Ceremony for Huff Hall addition honors UI alumni

BY JAMAL COLLIER

STAFF WRITER

University alumni Shahid Khan and Ann Carlson Khan were honored for their \$10 million donation to the addition to Huff Hall during the dedication of the Khan Annex on Thursday.

The Khan Annex provides over 24,000 square feet to programs for the College of Applied Health Sciences, including a center on Health, Aging, Disability, the Master of Public Health Program, classrooms, research labs and office facilities.

Members of the community, University administrators and students attended the ceremony. University President Michael Hogan said the rain that started right before the ceremony began "can't damper the sunshiny spirit of the day, at least for (him)."

Hogan said the Khan Annex can be an innovation that can encourage research into healthier lifestyles.

Shahid and Ann graduated from the University in 1971 and 1980 respectively, and the couple has been a longtime financial supporter.

The Khans are responsible for funding the Khan Outdoor Tennis Complex, home to both the University men's and women's tennis teams.

The Krannert Center for the

Performing Arts, the University Library and five professorships in the College of Applied Health Sciences are all additional beneficiaries of the Khans' contributions.

Shahid credits his wife with the original idea for the center. He said she has been very passionate about helping people with disabilities.

Ann said she had the original idea for the Khan Annex to pursue research in helping others with any kind of injury.

"You don't appreciate it until you break your foot and see how hard it is to get into a building," she said

Ann worked alongside Tanya Gallagher, Dean of the College

of AHS, to help build off the idea she had.

Gallagher said the biggest barrier during the planning was realizing what is possible and how to make it a reality.

"The core assumption in the college is that we can improve people's lives," Gallagher said. "We can do that if we learn more and develop more technology to try and support the quality of life in people."

The Khans were presented with a plaque by the college of AHS for their services.

"The only thing I like better than making money is using it to make a difference," Shahid said. "So the students will be working out of the best there is." **ALLERTON PARK**

Bridge to be replaced beginning next week

By TOM KACICH

tkacich@news-gazette.com

MONTICELLO - After more than 10 years of enduring what is literally a bridge to nowhere, there's hope for frequent visitors to Allerton Park in rural Piatt County.

A "bridge-breaking" ceremony will be held next week at the old south entrance bridge to the park - which has been closed for a decade - and construction on a new bridge will begin this fall.

The old concrete span over the Sangamon River, built almost 100 years ago, was declared unsafe after an engineer's inspection in June 2001, and was closed immediately. At the time officials at the University of Illinois, which owns the 1,500acre park and retreat center, said a new bridge was expected to open in the spring of 2003.

It's now expected to open in 2013, according to Melyvn Skvarla, an architect with the UI's capital planning department.

"We hope that it will be finished in two years, depending on weather conditions," he said.

O'Neil Bros. of Champaign, a division of MACC of Illinois, is the apparent low bidder for the project and will replace the bridge at a cost of about \$1.59 million, plus will repave about 3 miles of roadway inside the park at an additional cost of about \$506,000.

Politics, the state's finances and a dispute over the design of the replacement bridge have

delayed construction of a new bridge.

"It's just been endless, trying to get past preservationists who wanted to retain the old bridge and its character," Monticello Mayor Chris Corrie said. "Yes, it did have character, but the replacement cost of a bridge like that was three or four times more. State Rep. Chapin Rose was so instrumental in getting a replacement bridge that everyone could afford. This really brings something of value to the state of Illinois.'

Rose, a Republican lawmaker from Mahomet whose district includes Piatt County, called the effort to rebuild the bridge "just unreal."

"For the longest time our biggest issue was with the state historic preservation agency that was demanding an architecturally significant bridge that would add a million bucks to the price tag. No one needed or wanted that."

"There was a lot holding up the new bridge. But that was the primary issue that consumed years of time. The other thing was the capital bill. We had no capital bill in Illinois for seven years."

The money for the new bridge, according to William Adams, associate chancellor of the Urbana campus, comes from a repair and renovation

fund in the UI's capital bill proceeds.

