



Board of Commissioners of Cook County

118 North Clark Street
Chicago, IL

Legislation Text

File #: 19-2988, **Version:** 1

PROPOSED RESOLUTION

HONORING EVONDA THOMAS-SMITH, PhD, ON THE OCCASION OF HER RETIREMENT

WHEREAS, Evonda Thomas-Smith, Ph.D., left her position as the City of Evanston Director of Health and Human Services on March 22, 2019. Dr. Thomas-Smith was first hired by the City of Evanston in 2005 to be the Division Chief of Personal Health Services. In January 2008, she became the Public Health Director of the Evanston Health Department; and

WHEREAS, Evonda Thomas-Smith has many accomplishments from this work. She initiated the “WOW” program - “Women Out Walking” (now “We’re Out Walking”), a six-week program to encourage women to walk regularly, alone or in groups, and to keep track of their progress. She initiated and oversaw the Citywide H1N1 flu virus vaccination program in 2009-2010, when the virus was spreading quickly. As a result of that program, approximately 13,000 people were vaccinated in mass community clinics in a three-week period; and

WHEREAS, in 2013, when Evanston residents approved a referendum to dissolve the Evanston Township government, she welcomed the General Assistance and Emergency Assistance programs into the Health Department. She remembers the people she met as a result of that change as enriching her greatly; and

WHEREAS, of all her accomplishments for the Evanston community, Dr. Thomas-Smith is most proud of the private public partnership that established the first Federally Qualified Health Center, Erie, Evanston Skokie Health Center, in Evanston. It has not only taken root, it is expanding, and thus better able to meet the healthcare needs of area residents; and

WHEREAS, Evonda Thomas-Smith has dedicated her life to public health, including improving access to healthcare, surveillance of infectious diseases, decreasing environmental health hazards, and analyzing how social determinants of health and social inequities impact health outcomes. In her role as a public health leader, she became the local face of a global network of professionals who strive to ensure the public’s health through ongoing assessment of need and policy development; and

WHEREAS, in May 2017, Human Impact Partners named Evonda Thomas-Smith a 2017-2018 Health Equity Awakened Leadership Fellow. Leadership Fellows from local health departments across the country explore strategies that advance racial and social justice in public health, data-driven framing, and systems change. In accepting the Fellowship, Dr. Thomas-Smith expressed her excitement “to be afforded the opportunity to take a deep dive into my personal leadership development, and shape racial and social justice strategies for public health, using inside-outside strategies to advance health equity in Evanston;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Commissioners of Cook County, on behalf of the 5.2 million residents of Cook County takes great pleasure in honoring and celebrating Evonda Thomas Smith’s many contributions bettering the lives of the residents of Evanston and citizens of Cook County, Illinois;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a suitable copy of this Resolution be spread upon the official proceedings of this Honorable Body and that an official copy of the same be tendered to Evonda Thomas Smith .