

Dear UIC Board of Trustees,

We the undersigned are standing with SEIU Local 73 custodial staff at the University of Illinois Chicago in their fight for a safe and clean hospital. SEIU Building Service Workers were on the frontline of the pandemic doing everything in their power to keep patients safe despite staffing and supplies shortages. We are disappointed to learn that UIC Hospital (UI Health) is now considering privatizing these very same workers who put their lives on the line for their patients.

UIC is a vital public institution that was intended to be run by public servants and decision-makers who take seriously the best interests of the residents of Illinois, not the profits of private companies. We admire UIC Hospital's commitment to addressing inequities and disparities in health outcomes by providing quality care to underserved populations but privatizing the hospital custodial will undermine these efforts.

Privatization harms workers and their communities. It threatens union benefits such as livable wages, healthcare, job security, and retirement, resulting in lower standards and less accountability for employers. Furthermore, studies have shown that outsourcing hospital cleaning services is directly linked to higher rates of patient healthcare-associated infections (HAIs) – the most common complication of hospital care and one of the leading causes of death in the US.

We understand that the nationwide staffing crisis in healthcare has created challenges for many hospitals across the country, but privatization is not the answer. We know that UIC Hospital has already taken some small steps towards improving the staffing levels of custodial staff in partnership with SEIU 73. We hope UIC continues those efforts at the bargaining table with SEIU 73.

We strongly urge UIC Hospital to take any action necessary to protect the integrity of Illinois public jobs and public services, up to and including negotiating a fair contract with SEIU 73.

Sincerely,

25th Ward Alderman Byron Sigcho-Lopez

27th Ward Alderman Walter Burnett

34 Ward Alderman Bill Conway

32nd District State Representative Cyril Nichols

9th District State Representative Lakesia Collins

12th District State Senator Celina Villanueva