



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**FIGRETTI SAYS PLANS FOR PROVIDENT HOSPITAL HEADING IN WRONG DIRECTION AND
A CONTINUATION OF PRECKWINKLE'S FAILED TAX AND SPEND POLICIES**

Chicago, IL — "The announcement that the Cook County Health System plans to reactivate emergency ambulance runs at Provident Hospital is another huge error, budgetary waste, and continuation of Cook County's failed tax and spend policies of Cook County Board President, Toni Preckwinkle," said Bob Fioretti, candidate for Cook County Board President. "I said just last week that we need budget cuts, not spending increases. How can anyone justify reopening an emergency service for ambulances only blocks from the new University of Chicago Hospital Trauma facility? Not only are both facilities clearly visible to each other — the new facility is the most expensive and advanced privately-run trauma center in Illinois," Fioretti stated. Adding, "The community advocated for this state-of-the-art facility and the University provided it. There is no logic whatsoever in attempting to compete with it."

"Keep in my mind, Provident is only a 6-7-minute ride via ambulance from Stroger Hospital. The 4,000 health system personnel vacancies equate to approximately \$300 million. Those 4,000 jobs should be frozen, not filled," Fioretti said. Merge Provident into Stroger Hospital to cut unnecessary spending, build efficiency with will save jobs in the long-term. Another option is to repurpose the facility into an inpatient mental health facility. The psychiatric professionals I speak to decry the closure inpatient psychiatric hospitals, and this can address those concerns," Fioretti added.

"This is yet another example of Toni Preckwinkle's lack of leadership. Preckwinkle prefers to expand inefficient county bureaucracy and continue her failed tax and spend policies. Toni Preckwinkle knows that her budget is subsidized by federal Covid funding. Once that funding is depleted, she will raid the already stress public aid funds system," Fioretti explained.

CEO of Cook County Health, Israel Rocha, has stated, "The more patients we are able to keep, the more patients we are able to care for [and bill for], the better our future becomes as a self-sustaining center of care. We think we are there now, that's why these investments have allowed us to continue the growth."

In response to the CEO's statement, Fioretti stated, "If the State Health Facility's Planning Board is doing their job, public hospitals would not be attempting to compete with private hospitals. Not only is this not a sustainable plan — it is a total waste of taxpayer dollars. We cannot have a 7.8% increase (or more) in Cook County budgets. The size of the county budget is nearly three times what it was a decade ago and there are no performance parameters to measure and review budget effectiveness and efficiency. I plan to institute objective, commons-sense, budget measures for all areas of the budget, including the budgets for the offices of Cook County State's Attorney, Sherriff, as well as the judicial budget. There must be a way to measure the overall impact and effectiveness of the billions of taxpayer dollars being spent annually," Fioretti proclaimed.

"Toni Preckwinkle is not leading on any of these issues. Ignoring these major problems and kicking the can down the road is not a solution. She has a blatant disregard for taxpayers, taxpayer dollars, and the general welfare and public safety of Cook County residents and families. If Cook County does not get these issues under control now, we, as a county, are headed for disaster," Fioretti concluded.

To learn more about Bob Fioretti and his campaign for Cook County Board President, visit www.FiorettiForCook.com.

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