



Board of Commissioners of Cook County

118 North Clark Street
Chicago, IL

Legislation Text

File #: 20-2893, Version: 1

PROPOSED RESOLUTION

CALLING UPON PUBLIC HEALTH AUTHORITIES TO PRIORITIZE EQUITY IN CONTACT TRACING

WHEREAS, the COVID-19 pandemic poses a significant public health risk, with more than 2.4 million confirmed cases in the United States and more than 117,000 documented fatalities; and

WHEREAS, Cook County has reported more than 84,906 confirmed cases and more than 4,189 documented fatalities. According to Johns Hopkins University's most recent report, Cook County has the highest number of cases in the United States; and

WHEREAS, COVID-19 has disproportionately impacted communities of color, in particular Black and Latinx communities in Cook County; and

WHEREAS, the ease of transmission and the rate of death associated with COVID-19 pandemic require rigorous and sustained efforts to prevent, track, and treat the virus; and

WHEREAS, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has identified contact tracing as a key strategy to prevent further spread of COVID-19; and

WHEREAS, many public health experts have stated that success of contact tracing depends on public trust and effective community engagement; and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, the Cook County Board of Commissioners calls upon the local public health authorities including Cook County Department of Public Health (CCDPH) to prioritize the areas listed in this resolution when developing and executing a contact tracing plan including:

- 1) **Cultural Awareness:** The development of a program that is culturally informed and in consultation with the most affected communities to produce an equitable contact tracing plan that will be key to reach Cook County's diverse communities.
- 2) **Employment:** The hiring of residents from the most affected communities to carry out contact tracing activities where there is the highest need.
- 3) **Language Access:** Local public health authorities should prioritize language access in the hiring process by considering language ability in the top five languages spoken in Cook County in order to facilitate effective communication with individuals. Appropriate translated material should be provided to community members contacted as well.
- 4) **Data Privacy:** Protection of each person's private data. A person's information is strictly confidential and should be treated as the private medical record it is. Local public health authorities should guarantee sensitive information will not be shared with other agencies, including immigration officials.
- 5) **Training:** Local public health jurisdictions should design adequate training plans for contact tracers, case investigators and team leads that include the areas of confidentiality, maintaining trust with contacts, and cultural

sensitivity.

- 6) **Information and Resources:** Assurance that contact tracers will fully inform individuals of their rights and options in terms of testing, alternative housing, and other resources available as appropriate, depending on the circumstances and needs of the individual.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Cook County Board of Commissioners recommend the above items to prevent further spread of COVID-19.