



**Board of Commissioners of Cook County  
Minutes of the Health & Hospitals Committee**

**1:00 PM**

**Tuesday, October 22, 2024**

**Cook County Building, Board Room,  
118 North Clark Street, Chicago, Illinois**

**ATTENDANCE**

**Present:** Anaya, Aguilar, Britton, Daley, Degnen, Gainer, Gordon, Lowry, Miller, Moore, Morita, K. Morrison, S. Morrison, Quezada, Scott, Stamps and Trevor (17)

**A motion was made by Commissioner Lowry, seconded by Commissioner Scott, to allow for remote participation in the meeting. The motion carried by the following vote:**

**Ayes:** Anaya, Aguilar, Britton, Daley, Degnen, Gainer, Gordon, Lowry, Miller, Moore, Morita, K. Morrison, S. Morrison, Quezada, Scott, Stamps and Trevor (17)

**PUBLIC TESTIMONY**

Vice Chair, Anaya asked the Secretary to the Board to call upon the registered public speakers, in accordance with Cook County Code.

No public speakers.

**24-5833**

**COMMITTEE MINUTES**

Approval of the minutes from the meeting of 09/17/2024.

**A motion was made by Commissioner Lowry, seconded by Commissioner Scott, to approve 24-5833. The motion carried by the following vote:**

**Ayes:** Anaya, Aguilar, Britton, Daley, Degnen, Gainer, Gordon, Lowry, Miller, Moore, Morita, K. Morrison, S. Morrison, Quezada, Scott, Stamps and Trevor (17)

**24-4173**

**Presented by:** ERIK MIKAITIS, M.D., Interim Chief Executive Officer, Cook County Health and Hospitals Systems

**REPORT**

**Department:** Cook County Health/Cook County Department of Public Health

**Report Title:** Health Disparities Semi-Annual Report

**Report Period:** January 2024 - July 2024

**Summary:** This semi-annual report is submitted to comply with Resolution 22-1703 for CCH and CCDPH to appear before the Health and Hospitals Committee to provide periodic updates on healthcare disparities.

**A motion was made by Commissioner Miller, seconded by Commissioner Lowry, to recommend for receiving and filing 24-4173. The motion carried by the following vote:**

**Ayes:** Anaya, Aguilar, Britton, Daley, Degnen, Gainer, Gordon, Lowry, Miller, Moore, Morita, K. Morrison, S. Morrison, Quezada, Scott, Stamps and Trevor (17)

**24-1436**

**Presented by:** ERIK MIKAITIS, M.D., Interim Chief Executive Officer, Cook County Health and Hospitals Systems

**REPORT**

**Department:** Cook County Department of Public Health (CCDPH)

**Report Title:** CCDPH Quarter 3 Report

**Report Period:** Q 3 2024

**Summary:** Community Immunization and Emergency Preparedness and Response

**A motion was made by Commissioner Miller, seconded by Commissioner Lowry, to approve 24-1436. The motion carried by the following vote:**

**Ayes:** Anaya, Aguilar, Daley, Degnen, Gainer, Gordon, Lowry, Miller, Moore, Morita, K. Morrison, S. Morrison, Scott, Stamps and Trevor (15)

**Absent:** Britton and Quezada (2)

**24-3172**

**Sponsored by:** MONICA GORDON, DENNIS DEER, TARA S. STAMPS, DONNA MILLER, BRIDGET DEGNEN, JOSINA MORITA, FRANK J. AGUILAR, ALMA E. ANAYA, SCOTT R. BRITTON, JOHN P. DALEY, BRIDGET GAINER, BILL LOWRY, SEAN M. MORRISON, ANTHONY J. QUEZADA, MAGGIE TREVOR and KEVIN B. MORRISON, Cook County Board Of Commissioners

**PROPOSED RESOLUTION**

**REQUESTING A REPORT FROM THE COOK COUNTY HEALTH AND HOSPITALS SYSTEM AND THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH ON THE CURRENT SYPHILIS STATISTICS, TREATMENT, EDUCATION, AND EFFORT TO REDUCE THE CASES OF SYPHILIS AND CONGENITAL SYPHILIS IN COOK COUNTY**

