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BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF COOK COUNTY
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TONI PRECKWINKLE
PRESIDENT

I am pleased to present to you our Cook County Budget for Fiscal Year 2020. This \$6.2 billion budget is both responsible and responsive and guides our work to achieve our policy priorities on justice, health, economic development and the environment under the Policy Roadmap, my office's five-year strategic plan. The Policy Roadmap centers on equity and mandates that we use an equity lens in our strategies as a policy and practice. This budget builds on that mandate as well as our mission and commitment to serve as a good steward of public resources by building vibrant and sustainable communities for all residents where people want to live, learn, work and play. We are doing this all without the need to raise existing taxes.

This year we experienced a historically small projected preliminary budget gap of \$18.7 million. This was the lowest preliminary gap of my administration and an almost 96% decrease from the \$487 million encountered in my first year in office. We have narrowed this gap while remaining mindful of future financial challenges. Cook County is on track to provide supplemental pension payments of almost \$1.3 billion above the statutorily required contribution, reducing the unfunded pension liability.

By pushing for criminal justice and bond reform we have seen a sustained reduction in the jail pre-trial detainee population without a negative impact to public safety. Cook County will continue to implement sustainable reforms within the criminal justice system, invest in community-based services and work with public safety stakeholders to provide the resources necessary to reduce violence. This year we will allocate millions more to enhance Cook County's collaboration efforts with its public safety partners and continue our work to transform the criminal justice system into one that is fair, efficient, compassionate and transparent.

In the coming year, Cook County Health (CCH) will continue transforming into a healthcare organization of choice by providing outstanding clinics and specialty care across Cook County while continuing to improve patient experiences and provide quality healthcare and services regardless of a patient's ability to pay. Despite operating only two of the more than 60 hospitals in Cook County, CCH provides over 50% of all charity care in the County and therefore serves as a safety net for many residents. While we continue to deliver this important care for our residents, we must be mindful of the challenges our system faces from the unsustainable growth in uncompensated care. Therefore, I encourage the CCH Board to implement strategies to maximize the internal capture rates from CountyCare members and effectively manage the cost of providing care. We will continue to advocate on CCH's behalf at the Federal and State levels to ensure we are able to build on our progress and continue providing life-saving care.

In line with our equity framework, we are also focused on improving access to safe and efficient transportation. Cook County is working closely with our regional transit partners on a pilot plan to assist residents in the southern portion of the County with more frequent, affordable and accessible transportation options. Our goal is simple - to ensure residents in south Cook County have better access to transit.

We have lofty goals under our Policy Roadmap but are taking realistic and responsible steps toward accomplishing them. I look forward to continuing the great progress we've made together.

Sincerely,

Toni Preckwinkle
President, Cook County Board of Commissioners