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MAYOR BRANDON JOHNSON JOINS CITY COLLEGES OF CHICAGO, THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO, AND UCHICAGO MEDICINE TO ANNOUNCE THE EXPANSION OF HEALTHCARE PROGRAMS AND FACILITIES ON THE SOUTH SIDE OF CHICAGO

CHICAGO - Mayor Brandon Johnson joined City Colleges of Chicago, the University of Chicago, and the University of Chicago Medical Center to announce the expansion of healthcare programs and facilities on the South Side of Chicago that will increase access to affordable higher education, clinical experiences and employment opportunities for South Side residents in growing healthcare fields.

“This health care pipeline expansion builds on a successful and strong relationship between City Colleges, the University of Chicago, and UChicago Medicine that is already placing our students into upwardly mobile careers,” said **Mayor Brandon Johnson**. “I applaud the partnership and the investment on our great South Side that this project represents.”

With this announcement, City Colleges will bring a full nursing pathway to Kennedy-King College in Englewood, which will include an associate degree in nursing and a licensed practical nursing program operated by Malcolm X College at Kennedy-King College, and a basic nursing assistant program and general education courses operated by Kennedy-King College. In addition, an expanded partnership between University of Chicago, UChicago Medicine and City Colleges/Malcolm X College will see the construction of two new facilities in Washington Park – the UChicago Medicine Clinical Labs, owned and operated by UChicago Medicine, and the Malcolm X College Learning Center, owned and operated by City Colleges and including the first clinical lab tech program in Chicago. In all, the two new Washington Park facilities are expected to bring about 600 jobs to the neighborhood.

“We are thrilled to expand access to City Colleges’ quality, affordable healthcare education and provide connections to in-demand healthcare careers for residents of the South Side,” said **Chancellor Juan Salgado, City Colleges of Chicago**. “Working



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with our partners at UChicago and UChicago Medicine, together we will create new economic opportunities and support healthy communities.”

UChicago Medicine plans to build a new facility that consolidates its existing clinical labs, modernizes their operations, and maximizes lab test efficiency to ensure best-in-class care. The facility would bring 550 jobs — including approximately 200 new positions — to Washington Park, provide clinical rotations for students, and help the hospital add critical lab capacity to meet the expanded diagnostic needs of a new cancer pavilion, expected to open in 2027. The new facility builds on investments UChicago has made over the past decade to reactivate several vacant spaces along East Garfield Boulevard, bring fresh vibrancy to the Washington Park neighborhood, and promote growth at a critical transit point.

“The University of Chicago is thrilled to embark on this undertaking in partnership with the City Colleges and our neighbors in Washington Park,” said **University of Chicago President Paul Alivisatos**. “Together, we will not only help address the immense unmet demand for health care professionals throughout the region, but through our efforts to educate, train, and employ individuals from our local communities, we are investing in the creation of a more robust service network that will elevate the collective health and wealth of us all.”

The Malcolm X College Learning Center in Washington Park will establish the first clinical lab technician program in the City of Chicago, with the opportunity to expand Malcolm X programming for other high-demand allied health professions. When fully operating, the Learning Center is expected to serve up to 800 students per year. The Center will include classrooms, dry labs, office space, and ground-floor retail space.

The Washington Park facilities will be built on two adjacent plots of land on the north side of Garfield Blvd. between the Green Line track and land just east of Calumet Ave. The UChicago Medicine Clinical Labs will be built on land owned by the University of Chicago, and the Malcolm X Learning Center will be built on land currently owned by the CTA. Both facilities are expected to break ground in 2025 and open during the 2026-27 academic year.

The connected projects would provide an on-ramp and clear pathway to careers in the health sciences for South Side residents, accelerating their ability to secure in-demand positions that pay well.

The new nursing programs at Kennedy-King College are expected to create a path for roughly 50 Basic Nursing Assistant (BNA) students by Fall 2024, 50 future associate degree earners in nursing by 2026, 10 Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN)



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degree earners by 2026, and 100 associate degree earners in nursing by 2028. This expansion will return a full nursing pathway to Kennedy-King College. City Colleges will partner with surrounding Chicago Public Schools high schools to create a pipeline to healthcare educational pathways, work-based learning, and careers.

The Washington Park project builds upon a formal Memorandum of Understanding established between the University of Chicago and City Colleges of Chicago in 2021 that aims to strengthen STEM education and career opportunities and create a more diverse field of professionals entering the sciences. For instance, UChicago and City Colleges have collaborated on a teaching fellowship that provides recent Ph.D. graduates in data science, mathematics, statistics, computer science, and other STEM fields with mentorship and teaching instruction as preparation for dual teaching appointments at the University and City Colleges. A [molecular engineering course](#) at UChicago's [Pritzker School of Molecular Engineering](#) (PME) taught exclusively for City Colleges students, for instance, was designed to open pathways for students to transfer into four-year STEM degree programs.

Annually, UChicago Medicine hires about 120 Malcolm X graduates, hosts roughly 65 Malcolm X students through internships, practicums, and apprenticeships, and engages with 100+ Malcolm X students through career development events. The project will help meet the significant and growing demand from local employers who have contended with a shortage of qualified candidates for clinical lab technician roles in recent years. UChicago Medicine often struggles to hire qualified candidates for its clinical lab tech positions, with positions remaining vacant longer than other healthcare roles. The scarcity of qualified candidates is even greater for South Side safety net hospitals.

Each year, there are approximately 500 job openings for medical laboratory positions in Chicago. Earning an associate degree in a clinical lab tech program qualifies graduates for positions ranging in pay from \$42,000 to \$80,000.

In addition, in 2023, there were 3,373 job openings for Registered Nurses in Cook County, with annual median salaries of \$83,000.

UChicago and City Colleges looked to quality-of-life plans Washington Park residents have contributed to over the past 15 years to guide initial project concepts. In those plans residents prioritized workforce development opportunities, revitalization of the Garfield corridor, utilization of Green Line stations for new development and welcomed partnerships with nearby employers and higher education institutions, especially those leading to stable, well-paid careers for residents. In the coming months, additional information will be shared, including a more detailed site plan,



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initial renderings, and early thinking on the ground floor retail space. The next community meeting focused on the Washington Park facilities will be held in April.

“As an academic health system, UChicago Medicine is committed to educating the next generation of healthcare workers,” said University of Chicago Executive Vice President for Medical Affairs Mark Anderson. “Our plans in Washington Park will train and empower a more diverse workforce, and also support the growing clinical needs of our medical campus. We are proud to collaborate with City Colleges, and look forward to working together to improve the lives of residents across Chicago’s South Side.”

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