The university has owned the Allerton complex since 1946 when the late Robert Allerton, the only son of Chicago banker and stockyards baron Samuel Allerton, donated it.

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Rose said the project didn't have an influential advocate at the UI until Robert Easter became interim chancellor.

"I want to give credit to Bob Easter. Until he showed up as interim chancellor, I don't think anyone on the Urbana campus knew where Allerton Park was," Rose said. "I think Bob Easter being the good community citizen, he realized what a treasure this place is for the university and that part of being a good neighbor is maintaining it. Economic development is the fourth mission of the University of Illinois and in his mind it made sense for a lot of reasons to get this thing fixed.

"Once we had a champion at the campus level it was done fairly quickly."

Corrie said replacing the bridge and reopening the south entrance to Allerton Park, which leads into downtown Monticello, will do wonders for the local economy. Allerton Park, which the state tourism office recently declared one of "the seven

wonders of Illinois," attracts between 80,000 and 100,000 visitors a year, said Jessica Hampson, marketing director at the retreat.

"Having that bridge outbypassed the city of Monticello for just about everyone who went to that park. That's hard on us," Corrie said.

There's no estimate for how much the city lost with the bridge closure, Corrie said, but he called it "significant."

"Even if one out of 10 people who goes to that place spent some money on Monticello, that would be significant," he said.

"There's no question that it's a wise move on the part of the state to put that bridge back in. Tourism accounts for a huge amount of positive commerce anywhere you go. But Allerton is just about the main thing we have here in central Illinois. When we travel to art shows all over he county you'd be surprised how many people say, 'Oh yeah, Monticello, that's where that neat park is outside of the town."

Rose and Piatt County Engineer Eric Seibring said that reopening the south road will be good for residents north of the park and for officials

in Willow Branch Township that have had to put up traffic diversions for a decade.

"It will help the township simply because it will get a lot of traffic off those roads that weren't built for this volume," Seibring said.

"And it's an additional cost to those people to keep it up and running," Rose added.

Local, state and UI officials are planning a ceremony at the site of the old bridge at 11 a.m. Friday, Sept. 30, to mark its demolition and the beginning of construction of the new span. He's informally calling it a "bridge breaking."

"We talked about having a jackhammer or a sledgehammer and everyone getting a chance with it," Rose joked. "But it's just mainly going to be a ceremony."

William Adams, associate vice chancellor at the UI, credited Rose with "never letting go of this. He just kept pushing and pushing and pushing.

"There have been a lot of us who have been working on this for a number of years, and it will be nice to have an event to finally show the progress," he said.

New plan for No Child Left Behind

Obama is expected to seek overhaul, push for more flexibility

By DIANE RADO
Tribune reporter

For nearly a decade, public schools in Illinois and around the country have struggled to meet federal academic standards and have been considered "failing" when too many children flunked achievement tests.

In Illinois alone, more than 90 percent of high schools are below the federal bar, as are 44 percent of elementary schools.

But if the White House has its way, schools and districts no longer would be labeled failures and No Child Left Behind — the landmark education act signed into law by President George W. Bush in January 2002 — would be overhauled.

President Barack Obama on Friday is expected to propose monumental changes to the way schools are judged and sanctioned based on student academic achievement, fixing what senior administration officials on Thursday called a "broken law."

A cornerstone of the law — that all students tested pass state exams by 2013-14 — would be thrown out in favor of states coming up with their own plans to bring struggling students up to par in the most troubled schools. "Adequate Yearly Progress" — the annual requirement to improve test scores — would go away.

Administration officials emphasized that states will have to set high bars and that schools still will be held accountable for student performance.

The changes aren't a sure thing yet.

