yarbrough is reporting that the employee salaries savings will only amount to \$1.45 Million instead of \$3.320 Million.

We urge Commissioners to examine the Clerk's budget very carefully to ensure that additional patronage employees do not creep into the Clerk's budget over the 5 non-union positions the Clerk's office testified is their intent to create to manage the unionized Recorder's staff coming into the Clerk's Office.

Second, the recommended budget reductions presented by the CCH Board are the wrong way to approach the CCH budget. The Cook County Health and Hospital System is the safety net for all Cook County residents. We see Cook County healthcare services as vital. That is why CCH employees risk their lives during the COVID pandemic to show up for work every day. They are not receiving pandemic pay like their colleagues at other health systems. The employees continue to come to work each day because they know patients cannot seek services elsewhere.

Instead of closing clinics, restricting access to emergency services, privatizing healthcare services and laying off essential workers; this Health and Hospitals Board should seek to expand services in an effort to reach more patients.

The proposed closures of the Cook County Near South clinic at 35th and South Michigan and Cook County Woodlawn Clinic at 63rd and Woodlawn, the reduction of services at Provident Hospital at 51st and Martin Luther King Dr. cannot be looked at solely through the lens of the CCHHS budget. The closures of Michael Reese, the announced closure of Mercy Hospital and the unsustainable financial situations of the Advocate Trinity, South Shore, and St. Bernard Hospitals create the possibility of a large healthcare desert on Chicago's near South Side.

Furthermore, the privatization of the Morton East clinic is a mistake. Public services should be delivered by public employees. Private companies delivering healthcare and support services inside the CCHHS system have proved to be disastrous.

Cook County Health and Hospital System should be expanding mental, behavioral and general health services instead of cutting services that poor, uninsured, underinsured, and Black and Brown communities rely upon.

SEIU Local 73 members urge the members of the Cook County Board to restore the clinic services portion of the Cook County Health budget and resist the urge to cut other healthcare services in the midst of the COVID-19 global pandemic.

**Q3**

Acknowledgement of submitting written testimony only

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#65

COMPLETE

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**Last Modified:** Wednesday, October 28, 2020 3:58:36 PM  
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**IP Address:** 99.64.250.159

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Page 1

## Q1

Please provide some basic information

Witness Name:	Glenn Spoolstra
Organization (if any):	Elim Christian Services
City/Town:	Crestwood
State:	IL
ZIP:	60418

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## Q2

Written Statement? You can type or copy/paste any written statement you want included in the meeting record here. If this is not enough space, or you have other attachments for distribution, please email them to [cookcounty.board@cookcountyil.gov](mailto:cookcounty.board@cookcountyil.gov)

I am the Community Relationship Manager at Elim and as such we provide school supplies to under-resourced children in the Chicagoland area. It has been great to work with the Members of the Cook County Sheriff to distribute these supplies in Ford Heights, Posen, Robbins, Markham, and Midlothian. The children are receptive to interfacing with the officers, and it provides a great way to build relationships. In addition they have also come and helped to assemble the school kits at our facility where we serve people with Special needs. It has been great to watch the officers build relationships with our adults, and esteem them in their work. We are extremely grateful to have a working relationship with the Cook County Sherriff and we look forward to adding to that relationship in other suburubs.

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## Q3

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#66

COMPLETE

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**Last Modified:** Wednesday, October 28, 2020 4:00:04 PM  
**Time Spent:** 00:19:48  
**IP Address:** 73.176.142.159

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Page 1

## Q1

Please provide some basic information

Witness Name:	Pia Kanoy
Organization (if any):	The Inner Voice, Inc.
City/Town:	Chicago
State:	IL
ZIP:	60099

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## Q2

Written Statement? You can type or copy/paste any written statement you want included in the meeting record here. If this is not enough space, or you have other attachments for distribution, please email them to [cookcounty.board@cookcountyil.gov](mailto:cookcounty.board@cookcountyil.gov)

Good afternoon,

my name is Pia Kanoy and I am the Director of Veteran Services at the nonprofit organization The Inner Voice, Inc. and a 30-year Army veteran. Our agency assists Chicago's homeless citizens in various ways. My team helps homeless and unemployed veterans find work, refer to partner services as needed and assist the veteran in becoming self-sufficient and a member of society again. In May 2019, Inner Voice partnered with the Cook County jail's Tier 2B in Division VI (which houses veterans). My staff and I would conduct weekly or bi-weekly visits to discuss employment opportunities for justice involved veterans as well as offer a four-hour quarterly employment readiness workshop, the first ever offered to veterans at Cook County jail.

The response from the Tier 2B veterans was positive, and more than 30 veterans sought employment and partner service assistance once released from jail. The overwhelming response indicated how much our program is needed at the jail to give inmates hope, choices and an opportunity to return to work.

Unfortunately, the pandemic ended our visits since March, but I stay in contact with Officer John Coddington, who is the veterans' liaison officer. We currently discuss to conduct a virtual workshop for interested veterans seeking employment.

Having observed first hand the positive impact our program, as well as many other veteran specific programs have at the jail inspired me to write to you and request continuous funding for such programs. Inner Voice is proud to give people a second chance and would welcome the partnership with Cook County jail's Tier 2B extended.

