

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS
February 28 South Side Healthy Community Organization Town Hall

1. Has the SSHCO started receiving funds?

Yes, we started receiving funds from the State at the end of January 2022.

2. How is the SSHCO allocating funds?

Year-one funds will be focused on meeting the year-one deliverables that we committed to HFS. These include adding 10 primary care providers to FQHC sites that are part of the SSHCO. Those first 10 will be spread among three of our FQHCs – Friend Health Center, Beloved Community Wellness Center and Chicago Family Health Center year one. In addition, we will be hiring 80 community healthcare workers and nurse care coordinators in this first year. We anticipate we will also spend some of our budgeted funds on technology to support communication between the new providers and care management staff.

3. How will you communicate open job opportunities?

Future job opportunities will be communicated through emails and social media and all job openings will be posted on our website – www.southsidehealthycommunity.com

4. When specifically will the new resources and caregivers be in place?

As per our proposal, we are targeting hiring our first group of Community Health Workers as soon as June 2022. We are targeting the fall to begin onboarding our first group of Primary Care Providers and some specialists, including psychiatrists and other mental health professionals.

5. How will we know when there is more access – how will we start to feel the impact?

The SSHCO will share with the community – by email, social media posts and our website – and other means once our new providers are able to receive patients.

6. Will you make a promise to hire the community health workers ONLY from the South Side? What are the qualifications for that position?

Our goal is to hire community health workers from the South Side. Qualifications will be posted along with job openings and job descriptions very soon on our digital channels and through other job sites.

7. What specifically are you doing to protect the privacy of health records?

The SSHCO is comprised of thirteen healthcare organizations that work with protected health information every day. As we develop new technology that allows our organizations to communicate, we have engaged an attorney who specializes in privacy and security to help us understand the standards, boundaries, and restrictions we must have in place to protect patient privacy. We understand that this is an important issue and will work to develop security protocols as we develop the technology.

8. You've talked before about a community advisory council – where does that stand? How will we learn how we might get involved on that – how will you be making decisions for community participation?

Thank you for being patient with us. We believe it's best to hire a CEO and then form the community advisory council. As soon as we are ready to form it, we will send out a communication via our website and e-mail list.

9. Will residents from the neighborhood be trained for CHW (Community Health Worker) positions? Or, will this require people to already be trained?

We are going to hire both experienced and first-time CHWs. For individuals who are not trained, we will provide training. All new hires will receive training on the SSHCO's model of care, in addition to our policies, practices and procedures.

10. What is the geographic area that you are working with? What other community-based organizations and/or faith-based organizations are you working with to target families in need; particularly to ensure their social service needs are being met?

The SSHCO's service area has about 400,000 residents. Our reach is as far west as Holy Cross, as far east as South Shore, north to about 26th street and south to the city limits. We have been building a list of community-based organizations that are interested in being a referral partner, but that list is by no means exhaustive. If you know of a faith based or community-based organization that is still interested in becoming a referral partner, go to our website and submit their information. This will help us to have a strong resource at the time that we are ready to start implementing the plan.

11. If an organization completed the RFI (request for information) when will we hear back about progress?

Our initial process to find organizations that are interested in partnering with us was to put out a survey or RFI. We completed that first wave in February. That provided us with insight into the type of services community-based organizations (CBOs) are offering and how we can partner to improve on our care model and the resources available to our patients. We sent a note to all who participated and will release a more detailed Request for Proposals down the road as we are ready to tackle specific needs.

12. How will this collaborative ensure fair worker wage for Community Health Workers?

Fair worker wages are extremely important to this collaborative. The SSHCO will ensure that wages are at fair market value for all positions hired. Our collaborative partners have hiring expertise in specific areas and knowledge of fair, competitive wages for a given role.

13. Are there any SSHCO volunteer opportunities now for faith-based organizations to be potentially involved in, and assist where there's a greatest need?

If your organization is interested in getting involved through volunteer efforts or otherwise, please go to our website and click on the contact page for a contact form, email address or phone number you can use so that we can capture this information. We are maintaining a log of these types of resources so that they are on-hand and available for us to use as soon as our infrastructure is ready to start addressing specific needs

14. Will behavioral health be expanded as well for the community?

These services are in fact among our first priorities. We are developing a plan to hire 50 new behavioral health workers which include psychiatrists, psychiatric nurses, licensed social workers and other licensed professionals trained in behavioral health.

15. Will Licensed Clinical Professional Counselors be hired to assist with behavioral health?

Absolutely. This is the part of the group of behavioral health providers that we are beginning to recruit now.

16. Will there be an opportunity to open up more inpatient behavioral health sites and residential facilities for our community members or is this out of scope for the SSHCO?

The funding we received from the State of Illinois' Department of Healthcare and Family Services for the South Side Healthy Community Organization will not be used to open more inpatient behavioral health sites or beds within our collaborative sites. However, some of our members may choose to increase behavioral health access outside of the SSHCO in which case they would continue to be a valuable resource to our partner organizations.

17. Is there any room to work with other community health partners to meet the needs of behavioral health needs which is vast on the South Side with very limited resources?

The SSHCO released a survey, or Request for Information (RFI) to all types of community-based organizations including behavioral health providers. This helped us to assess interested partners who may be connected to the SSHCO as referral partners for behavioral health care that is needed above and beyond what the SSHCO can provide.

18. The SSHCO noted in its application an estimated perinatal workforce shortage of at least 60 CFEs in this region. How many midwives does SSHCO plan to hire and what does that timeline look like?

The SSHCO will deploy 10 providers in year one, some of whom will be devoted to Obstetric (or OB) care. We anticipate hiring these roles by the Fall of 2022. The need for midwifery services, specifically, is still being reviewed. Midwives are able to care for some of the least complex pregnant patients, whereas Obstetricians can cover a wider range – so we will be assessing the needs of our patient population in order to provide the right levels of care at the right place and time.

19. So when the various healthcare providers are hired they will be working at the various organizations?

That is correct. Providers hired through our model will be placed across all of the 13 collaborative member sites on the South Side of Chicago.

20. Will you be hiring licensed social workers as well for the CHW role?

Yes, we will be hiring licensed social workers. They will all function within the space of care coordination. All healthcare professionals will work together to provide care coordination for the patients.

21. Will you open up the opportunity to be a board member?

The SSHCO Board of Directors Bylaws state that the Board will include individuals from the 13 Incorporating Member sites, plus three Community-Based Board members, and the Chief Executive Officer (to be hired). The Community-Based Board Members will serve an initial term of two years. After such time, the Community Advisory Council (to be formed once our CEO is hired) will have the opportunity to nominate or re-elect three candidates to serve in this role. The next round of Community-Based Board members will serve a term of three years.

22. How can health centers which are not part of the SSHCO be considered as providers and contractors?

If your health center provides services which could be considered a referral service for SSHCO patients, please feel free to complete the Request for Information survey we have available on our website at: www.southsidehealthycommunity.com

23. Initiatives like this, specific to maternal health, have existed before. What is the SSHCO doing that is different or innovative?

The main difference in this initiative is that it is holistic, comprehensive and collaborative. There is always room for continuous improvement when it comes to healthcare, building upon lessons learned from the past and new areas of opportunity. We are planning to use this opportunity to: A) grow the number of maternal care providers on the South Side so they are more conveniently accessible to patients; B) provide social resources to pregnant moms as part of their care-management; and C) probably most innovative about our work is that we will use this opportunity to share best practices across our 13 collaborative sites to learn from one another. The SSHCO provides the opportunity for our care sites to work collaboratively on high-risk pregnant moms, ensuring that they get the right level of care at the right time.