So far, the Obama administration has been unable to reach a deal with Congress to amend the

More schools failing in Illinois

Under federal No Child Left Behind reforms, an increasing number of schools and districts have been failing to meet federal academic standards over the decade. Schools are considered failing if they don't meet annual targets for passing state achievement tests, called "Adequate Yearly Progress." Overall the percentage of Illinois schools not making AYP increased from 32.3 percent in 2002-03 to 52.5 percent last school year, with high schools faring the worst.

Made AYP

Illinois high schools By school year

54.7%

65.5

19.3

2002-03

2003-04

2004-05

2005-06

2006-07

2007-08

2008-09

2009-10

Illinois elementary schools By school year		
Made AYP		Did not make AYP
70.3	2002-03	29.7%
74.2	2003-04	25.8
78.3	2004-05	21.7
85.4	2005-06	14.6
81,9	2006-07	18.1
75.5	2007-08	24.5
67.5	2008-09	32.5
55.8	2009-10	44.2

SOURCE: Illinois State Board of Education

law, so the U.S. Department of Education is moving forward with a process of waivers to allow states the flexibility to change their systems of testing students and judging the performance of schools and districts.

States can apply for the waivers to No Child Left Behind as early as November. Illinois will likely seek one, said State Board of Education spokeswoman Mary Fergus.

"We would still like to see the details involved in the process. While we support the general themes for flexibility, additional information will be forthcoming from the (Department of Education) over the next week or two that will assist us in making that decision on whether or not to formally seek a waiver," she said.

The waivers themselves are controversial, and the White House already has encountered some resistance from members of Congress who believe Obama and U.S. Education Secretary Arne Duncan are going too far without lawmakers' approval.

No Child Left Behind got bipartisan support when it was approved a decade ago, and civil rights groups lauded the law's focus on ensuring that minority and disadvantaged students pass state tests and get help if they are

Every year, an increasing percentage of students had to pass reading and math tests — 85 percent in Illinois in 2011 — and ultimately all students had to pass by 2013-14. Schools and districts have been judged not only on all students, but groups of students within the school and district, such as minority and poor students. If one group failed, the school failed, and schools faced sanctions for repeatedly failing.

struggling.

"The problem with the current system is that it is driving the whole educational system to a single test score. ... It is the dumbing down of America's schools," said Superintendent Harry Griffith, who oversees Lake Forest high school and elementary districts.

"Accountability needs to stay — it is very important. But using one single test score is irresponsible," he said.

Did not make AYP

45.3%

34.5

41.9

48.8

50.4

65.5

80.7

91.6

TRIBUNE

Lake Forest High School District 115 was the only high school district in Illinois that met the adequate yearly progress target required for passing state tests in 2010. But this year, Griffith said the district didn't make AYP, because of the performance of one student group.

Around the country, lawmakers have been hearing complaints about all the failing schools, putting pressure on Washington to do something about No Child Left Behind.

It wasn't just the bad public image that worried educators. Concerns have arisen about states lowering standards and schools focusing on teaching to the test and getting kids to pass rather than providing a rich curriculum.

"There's an overemphasis on minimum achievement and not on the higher end," said Gene Wilhoit, executive director of the Council of Chief State School Officers, which has been active in attempts to reform No Child Left Behind.

Wilhoit stressed that No Child Left Behind brought important changes to school systems, particularly by putting a spotlight on the performance of students from all backgrounds.

Under the waiver process, states will have to come up with plans that include three critical areas. They must adopt learning standards to ensure students are ready for college and work; develop systems that reward highachieving schools that serve low-income students and show student progress; and put in place teacher and principal evaluation systems that include judging educators in part on the progress of their students.

States also will have to focus on turning around their worst-performing schools, the bottom 5 percent, and pay more attention to improving an additional 10 percent of schools that have low graduation rates and big gaps in performance between student groups.

Glenn "Max" McGee, a former state school superintendent and former local district superintendent in Illinois, said it will be important to continue breaking out data to spotlight how disadvantaged students are doing compared to their peers, and not diminish attention on the achievement gap.

"The achievement gap is public enemy No. 1." McGee said.

