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**Cook County Announces COVID-19 Respite Housing for Healthcare Workers, First Responders and Correctional Officers**

CHICAGO – Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle, joined by the Cook County Department of Public Health (CCDPH), Cook County Department of Emergency Management and Regional Security (EMRS) and area first responders today announced the availability of respite housing for suburban Cook County healthcare professionals, first responders and correctional officers.

“To further help prevent the spread of COVID-19, healthcare workers from hospitals and nursing homes, first responders (including fire, police and EMS workers), and correctional employees who are on the front lines and have experienced repeat exposures, will have a place to safely quarantine away from household members at higher risk of complications from the disease,” said Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle.

Hotel rooms for the respite housing program were secured by IEMA. EMRS coordinated planning and logistics for the program. CCDPH is overseeing implementation for those on the front lines of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Those who are eligible for respite housing include, but are not limited to:

- respiratory therapists, certified nursing assistants, patient care technicians, nurses, cleaning staff, transporters, radiology techs and medical assistants, among others
- police, fire, and emergency medical service (EMS) personnel employed or contracted by a governmental entity
- correctional employees

“Given the limited supply of hotel space, and that we are taking a health equity approach, priority is being given to workers who may not be able to afford to rent a hotel room,” said CCDPH Senior Medical Officer Dr. Rachel Rubin.

Respite housing will be offered in 7-day increments. Renewal will be based on the availability of housing and what is needed to address the immediate threat to public health and safety.

“Right now, healthcare workers, first responders and correctional workers are our boots on the ground in the fight against COVID-19,” said EMRS Executive Director William Barnes. “We have an obligation to provide them with this housing option to help them protect their families while they protect us.”

Last week, Cook County unveiled the first phase of its COVID-19 alternative housing plan for people discharged from area hospitals who are unable to safely recover and isolate in their homes, including people who are homeless or housing insecure.

For more information, visit [www.cookcountypublichealth.org](http://www.cookcountypublichealth.org) or call the CCDPH COVID-19 Hotline at 708-633-3319.

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