

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The main aim of Cook County Health (CCH)'s Center for Health Equity and Innovation ("Center") is to identify and advance strategies, initiatives, and programs that improve health equity throughout Cook County. The Center's goals are to promote justice and equity, convene experts in data and analytics, as well as community leaders, and align resources to develop effective, sustainable long-standing gains towards achieving health equity.

To achieve its goals, the Center's objectives are to create a platform at CCH that:

- 1) Fosters a learning health system internally and that extends beyond the physical campus.
- 2) Provides ideation of programs to support CCH strategic priorities through programmatic, data, and technological innovations.
- 3) Develops cross-departmental and external partnerships to strive for health equity.
- 4) Identifies and obtain resources for these innovations.

The Center was established in CCH's Fiscal Year (FY) 2020 budget and brings together Health Research and Solutions (HRS) (formerly the Collaborative Research Unit) and the Programmatic Services and Innovation Unit (PSIU). The joining of these units is to create solutions that effectively integrate clinical care and address social needs that can lead to long-term sustainable improvements, moving towards achieving health equity.

KEY AREAS OF FOCUS

The Center seeks to champion efforts within CCH that are focused on generating financial resources, research and data analytics, community engagement, and equity and justice promotion. The categories below highlight the key focus areas of the Center's work:

1) GRANT FUNDING AND PROJECT MANAGEMENT

As part of the Center, the Programmatic Services and Innovation Unit (PSIU) has become a significant source of innovations and delivered major revenue streams. PSIU currently manages 69 innovative, multiyear grant projects totaling \$37 million in funds from federal and state government agencies, public and private foundations, and other non-profit entities. Grants have been awarded for scientific research, programmatic implementation, capital planning, and health policy. In FY 2020 to date, PSIU has been awarded 35 grant awards amounting to \$12.4 million, a significant increase from the \$1.45 million awarded its first year in 2017. By category in FY 2020, CCH received \$4 million for 7 Substance Use Disorder awards, \$2.8 million for 3 Justice Involved/Mental Health awards, \$2.2 million for 3 Maternal Child Health awards, \$2.1 million for 10 COVID-19 awards, \$547,154 for 8 awards in various areas including: Chronic Illnesses, Infectious Diseases, Injury Prevention, Housing, and Health Policy.

Current funders include U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services, U.S. Dept. of Justice Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Centers for Disease Control, Illinois Dept. of Human Services, Illinois Dept. of Public Health, Illinois Dept. of Healthcare and

Family Services, Chicago Dept. of Public Health, Public Health Institute of Metropolitan Chicago, Illinois Public Health Institute, Illinois Children's Healthcare Foundation, MacArthur Foundation, Great Lakes Hemophilia Foundation, Michael Reese Health Trust, Chicago Community Trust, American Cancer Society, J.B. and M.K. Pritzker Family Foundation Illinois Public Health Institute, American College of Preventive Medicine, Near North Health Services Corporation, Corporation for Supportive Housing, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, Institute for Diversity and Health Equity, and Duke University

The department works to support innovation and revenue generation by: identifying funding opportunities; interfacing with funders; fostering collaborative work; preparing and writing proposals; providing research resources, support, and data processing linkages to principal investigators and teams; constructing budgets; and guiding the implementation of new projects. Current staff members include a Director; Assistant Grants Management Director, Senior Development Manager; Grants Program Manager; Research Assistant, Grant Writer; and Grant Analyst.

Between 2017 and 2020, the Center has secured funding for innovative projects including: improving care for adolescents in outpatient clinics; creating a healthcare workforce pipeline training program for local residents; offering legal assistance for patients suffering from workplace injuries; providing sexual abuse/assault examination training for emergency room nurses; diverting residents with mental health issues and/or substance use disorders from the local police precincts to instead receive health services; strengthening the prenatal health delivery system and establishing a new model of comprehensive prenatal health care services; and expanding jail-based and community-based Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT) services to address the opioid crisis.