He also said that while the states may move away from a system in which schools are labeled as failing, educators can't ignore the realities.

"Unfortunately, we will have failing schools," he said. "They just may not be designated as such."

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THE CHRONICLE

QuickWire: U. of Texas Gets \$50-Million to Build Academic Supercomputer

September 22, 2011, 5:10 pm By Alex Campbell

The University of Texas at Austin will receive \$50-million over the next four years to build a supercomputer that university officials say "will be one of the most powerful systems in the world." The computer, to be called Stampede, will be built at the university's Texas Advanced Computing Center, and it's expected to be up and running by January 2013. The money comes from a grant from the National Science Foundation, which will put up \$27.5 million upfront. The computer will be "uniquely comprehensive," university officials say, with the ability to help scientists in a number of different fields, among them, weather forecasting, climate change, drug discovery, and automobile and airplane production. The computer is designed to be capable of between 2 and 10 quadrillion operations per second, said Jay Boisseau, director of the Texas Advanced Computing Center. Scientists will be able to use it to pull together massive amounts of data, and also visualize that information — something that he says usually requires two different specialized devices.

This entry was posted in Research, Uncategorized. Bookmark the permalink.

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News: A Multi-Part Question - Inside Higher Ed

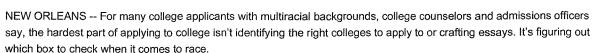


News

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A Multi-Part Question

September 23, 2011



With more students coming from multiracial backgrounds and colleges and universities becoming increasingly nuanced in how they ask about and measure diversity, students and institutions alike are trying to figure out how to adequately account for diversity in the application process. The issues faced by multiracial college applicants were a major topic of discussion here Thursday as college counselors convened for the annual meeting of the <u>National Association of College Admission Counseling</u>.

In particular, counselors said, recent changes in the structure of application questions about racial and ethnic background have led to confusion among students -- particularly Latino students -- about how they should identify themselves in the process. The questions are causing stress for students, and institutions are finding the data more convoluted, and sometimes less useful, than before.

Much of the admissions officers' concern centered on how the Common Application, which is used by <u>460 colleges</u>, asks students about their ethnic and racial identity. Since 2009, in response to <u>changes in federal reporting requirements</u>, ethnicity has been a two-part question on the application, and other institutions' applications have similar language.

The first part asks students to say whether they identify as Latino or Hispanic. The second part of the question asks them -- regardless of how they answered the previous question -- to identify as American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, black or African American, Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, or white. Students can check as many boxes as they'd like in the second question, and both questions are optional.

Before the change, universities were just required to ask and report whether students identified themselves as African American/Black, Hispanic, Asian/Pacific Islander, American Indian/Alaskan Native, or White, though many institutions also allowed students to choose multiracial. In most instances, students could only select one category. The change in the wording was motivated by a change to what the federal government required colleges to report when it came to data, and the same language was used in the 2010 census.

When the Common Application and other institutions implemented the wording change, many colleges saw an increase in the number of students identifying as multiracial. Admissions officers said Latino or Hispanic students, many of whom didn't traditionally identify as any other ethnicity but felt obligated to answer the second question, drove the increase. Several counselors said the new wording also motivated students who previously would have identified as only one race -- such as a black student whose great-grandfather was white -- to identify as more than one race.

Rob Killion, executive director of the Common Application, said that he regularly hears about issues with the questions in the application but that, because of the federal reporting requirements, there isn't much leeway for changing the questions. "If there was some way that we could make these questions more understandable to kids, we would do it," he said.

Several admissions counselors at Thursday's session said they have seen an increase in the number of students asking them how to answer such questions.

Admissions officials said the new wording creates problems not only for students, but also for colleges and universities. Institutions want to be able to provide the right resources for students from different backgrounds once they're on a campus, counselors said. Different resources might be needed for a multiracial student than for one who identifies as having a single ethnicity.

