



Board of Commissioners of Cook County

118 North Clark Street
Chicago, IL

Legislation Text

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PROPOSED RESOLUTION

RAISING HIV/AIDS AWARENESS YEAR-ROUND

WHEREAS, the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) weakens a person's immune system by destroying important cells that fight disease and infection, and

WHEREAS, even though there is currently no effective cure for HIV, with proper medical care, HIV can be controlled, and

WHEREAS, according to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), HIV remains a persistent public health problem in the United States where an estimated 1,189,700 people had HIV at the end of 2019, the most recent year for which this information is available, and

WHEREAS, Black/African American people are most affected by HIV. In 2020, Black/African American people accounted for 42% (12,827) of all new HIV diagnoses. Additionally, Hispanic/Latino people are also strongly affected. They accounted for 27% (8,285) of all new HIV diagnoses, and

WHEREAS, young people aged 13 to 24 are especially affected by HIV. In 2020, young people accounted for 20% (6,135) of all new HIV diagnoses, and

WHEREAS, HIV stigma and discrimination affect the emotional well-being and mental health of people living with HIV, who often develop a negative self-image. People with HIV may fear they will be discriminated against or judged negatively if their HIV status is revealed, and

WHEREAS, HIV stigma is rooted in ideas about HIV coming from the HIV images that first appeared in the early 1980s, which created misconceptions about how HIV is transmitted and what it means to live with HIV today, and

WHEREAS, the lack of information and awareness combined with outdated beliefs lead people to fear getting HIV. Additionally, many people think of HIV as a disease that only certain groups get. This leads to negative value judgements about people who are living with HIV, and

WHEREAS, talking openly about HIV can help normalize the subject. It also provides opportunities to correct misconceptions and help others learn more about HIV, and

WHEREAS, the CDC has created National HIV Awareness Days, dedicating different days in the year to a group of affected people and to educate about prevention and treatment of the disease, and

WHEREAS, in 2023, the CDC designated February 7 as National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day; March 10 as National Women and Girls HIV/AIDS Awareness Day; March 20 as National Native HIV/AIDS Awareness Day; April 10 as National Youth HIV/AIDS Awareness Day; April 18 as National Transgender HIV/AIDS Awareness Day; May 19 as National Asian and Pacific Islander HIV/AIDS Awareness Day; June 27 as National HIV Testing Awareness Day; August 20 as National Southern HIV/AIDS Awareness Day; September 18 as National HIV/AIDS and Aging Awareness Day; September 27 as National Gay Men's HIV/AIDS Awareness Day; October 15 as National Latinx HIV/AIDS Awareness Day; and December 1 as World AIDS Day, and

WHEREAS, the CDC offers media tool kits in English and Spanish on their website: www.cdc.gov/hiv/library/awareness, for use by those who would like to join them in spreading awareness through social, digital and printed media, throughout the year, and

WHEREAS, South Suburban HIV/AIDS Regional Clinics (SSHARC), formerly known as South Suburban HIV/AIDS Regional Coalition was founded in 2001 and provides discrete, comprehensive treatment and prevention programs focused on HIV/AIDS medical care within three Cook County Health Ambulatory Clinic Network of Cook County (ACHN) locations (Cottage Grove Health Center, Robbins Health Center, and Blue Island Health Center), and

WHEREAS, SSHARC utilizes a broad base of health departments, community organizations, clinical sites, and consumers in South Suburban Cook County to enhance the healthcare and prevention efforts of their clients and communities, and

WHEREAS, since 2001, SSHARC has been the recipient of Health Resources & Services Administration (HRSA), Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH) and Illinois Department of Public Health Ryan White & HIV prevention funding. SSHARC is funded to provide outpatient/ambulatory care, mental health, outpatient substance abuse, case management, early intervention services (EIS), oral health, psychosocial support, and outreach services to improve the quality of life of CCH patients living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA), and

WHEREAS, in 2022, SSHARC served more than 440 HIV positive Cook County Health patients through medical and supportive services. 25% of SSHARC patients fell into the 33-42 years of age demographic, with the second largest group at 22% being between 53-62 years of age. 86.8% of patients identify as Black or African American and 26.3% identify as Hispanic. 74% of SSHARC patients are male, 24.2% female and 1.8% identify as Transgender, and

WHEREAS, SSHARC provides community HIV testing within south suburban communities in proximity of the three ACHN locations where SSHARC resides. In 2022, 443 community HIV rapid tests were conducted resulting in the diagnosis of 11 new cases of HIV.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the members of the Cook County Board of Commissioners do hereby express their gratitude to South Suburban HIV/AIDS Regional Clinics for their service to the Southland residents in need of discrete medical services for treatment and prevention of HIV/AIDS, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the members of the Cook County Board of Commissioners wish to join in the effort to raise HIV/AIDS Awareness every day of the year, and encourage the residents of this County to help by partnering with the CDC in spreading awareness through all media at their disposition, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this text be spread upon the official proceedings of this Honorable Body.