2) RESEARCH ADMINISTRATION

With the increasing demand for clinical research opportunities at CCH, PSIU realized the inherent need to provide oversight and support for CCH clinicians engaging in research. Current research sponsors include: National Institutes of Health (NIH), Eli Lilly & Company, Bayer Healthcare Pharmaceuticals, AbbVie Inc., Avita Medical, Alnylam Pharmaceuticals, Akcea Therapeutics, and Amgen Biotech. In terms of grant research evaluation, PSIU supports clinicians to determine whether existing interventions are effective and to identify areas of opportunity for improvement. As it relates to clinical research administration, PSIU supports and oversees clinical research by ensuring compliance with federal regulations, sponsor requirements, and CCH policies. This complex task includes assuring appropriate legal review of study documents, as well as reviewing all agreements for compliance with institutional and regulatory policies. Of note, PSIU has recently established COVID Research Consortium Administrative Support project for the many current COVID related clinical research studies.

3) DATA, ANALYTICS, & INFORMATICS SOLUTIONS

A key part of the Center, Health Research & Solutions (formerly the Collaborative Research Unit [CRU]) was founded over 20 years ago and provides unique expertise in project design, implementation, informatics solutions, software applications, and analytics. HRS is comprised of

two physician investigators, who are supported by diverse team of health informatics and clinical research staff. The scope of supported activities is broad—including health services research, clinical care, & community-based studies; however, we have focused on a few high-priority domains: housing persons experiencing homelessness, treating those with substance use disorders, and the justice-involved population. With guidance and support from the Hospital Information Systems and Business Intelligence Departments, we have led or assisted with the following projects: provision of housing for people experiencing homelessness; counseling services for those exposed to intimate partner violence; cessation of tobacco use in primary care; psychosocial distress in oncology clinics; patient- and physician networks of prescription opioids; and, a real-time out-of-care software platform for alerting care coordinators for HIV-infected patients, homeless individuals who have a housing unit, and out-of-care patients who have substance use disorders.

4) PREVENTIVE MEDICINE PROGRAM

For fiscal year 2021, the Preventive Medicine Program will be housed in the Center. The move was promoted to foster cross-departmental projects, to provide supervision by physicians board-certified by the American College of Preventive Medicine, and houses the program in a setting that focuses on health promotion by addressing social determinants of health and promoting health beyond traditional medical service delivery. The Preventive Medicine Program actively recruits individuals who are oriented toward the Center’s focus areas and has a history of training future leaders in public health and CCH programs.

5) SYSTEMWIDE HEALTH EQUITY EFFORTS

Externally, the Center serves as a point of collaboration for cross-sector engagement to address health inequities. The Center has and will continue to host Summits to bring together the community’s best minds in Cook County to address the health needs of the community and improve patient outcomes. Specifically, the Center is planning a racial equity summit, specifically on COVID-19, to be held in early 2021. **Also**, the Center is working to align and leverage strategic CCH efforts to engage employees, patients, and community residents related to health equity through CCH High Reliability Organization Learning Network Work Groups, CCH Trauma Informed Care Task Force, CCH Community Advisory Boards, and the Cook County Department of Public Health’s Community Co-Design process. Additionally, the Center is now supporting the Cook County Racial and Health Equity Initiative led by two physician leaders to develop a comprehensive strategy to address health equity for patients, employees, and the community. Furthermore, the Center is an active member of the Pursuing Equity Learning & Action Network of Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI) and is seeking to implement IHI Improving Health Equity Assessment Tool for Health Care Organizations to develop measures for quarterly reporting.

THE CENTER’S NEXT STEPS

In short term, the Center plans to continue:

- To work to identify funding to support strategic objectives;

- Deploy a software solution for care coordination that will replace a vendor system resulting in cost savings, flexibility to deploy additional modules for populations, and enhanced data capture for research and operational activities.
- Sustain research and grant administration;
- Oversee strategic implementation support for grant funded programs;
- Develop innovations in research through data analytics and the use of technology;
- Align and leverage strategic CCH efforts to engage employees, patients, and community residents related to health equity
- Plan and implement racial and health equity initiatives to address structural and systemic racism;
- In addition, remain active in local and national coalitions and learning networks to advance health equity.