"What you collect for the feds and what you want to present internally might be different," said Jarrid Whitney, executive director of admissions and financial aid at the California Institute of Technology. "We can't always break out the multiracial data in ways that we want to."

Jim Rawlins, executive director of admissions at Colorado State University, said his institution added a supplemental question about whether students identify as multiracial. That only added more layers of complexity. "We have students who check that box who only checked one of the above boxes, and students who checked more than one of the above boxes who don't check that box."

There is also a concern that students might not be <u>authentic</u> in how they answer questions about race and ethnicity, seeking an edge in the application process by identifying as multiracial when they really consider themselves to be only one race.

Asking about racial and ethnic identity in applications is complicated by the fact that many multiracial students have not confronted the question of identity, and most have not made solid determinations about it, by the time they're applying to college, said Kendall Reid-Webster, a counselor at the Marist School, in Atlanta, who regularly works with students and adults who are struggling with the issue of racial identity.

Bonnie Hall, associate director of admissions at Worcester Polytechnic Institute, said institutions should take time to examine what they are using the data for. If an institution is just using the questions to fill quotas of different races on campus, then they're not really pursuing diversity. If they're using it to try create a variety of perspectives on campus, then the new questions might help them better identify what students can bring. "What is the ultimate goal?" she asked the crowd at the session Thursday. "I would hope that everyone's answer is real diversity on campus."

- Kevin Kiley

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CHARITY CARE

Quinn halts rulings on tax exemptions

Office says he wants to wait until new rules on defining amount of care are hashed out

By CARLA K. JOHNSON Associated Press Medical Writer

CHICAGO — Gov. Pat Quinn has ordered state officials not to issue any new rulings that could deny tax-exempt status to nonprofit hospitals, saying he hopes to work with the hospital industry to find a legislative compromise.

In a letter to the Illinois Hospital Association released to The Associated Press on Thursday, Quinn called for a solution that would be fair to both the hospitals and Illinois taxpayers. The letter follows the Illinois Department of Revenue's decision last month to deny tax exemptions to three hospitals, citing a 2010 Illinois Supreme Court ruling. The denials signaled that the state would get tough on hospitals it believes are operating more like businesses than charities.

"I trust that (the Illinois Hospital Association) and the hospital community will make every effort to be a constructive partner in finding a solution to this issue that is fair to both hospitals and taxpayers and meets the requirements of the Illinois Constitution," Quinn wrote in his letter dated Monday.

The tax-exemption decisions have raised uncertainty for hospital executives. Officials at Hopedale Medical Complex in central Illinois have said they are delaying construction of a replacement hospital because of uncertainty about whether the property would be tax exempt.

At stake are millions of dollars in tax revenues that the hospitals could contribute to cities, parks and schools by paying taxes. No state tax revenue is at stake because the exemptions are for local property taxes.

Quinn's move is intended to create breathing room during talks on new legislation that could clearly define what hospitals must do to earn taxexempt status. He wants recommendations on the legislation by March 1.

Quinn spokeswoman Brie Callahan said Quinn ordered the hold because the state hospital association showed a new willingness to compromise following the three rulings last month.

Please see CHARITY CARE, A-6

continued

CHARITY CARE

Continued from A-1

But the negotiations could be difficult. The Chicago-based Fair Care Coalition has argued that tax-exempt hospitals should be required to spend 3.5 percent of their annual revenue on providing free and discounted care to the poor and uninsured.

"We want a standard that's going to be measureable," said Roshani Saraiya, a community leader with the Logan Square Neighborhood Association, a coalition member. "We want a hard number. We're not stuck on that number. We're more focused of finding solutions to the problem."

It's not clear that the hospital association will be able to accept any hard number to set charity care as a percentage of revenue.

"That's yesterday's answer to the problem," Illinois Hospital Association President Maryjane Wurth said Thursday by phone.

Wurth said she applauds Quinn's decision to put new tax-exemption rulings on hold and looks forward to working toward a legislative solution. The association also wants the Department of Revenue to reconsider the three rulings already handed down until a legislative solution can be reached.