**WHEREAS**, syphilis is a sexually transmitted infection (STI) that can cause serious health problems without treatment. Syphilis infection develops in stages known as primary, secondary, latent, and tertiary, with each stage presenting different signs and symptoms; and

**WHEREAS**, congenital syphilis (CS) is a disease that occurs when a mother with syphilis passes the infection on to her baby during pregnancy, affecting the baby depending on how long syphilis has gone untreated, causing among many other health impacts: miscarriage, stillbirth, prematurity, low birth weight, or even death shortly after birth; and

**WHEREAS**, babies born with congenital syphilis can present deformed bones, severe anemia, enlarged liver and spleen, jaundice, brain and nerve problems, like blindness or deafness, meningitis, and skin rashes; and

**WHEREAS**, according to the Cook County Department of Public Health’s 2020-2021 STI Surveillance Report, published last year, “amid increases across the U.S., the number of Primary and Secondary Syphilis (PSS) cases rose 66% from 167 in 2020 to 277 in 2021. The rates doubled in non-Hispanic-Black/African-American persons, doubled in non-Hispanic Whites, and increased by 52% in Hispanic/Latinx persons. PSS rates are highest in west suburbs and those municipalities in the south bordering the City of Chicago. PSS rates increased 53% in men (sex at birth) and tripled in women (sex at birth).” And

**WHEREAS**, the CCDPH also reports that congenital syphilis cases more than doubled between 2020 and 2021, an especially worrisome trend considering that “Syphilis can look like so many other conditions. Providers must know how to diagnose, stage and treat syphilis. Writing a prescription is not enough, often, many patients may also need additional support to receive and complete treatment, including help paying for medications in some cases. Syphilis is preventable, treatable, and curable with the right medications given at the right time.” And

**WHEREAS**, per the CDC, it is possible that a baby with CS won’t have any symptoms at birth. But without treatment, the baby may develop serious problems. Usually, these health problems develop in the first few weeks after birth, but they can also happen years later. Babies who do not get treatment for CS and develop symptoms later can die from the infection. They may also be developmentally delayed or have seizures; and

**WHEREAS**, per the CCDPH website, last updated August of 2023, the only medication available to treat pregnant people with syphilis and babies with congenital syphilis is in short supply. Pfizer, the maker of this penicillin, anticipates this shortage until early- to mid-2024; and

**WHEREAS**, also per the CCDPH website, the Department is working to reduce the cases of syphilis by: serving as a technical consultant for test ordering, staging, and current treatment guidelines; contacting and talking with cases, help them to notify partners, and help individuals reduce risk; providing condoms; educating the public, providers and the department; monitoring trends and intervene where possible; and helping people get into primary care; and

**WHEREAS**, the CDC encourages all pregnant women to be tested for syphilis at the first prenatal visit, since people may have syphilis and not know it, may show no symptoms or symptoms may be very mild or similar to other health problems.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Cook County Board of Commissioners does hereby request that representatives of the Cook County Health and Hospitals System and the Department of Public Health present to this body an updated report on the rates of syphilis and congenital syphilis in Cook County, the shortage of medication and impact on treatment, and their efforts to reduce the incidence of this disease; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Cook County Board of Commissioners also requests that the CCDPH evaluate and propose education avenues on the spread and symptoms of syphilis for the public and medical workers, including primary doctors, gynecologists, and specialists to help them identify, treat and cure syphilis.

**A motion was made by Commissioner Gordon, seconded by Commissioner Miller, to defer 24-3172. The motion carried by the following vote:**

**Ayes:** Anaya, Aguilar, Britton, Daley, Degnen, Gainer, Gordon, Lowry, Miller, Moore, Morita, K. Morrison, S. Morrison, Quezada, Scott, Stamps and Trevor (17)

### ADJOURNMENT


**A motion was made by Commissioner K. Morrison, seconded by Commissioner Daley, to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried by the following vote:**

**Ayes:** Anaya, Aguilar, Britton, Daley, Degnen, Gainer, Gordon, Lowry, Miller, Moore, Morita, K. Morrison, S. Morrison, Quezada, Scott, Stamps and Trevor (17)

Respectfully submitted,



Vice Chair



Secretary

A complete record of this meeting is available at <https://cook-county.legistar.com>.