

Dear Mayor Emanuel: SAVE OUR MENTAL HEALTH CLINICS!

I write you as a taxpayer and voter in the City of Chicago who is very concerned about the sparse mental health services in our city and the constant threats of closure and privatization. As you prepare to balance the City's budget, we need you to know that closing our clinics because of budget difficulties or any other reason would be dangerous, irresponsible, unnecessary and immoral.



Two years ago, advocates saved four south side mental health clinics threatened with closure and Mayor Daley's staff committed to continue working with patients, advocates and workers towards keeping and improving our services. City Council appropriated \$2.5 million in CDBG funds to hire the necessary staff to keep our clinics sustainable but then hired only a few people. Though the City finally fixed the billing errors that caused the mess in the first place, billing still fell short by \$3 million.

Closing or privatizing clinics *will not* save the city money, because the clients who fall through the cracks will cost the city, county and state far more money when they show up at emergency rooms, jails and morgues. 46% of the population will suffer from some degree of mental illness during their lifetime and the current economy is only making things worse. The chronically mentally ill, in particular, have nowhere else to turn as both private and public services are shutting down.

Providing quality services to the mentally ill is the responsibility of government and a necessity for strong communities. Nearly every family has somebody with some form of mental illness. Closing clinics will increase unemployment, increase depression and mental illness and a lot of families will suffer.

These services cannot be sacrificed, they are as important to a stable Chicago as police, fire and other front-line responders.

Those of us who care about this issue pay taxes and vote. We want our tax dollars used to help out those who most need them. We urge you to do everything in your power as Mayor of the City of Chicago to save our clinics and show that Chicago cares about its most vulnerable residents.

Sincerely,

Name: _____

Address: _____

Disclaimer: My address is included to show you that I am a resident of Chicago, but may not be shared or saved.

If you wish to be notified of the progress on the Mental Health Movement's efforts, please include your phone and email. This section of the letter will not be delivered to the Mayor or shared with anyone else.

Phone: _____

Email: _____