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## **MEDIA**

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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# Boykin Announces Strategy to Revitalize Cook County Health Crisis, While County Under Preckwinkle Buckles Under Pressure

*Boykin says what stands out clearly is the COVID-19 pandemic has laid bare glaring disparities in the health and well-being of many underserved communities, while the County under President Preckwinkle buckles under pressure to handle the crisis.*

**COOK COUNTY (June 3, 2022)** | Since March 2020, the people of Cook County have suffered immeasurable losses from the COVID pandemic. We have grieved collectively while watching more than 15,000 residents lose their lives to the virus, which has upended our county's health and mental well-being.

Our public health system groaned under the heightened pressures to provide crisis care to the neediest among us. Doctors, nurses, and emergency responders rose to new heights of excellence in service, but they were pushed to the limits because the County was not prepared to handle the crisis.

“Two years into the pandemic, we are fortunate that the number of deaths and hospitalizations have declined, and mask mandates have been lifted. We can use this moment to pause and reflect on the challenge ahead in restoring Cook County’s health and well-being,” attorney Richard Boykin, Democratic Candidate for Cook County Board President said. He added, what stands out clearly is that the pandemic has laid bare glaring disparities in the health and well-being of many communities.

Our underserved communities suffered the highest rates of death, hospitalization and COVID infections. The surge had doctors across Chicago’s communities raising the alarm about further spread and the impact on the health care system, according to a WTTW news report.

“Black Chicagoans made up for a disproportionately high number of COVID-19 cases and death,” Dr. Doriane Miller, a professor at the University of Chicago and director of the Center for Community Health and Vitality at UChicago Medicine said.

Miller says she and her health care partners are seeing cases tick back up. “Because COVID-19 has so disproportionately affected the Black community in Chicago, actually I see a lot more concern about protection, particularly amongst our young people,” Miller said. [Young people] are very concerned that if they become infected, they may take these infections back to their loved ones who may be at risk for having more complicated infections.

By various measures, the state of Cook County’s health is poor. Under President Preckwinkle’s watch, Cook County lags way behind the other 101 counties in Illinois in three of six critical measures: clinical care access and quality, social and economic factors and physical environment. For two other measures--length and quality of life--Cook County ranks in the middle of the pack. For only one measure—health behaviors—Cook County ranks among the top tier counties in terms of performance.

*Table 1 shows how Cook County ranks compared to the other 101 counties in Illinois on six measures in 2022.*

**Table 1**  
**Cook County’s Rank Among Illinois’s 102 Counties:**  
**Health Outcomes and Factors Measures**

| <b>Health Outcomes and Factor</b> | <b>Rank</b> |
|-----------------------------------|-------------|
| Length of life                    | 43          |
| Quality of life                   | 36          |
| Health behaviors                  | 7           |
| Clinical care                     | 91          |
| Social and economic factors       | 97          |
| Physical environment              | 89          |

“As President, I will recruit an executive and top-level management team that supports the strategic priorities of improving behavioral and public health and how to manage large, complex organizations,” said Boykin.

I will hold all levels of Management accountable, whether supervisory, departmental, or executive, for understanding the Cook County Procurement Code, the basics of contract compliance, and the internal control processes under their purview to ensure that services are delivered effectively, efficiently and with full awareness of costs. I will work diligently toward building a system that brings equitable care and health outcomes to all residents of Cook County.”

For candidate Boykin’s full Comprehensive Health Plan, please visit:

<https://richardboykinforcookcounty.com/the-boykin-plan-to-revitalize-public-health-in-cook-county/>

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