For years, the hospital association has resisted a rigid percentage of revenue as a definition for charity care, arguing instead for a more expansive consideration of what hospitals contribute to the community through the costs of training doctors and nurses, the costs of care not covered by the government health programs Medicare and Medicaid and the cost of

Pending tax-exemption cases

The Illinois Department of Revenue has tax-exemption cases pending for:

- Adventist Bollingbrook Hospital, Bolingbrook.
- Adventist Glen Oaks Hospital, Glendale Heights.
 - Advocate Medical Center, Libertyville.
 - Carle Foundation Hospital, Urbana.
 - Childrens Memorial Hospital, Chicago.
 - Decatur Memorial Hospital, Decatur.
- Edward Hospital, Naperville and Hillsboro.
- Ferrell Hospital Community Foundation, Eldorado.
- Hillsboro Hospital, Hillsboro.
- Kewanee Hospital, Kewanee.
- Memorial Hospital Association, Carthage.
- Midwest Medical Center, Galena.
- Midwest Palliative & Hospice Care Center, Glenview.
- Northshore University Health System, Skokie and Chicago.
 - Northwestern Memorial Hospital, Chicago.
- OSF Healthcare System of Rockford, Monmouth.
- Southern Illinois Hospital Services, Murphysboro.
 - St. Marys Hospital, Ottawa.
- Trinity Medical Center, Moline and Rock Island.

patients' bad debt.

Wurth said the expansion of Medicaid coverage coming in 2014 under the Affordable Care Act will mean fewer Illinois residents will lack insurance. That will make setting a percentage of revenue for charity care unreasonable, she said.

Hospitals get time for a compromise

Determinations of tax-exempt status on hold for now

BY KATHY BERGEN
AND MORITZ HONERT
Tribune reporters

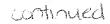
Gov. Pat Quinn extended an olive branch to nonprofit hospitals Thursday, saying the state would temporarily hold off on further decisions about their exemptions from property taxes.

The state sent a chill through the nonprofit hospital world in August when it denied exemptions for three hospitals, contending they did not provide enough charity care to qualify. Those hospitals — Northwestern Memorial Hospital's Prentice Women's Hospital, Edward Hospital in Naperville and Decatur Memorial Hospital — dispute that assessment.

Another 15 evaluations are in the pipeline.

The Illinois Department of Revenue decisions came in the wake of an Illinois Supreme Court ruling last year that the department was correct in withdrawing Provena Covenant Medical Center's property-tax exemption in 2004. The court found the Urbana hospital's charity care was insufficient to justify its exemption.

Please turn to Page 6



Hospitals get time on tax status

Continued from Page 1

After the three recent denials, the Illinois Hospital Association wrote to Quinn, asking the state to withdraw its denials and hold off issuing any additional ones until a legislative compromise could be worked out.

The state agreed, in part, to the request. In a recent letter to the association, Quinn said efforts to craft legislation that would more clearly define what constitutes an adequate level of charity care will begin, with recommendations due March 1. The hospital association will be included in those efforts, he stated.

And the Department of Revenue will hold off on any further tax-exemption decisions while those talks proceed.

"It's a temporary detente," said Brie Callahan, a spokeswoman for the governor. "If the talks aren't going anywhere ... then the Department of Revenue will have to do what is required by law and the Constitution."

The department's recent denials stand, but the three hospitals have the right to appeal, and that process can take up to a year.

The state's response drew positive responses from the three hospitals. They each issued statements that they looked forward to working with Quinn and the legislature toward a legislative solution, but that meanwhile, they would pursue appeals.

"We will work closely with the hospital community to ensure that any new legislation would reverse the initial denials by the Illinois Department of Revenue, and provide clear standards for charitable tax exemption," Edward



ALEX GARCIA/TRIBUNE PHOTO 2007

Northwestern Memorial Hospital's Prentice Women's Hospital, above, is one of three nonprofits already denied exemption from property taxes by the state of Illinois.

