

Dr Omar Cockey, MPH

Dental Director

Lake County Health Department

Aug 21, 2023

Health Facilities and Services Review Board

RE: Letter of Support

It is with immense pleasure I submit to you my letter of support for the Children Chicago Surgery Center. I have been a practicing dentistry for 33 years. Each of these years spent serving the underserved population. Both Medicaid and uninsured. By training, I am a hospital based trained dentist providing direct patient care in the operating room. I have had first-hand experience as a clinical provider providing care to children and adults in the operating room for 22 years in Paterson, New Jersey. My patient base were Medicaid patients. I understand the hardships faced by the venerable population. Moreover, there are Social Determinants of Health factors which impact patient care. Not to mention health literacy which impacts both medical and dental care.

I am presently serving as the Dental Director for Lake County Health Department Community Health Center. Over the years, LCHD has evolved into a public health accredited department, a federally qualified health center (FQHC) and a direct provider of behavioral health, primary care, and prevention services to Lake County residents. Dental Services in Community Health Centers have their role but cannot provide the complex services and treat the cases which require the advance specialty training that would be rendered in this surgical setting.

Practicing here in norther Illinois it is quite difficult for us to find providers to accept Medicaid and even more difficult to find services for the Special Needs population. Having trained in a large teaching hospital in New Jersey I saw the challenges in treating this population as well as the frustration from parents finding qualified dental care providers to care for this patient population.

Health care equity is a right, this venue will provide a service location for patients who seek such care. I am confident that the Chicago Children Surgery Center will serve as an access point for care for the Medicaid population. Moreover, here in the Chicagoland area it is my understand that there is waitlist for children seeking the services of operating room dentistry. This business model would serve as a critical access point for patients needing such high-level services.

Feel free to contact me should you have any additional questions.

Kind Regards

Dr Omar Cockey

Stripebass@msn.com

Dental Director

Lake County Health Department