



**For Immediate Release**

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## **Union Workers Demand Cook County Health Ends Privatization**

**Chicago, IL** – Cook County Health union workers, represented by SEIU Local 73, passionately advocated for an end to job privatization during the [Joint Finance and Health and Hospital Committee Meeting](#), which began on Oct. 17 and concluded today. The workers shed light on the critical need to terminate the practice of outsourcing positions that are best suited for full-time union employees.

Extensive research conducted by SEIU Local 73 reveals that the percentage of agency-employed individuals in outsourced job titles ranges from 20% to a staggering 86% of the total jobs within many departments. The most affected positions include Medical Laboratory Scientist (86%), Phlebotomist III (68%), Patient Care Technician (61%), Certified Surgical Tech (60%), and Hospital Cook (57%).

The reliance on agency workers, constituting 21% of the workforce at Cook County Health, is not only financially burdensome but also adversely impacts patient care by affecting continuity, experience, and more. Presently, 15 job titles, crucial for the efficient functioning of the healthcare system, face alarming outsourcing issues.

**Nicole Butler**, a Medical Assistant at Stroger Hospital, emphasized, "When the County uses agency work as a crutch, it holds back the level of care we are able to provide to our patients. Agency workers often lack familiarity with the inner workings of CCH, unlike us union workers. This reality comes at the expense of care for our communities."

Expressing concern about the potential erosion of union jobs, **Steven Wiggins**, a Building Service Worker at Stroger Hospital, stated, "We don't want to wake up one day with our union jobs replaced by less experienced agency workers. We know we're not the only hospital in the nation facing this issue, but the time is now for our County government to step up and address this matter of privatization."

SEIU Local 73 stands united in their call to the Cook County Health system and the County government to prioritize the welfare of patients and employees. The union advocates for the discontinuation of job privatization, urging a recommitment to the preservation of quality healthcare services delivered by dedicated union workers.

"Cook County Health needs to not only be a provider of choice for our communities, but an employer of choice, as well," said **Dian Palmer**, President of Local 73. "When the

county relies on inexperienced agency work, it serves as an unnecessary burden in the care and experience patients and workers face."

SEIU Local 73 thanks Commissioners Anaya, Degnen, and Quezada for their commitment to maintaining Cook County Health as a unionized hospital and ending the overreliance of private agency workers. We look forward to continue working with them and the other commissioners to make Cook County Health an employer and provider of choice.

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*SEIU Local 73 represents more than 35,000 workers, primarily in public service and publicly funded positions in school districts, municipalities, social service agencies, and many other job classifications in Illinois and Indiana. We are dedicated to improving the lives of workers and their families.*