"It's a temporary detente."

- Brie Callahan, spokeswoman for Gov. Pat Quinn

Hospital said in its statement.

The Illinois Hospital Association "is extremely pleased at the administration's decision to create some space and to create a process to discuss this," said Mark Deaton, the organization's general counsel. "Our understanding is there will be no further rulings in the meantime, which was important for addressing the anxiety in hospital community."

Hospitals' tax-exempt status is reviewed whenever there is a change in property use, such as an expansion or a change in ownership.

While property taxes do not provide revenue to the state, they are the lifeblood of many cash-strapped cities, school districts, park systems and libraries.

The hospital association earlier said that losing an exemption could be devastating to an individual hospital, potentially wiping out thin margins and triggering cuts in the workforce.

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Cook County Rx

Hold the line on health care costs

The people who run Cook County's health system are the latest to learn that Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle really does intend to hold a hard line on spending. The health system's independent board wants \$327.6 million from the county next year. That's \$54 million more than it was budgeted to get this year.

Preckwinkle's response: No way. She's offering \$243 million.

Preckwinkle shouldn't back down. Progress on an efficient health system has been made in the three years since Cook County pols reluctantly turned control of the system to the independent board. In 2009, the county shelled out a staggering \$417 million to keep the system afloat. The next year it was \$274 million, thanks in part/to the panel's aggressive move to secure more Medicaid reimbursement. This year, though, the county's costs have spiked, in part because the health board overestimated how much money it would take in from other sources. It is projected to spend \$363.8 million from the county this year.

That's the wrong direction.

The total budget for the system in 2012 is projected at \$937.6 million, a 2.8 percent rise.

"We can't cut any more without really doing harm to the people we're trying to serve," says Warren Batts, the chairman of the health board.

That's not what we expect to hear from this group of professionals, who are wellversed in budgets and delivering quality health care. Their mission is to provide quality care and set the health system on a sound financial footing, which means it We like Preckwinkle's response to the health panel: "In the current financial climate, it is not feasible for the (health system) to receive an additional subsidy from county taxpayers, and we feel that it's important for government bodies to take responsibility for their budget shortfalls."

Credit Preckwinkle for a healthy sense of urgency and resolve to streamline and modernize all facets of county government. That resolve isn't shared by everyone on the Cook County Board, as you can see from the other editorial on this page.

The county faces a \$315 million budget shortfall in 2012. We can't count on every county commissioner to recognize that. We do count on the health board to fully deliver on its promises to hike revenue, cut expenses and wring inefficiencies from the system. Glaring proof that it has not: It has been four years since we learned Cook County hospitals didn't even try to bill some patients. Today, the computers still aren't up to speed; the county and its health system can't communicate effectively. Some bills still aren't going out.

So Preckwinkle should stand her ground and remind the health experts they really blew their budget this year. And she should do everything she can to help them make this system cost-effective.

The health system does face a formidable challenge: It's getting more patients who can't pay for care and fewer patients who can.

57 percent of the county's patients fall into a category that officials call "self pay." That's a euphemism for "no-pay." The county gives them free care. This share of the patient load has been rising in the last few years, county officials tell us.

That's right. Nearly 6 in 10 people who walk in the door for care can't pay and there is no insurance company or government program that will reimburse Cook County taxpayers for their care. Many of these patients are undocumented immigrants. Some of them live in neighboring counties and travel to Cook for treatment. Bottom line: The county is forced to eat those costs. It has to do a better job of determining who is actually a resident of Cook County and who has the means to pay for care.

Many of the families who qualify for Medicaid are taking their business to other hospitals. County officials don't know why this is happening. They need to find out. The answer is vital if the health system is to regain Medicaid dollars and

boost its cash flow.

We had high hopes when county polsfinally turned the system over to the pros. The panel's prime mission: Bring expenses and revenues in line and deliver quality, efficient care. Mr. Batts & Co. have more to deliver.