

**MEETING OF THE HEALTH BENEFITS COMMITTEE OF THE RETIREMENT
BOARD OF THE COUNTY EMPLOYEES' AND OFFICERS' ANNUITY AND BENEFIT
FUND OF COOK COUNTY AND EX OFFICIO FOR THE FOREST PRESERVE
DISTRICT EMPLOYEES' ANNUITY AND BENEFIT FUND OF
COOK COUNTY**

**70 West Madison Street. Suite 1925
Chicago, Illinois 60602
9:30 a.m.**

Minutes for the September 25, 2025 Meeting

The County Employees' and Officers' Annuity and Benefit Fund of Cook County and the Forest Preserve District Employees' Annuity and Benefit Fund of Cook County Fund are herein collectively referred to as the "Fund." All Health Benefit Committee ("HBC" or "Committee") recommendations are preliminary in nature and subject to review and approval by the full Retirement Board.

Call to Order and Roll Call:

Trustees Present:	Samuel Richardson, Jr. (Chair), Hal Dardick; Lakeisha Marvel, Jerry Pray, Tracy Reed
Staff Present:	Brent Lewandowski, Executive Director; Rachelle Howliet, Senior Health Benefits Specialist; Rosemary Ihejirika, Benefits Manager; Gary LeDonne, Director, Benefits Administration; Margaret Fahrenbach, Legal Advisor
Others Present:	Mary Pat Burns, Burke Burns & Pinelli, Ltd.; Dan Levin, Segal Consulting; Cathryn Marsico, Cook County

Chairman Richardson asked if anyone present would like to address the Committee. There being no public comment, the meeting continued.

1. Review and Consideration of Approval of June 17, 2025, Health Benefits Committee Meeting Minutes

It was moved by Trustee Reed and seconded by Trustee Dardick that the presented minutes of the Health Benefits Committee meeting on June 17, 2025, be adopted.

[Vote Result:](#) **MOTION ADOPTED BY VOICE VOTE**

2. Review and Approval of Dental Plan Renewal

Brent Lewandowski, executive director, stated that since 2012 the Fund had provided annuitants with the opportunity to purchase dental insurance for themselves and their dependents through Guardian Life Insurance Company of America (Guardian). In order to participate in the dental insurance plan, annuitants contracted directly with Guardian and paid the premiums to the procuring broker. The arrangement with Guardian will expire at the end of 2025.

Guardian offered to provide the same benefits under the dental plan for 2026 and 2027, but the premiums would be increased by three percent (3%). In order to maintain the current rates, the benefits would need to be changed. It was considered whether the Fund should reduce out-of-pocket maximums, increase deductibles, decrease co-insurance on major services and other matters in order to keep the rates constant. Fund staff and Segal reviewed the options proposed by Guardian that would be necessary to avoid an increase in the premiums. After consideration of the options presented, the Fund staff and Segal concluded that it would be best to keep the benefits the same. The trustees discussed the options presented and determined that the rate increase was the best option so long as the benefits remained the same.

It was moved by Trustee Dardick and seconded by Trustee Pray that the Committee recommend that the Board authorize the continuation of the Dental Plan as offered by Guardian to include the presented benefits and administration at the proposed rates effective from January 1, 2026, through December 31, 2027.

Vote Result: **MOTION ADOPTED BY VOICE VOTE**

3. Review and Consideration of Approval of Health Plan Rates for 2026

Dan Levin, Segal Consulting, presented the cost projections for 2026 based upon three years of claims experience. It was projected that the Non-Medicare rates for the Choice plan would increase by 10.6% and the Non-Medicare rates for the Choice Plus plan would increase by 0.2%. The Medicare rates would increase by 6.9% for the Choice plan and by 8.5% for the Choice Plus plan. Segal noted that in 2025, the medical benefits for the Fund increased more than the pharmaceutical benefits, largely due to rebates related to prescription drugs from CMS and the drug manufacturers. Segal found that the Fund's increases were less than experienced by the industry in general.

Segal proposed that the Fund might consider the same percentage increase for all the Non-Medicare participants and all the Medicare participants whether that received coverage under the Choice or the Choice Plus plans. By using this method, the rates would fluctuate less from year to year and might give more stability to the plan. Fund staff noted that members would change their benefit selections when the premiums increased. Based upon the current Fund estimated subsidy of 44%, the Non-Medicare coverage under either plan would increase by 9.7% and the Medicare coverage under either plan would increase by 7.5%. It was noted that in earlier years, the Fund provided various subsidies based upon the demographics of the participant, i.e. a surviving spouse with children would receive a higher subsidy than a single person with no dependents. The Board wanted to gradually change the

proposed subsidy across all demographics so that eventually the subsidy would be the same for all. By 2022, the Board determined that the subsidy would be the same for all the enrollees.

In 2024, the estimated subsidy of 44.1% projected a cost of \$43.2M to the Fund. The actual Fund costs in 2024 were \$37.9M, which resulted in a subsidy of 41.9%. The trustees wanted to know when the actual subsidies were higher than projected. The trustees also recognized that those retirees with higher annuity benefits were more likely to choose the more expensive options for health care coverage and they wanted to be mindful of providing better options for retirees with lower annuity benefits in future years. The trustees wanted more information from Segal about the projected and actual subsidy rates before they could make a recommendation to the Board about the rates to be proposed effective January 1, 2026. Segal stated that it could provide the requested information by Monday or Tuesday of the following week. The Committee proposed that they reconvene on October 2, 2025, to review the information expected from Segal and to make a recommendation to the Board about the rates.

It was moved by Trustee Dardick and seconded by Trustee Pray that the Committee schedule a meeting on October 2, 2025, at 9:00 am to review and discuss the proposed subsidy rates and to make a recommendation about the rates to be adopted by the Board effective January 1, 2026.

Vote Result: MOTION ADOPTED BY VOICE VOTE

4. Old Business/New Business

There was no old business or new business discussed.

5. Adjournment

It was moved by Trustee Marvel and seconded by Trustee Pray that the Health Benefits Committee meeting be adjourned.

Vote Result: MOTION ADOPTED BY VOICE VOTE