Thank you for allowing me to write to you.

Warm regards,  
Pia Kanoy

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**Q3**

Acknowledgement of submitting written testimony only

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#67

COMPLETE

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**Last Modified:** Wednesday, October 28, 2020 4:03:01 PM  
**Time Spent:** 00:04:23  
**IP Address:** 24.12.192.252

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Page 1

Q1

Please provide some basic information

Witness Name:	Cindy Eigler
Organization (if any):	Chicago Torture Justice Center
City/Town:	Chicago
State:	IL
ZIP:	60621

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## Q2

Written Statement? You can type or copy/paste any written statement you want included in the meeting record here. If this is not enough space, or you have other attachments for distribution, please email them to [cookcounty.board@cookcountyil.gov](mailto:cookcounty.board@cookcountyil.gov)

My name is Cindy Eigler, and I am one of the Co-Executive Directors of the Chicago Torture Justice Center. Today I am offering testimony in strong support that the Budget for Black Lives be fully funded in the County's 2021 budget. I urge the County to immediately start the process to move County dollars out of policing and incarceration and into the resources that allow our communities to thrive as detailed in the Budget for Black Lives.

The Chicago Torture Justice Center (CTJC) was created out of the Reparations Ordinance passed by City Council in 2015. The Ordinance acknowledged the need for repair and healing following decades of police torture under Chicago Police Commander Jon Burge. CTJC is the first and only center of its kind in the country. We seek to address the traumas of police violence and institutionalized racism through access to healing and wellness services, trauma-informed resources, and community connection.

Working day in and day out with survivors of police torture, police violence, and family members whose loved ones have been killed by the police, we attend to both the seen and unseen wounds. The individuals we work with suffer from trauma, depression, and deep levels of anxiety. Many continue to experience nightmares and flashbacks of their encounters with the police, returning them to a desperate state of fighting for their lives. Further, many are re-traumatized at the sight of a police vehicle or officer, causing their blood pressure to rise or to break out in a sweat, leaving them with paralyzing feelings of fear and distrust.

The vast majority of the individuals we work with were not only harmed at the hands of the police, but also experienced incredible harm and loss in the courts, in the jails, and in decades of incarceration. As we witness at the Center, and as corroborated by psychological experts, the trauma experienced as a result of policing and incarceration impacts entire families and seeps into the community.

We at CTJC call for accountability to these multiple systems that serve to control, harm, disappear, and kill Black and brown individuals. We know that 400+ years of racialized violence and killing will not be absolved by the arrests nor the firings of individual police officers, nor will the closure of one prison. We demand accountability that is grounded in a radical call to action. We demand not just apologies for harm done, but repentance and real change that can end and repair harm. We see the violent results of an excessively funded and over-militarized policing system. We demand our communities are provided with the resources and access they need to flourish.

Our budgets are values documents, and the hundreds of millions of dollars of the County budget that currently go to detaining and locking up Black and brown people do not represent our values. If the jail budget had been reduced to reflect the decrease in the number of people locked up since 2013, the County would have \$117 million to fund health care, housing, jobs, restorative justice, and more. That represents what we stand for.

We ask that you FULLY fund the Budget for Black Lives, and ensure that the County's budget reflects the values and priorities of its communities.

## Q3

Acknowledgement of submitting written testimony only

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#68

COMPLETE

**Collector:** Web Link 1 (Web Link)  
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**Last Modified:** Wednesday, October 28, 2020 5:00:24 PM  
**Time Spent:** Over a day  
**IP Address:** 73.22.159.125

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Page 1

Q1

Please provide some basic information

Witness Name: Rosa Ruiz

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Q2

Written Statement? You can type or copy/paste any written statement you want included in the meeting record here. If this is not enough space, or you have other attachments for distribution, please email them to [cookcounty.board@cookcountyl.gov](mailto:cookcounty.board@cookcountyl.gov)

My name is Rosa Ruiz, and I have been using the school-based health center at Morton East ever since I was a teenager. When I was in high school, I would wake up with anxiety every day and would stay home from school at least once a week. There were multiple times that I had panic attacks during class and would need to go the school-based health center to calm down so that I could return to class. I had a rough time in high school, and if it weren't for the school-based health center's behavioral health services, I probably wouldn't be here to give this testimony. I know that high school can still be rough for a lot of students, and like me, I want people to be able to get the help that they need.

Now that I'm 22, I still go to the school-based health center for my behavioral health services because Maria and Diana have been so great. I tried to see another social worker at another clinic, but it wasn't the same. I like the relationship that I have with the current social workers because they know my history, understand what's going on, and I like the techniques that we're using in my treatment. If the school-based health center was no longer sponsored by Cook County Health and Hospital System, I would have to find a new social worker and open up to a stranger, which would be really difficult. It would also be very difficult because I am currently unemployed and in school, so I would have to work hard to find a place that takes the insurance that I have so that I can afford my services. Finally, the school-based health center is very close to my house and easy to access, and I don't want to have to find a new location.

Please keep sponsoring the school-based health center at Morton East so that I can continue my services with the providers I currently have, and so that others can benefit from the services, too.

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Q3

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