

CHICAGO -- U.S. Senator Dick Durbin (D-IL) today joined hospital leaders and the Illinois Health and Hospital Association (IHA) to unveil the four-year report of the Chicago HEAL Initiative. Launched in 2018 by Senator Durbin and 10 of the largest hospitals serving Chicago, the HEAL Initiative is a collaboration to address the root causes of gun violence through economic, health, and community projects in 18 of Chicago's neighborhoods with the highest rates of violence, poverty, and health disparities. Today's report highlights significant progress made by the hospitals in local hiring, job training and mentorship, and trauma-informed care and youth mental health activities. As part of today's report, Durbin also announced \$6.25 million in new federal funding to support these hospital-led efforts to break the cycle of violence through community programs.

"Today, we stand united in our relentless pursuit to combat the scourge of gun violence," said Durbin. "The release of our year four report on the Chicago HEAL Initiative marks another milestone in our ongoing mission to create safer communities. Through the unwavering commitment of hospital leaders and the power of collaboration, we have witnessed tangible progress in addressing the root causes of violence. This report showcases the transformative efforts of our health care institutions, reaching beyond their walls to engage communities and build partnerships. Together, we are forging a path towards lasting change — not just in Chicago, but as a beacon of hope for our entire nation."

"IHA is proud to support the work of the HEAL Initiative Chapter Two as the health systems continue to partner with Senator Durbin to strengthen the HEAL communities, improve health, and reduce violence," said AJ Wilhelmi, President and CEO, IHA.

"The HEAL Initiative makes it possible for our social workers and community health workers to expand mental health services and provide accessible, healing care that recognizes trauma and supports students and their families," said Sally Lemke, DNP, Director of Community-Based Practices, RUSH. "We are grateful for Senator Durbin for recognizing the crucial role school-based health centers play in promoting wellness, mental health, academic success, and community health."

Despite the challenges and strain of the COVID-19 pandemic, the hospitals were able to grow their commitments and investments in community violence prevention, addressing health disparities, trauma and mental health services, and local hiring, procurement, and workforce development. Among other highlights, last year the ten hospitals:

- Hired 5,390 new employees from the 18 focus neighborhoods.
- Provided 3,639 students with summer job, pipeline, or apprenticeship programs.
- Operated 24 school-based health clinics and mobile health units that served 11,277 students.
- Served 17,623 individuals with violence recovery programs, including 3,028 victims with ongoing trauma-informed case management services.

To meaningfully support the work of the hospitals, Durbin, a senior member of the Senate Appropriations Committee, worked to ensure the Fiscal Year (FY) 2023 Omnibus Appropriations Bill included significant resources for programs in Chicago that fund community mental health, housing, job training, and violence prevention, including:

- \$1.5 million to the University of Illinois Chicago in partnership with Rush University to expand school-based health services in Chicago.
- \$750,000 to Chicago Public Schools to launch a collaboration with HEAL hospitals to expand the number of hospitals partnering with CPS.
- \$1 million to the Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago to create a new community health clinic site in Austin to serve children and families.

- \$500,000 to Advocate Aurora Health to provide summer internships to local college students and expand career opportunities in the health care field.
- \$1.25 million to Sinai Health to expand their Population Health Career Pathway Program, which provides career training in growing health careers for at-risk youth in Chicago.
- \$1.25 million to the University of Chicago in partnership with Metropolitan Family Services to deliver street outreach and violence recovery services on the South Side of Chicago.

The 10 hospitals initially involved in Chicago HEAL are among the largest serving Chicago: Advocate Health; Ascension Saints Mary and Elizabeth Medical Center; Ann and Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago; Cook County Health and Hospital System; Loyola University Medical Center; Northwestern Memorial Hospital; Rush University Medical Center; Sinai Health System; University of Chicago Medical Center; and University of Illinois Hospital and Health Sciences Systems.

Read the full Year Four report [HERE](#).

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