

092308 ...where the Cook County health system is at this moment...

It's time to review where the Cook County health system is at this moment.

Some hopeful achievements have occurred over the past year, giving rays of hope in what was a uniformly dark horizon: the health budget deficit was staggering; the terrible reputation for patronage and nepotism was widely deplored and the country's failing economy made ever more Cook County residents needy of the Bureau's health services.

Into this unfortunate environment, the Emergency Network to Save Cook County Health Services came together. It called for reform of the health structure (by establishing an independent structure freed of patronage and nepotism. It also supported tax reform (an unpopular increase in a regressive sales tax).

Both of these difficult goals were authorized by vote of the County Commissioner. The 11 person replacement Board of Directors emerged as a serious, experienced body with formidable fiscal, administrative and health delivery tasks before it.

We want this new governance to succeed! Should it falter or fail the whole health service ability in this region is in immediate jeopardy.

Health and Medicine is committee to helping arm all of us with the tools to inform and aid this board in its many responsibilities. To this end we will be holding an advocacy training session on November 11th at the UIC School of Public Health. Please Join us.

Even as the fiscal reality of our country is destabilizing, the challenge presented by the Cook County health system must be resolved in favor of the patients.

Quentin D. Young, Chairman, Health & Medicine