



CITY OF CHICAGO • OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



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**MAYOR LIGHTFOOT INTRODUCES ORDINANCE TO CLARIFY FUNCTIONS,
REQUIRE DIVERSITY ON BOARD OF HEALTH**

Ordinance would add diversity requirements while aligning the functions of the Board of Health with other boards and commissions

CHICAGO – Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot introduced an ordinance today to clarify the functions of the Chicago Board of Health and add diversity requirements. These changes will clear up ambiguities while helping the board guide policymaking effectively in an age of COVID-19 and deep health inequity. The ordinance would also make the Board of Health more consistent with other City boards and commissions.

"The Board of Health has been an important voice in Chicago for generations, providing expert advice to the Mayor and the Department of Public Health," said Mayor Lightfoot. "The measure I've proposed would clean up inconsistencies in the code, while ensuring the board continues to be responsive to all Chicagoans for the generations to come."

"I strongly support the reforms that Mayor Lightfoot has proposed. They will help ensure the board has a clear role, looks like Chicago and continues to evolve to face the challenges of the day, from the pandemic to racial injustice," said Board of Health President Carolyn Lopez, MD.

The ordinance contains several measures:

- Clarify board functions to avoid overlap with the Department of Public Health. This step would codify existing practice, bring consistency with other City boards and avoid the possibility of conflicting efforts in the future.
- Establish three-year terms of office for Board of Health members. Today, the Board of Health is the only major City board in which all members have indefinite terms. The ordinance does not, however, include term limits.
- Require that the board have demographic diversity, members with a variety of skill sets ranging from community engagement to health equity, and representation from both a hospital system and a federally qualified health



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center. These provisions will help ensure the board looks like Chicago and gives voice to the needs of residents most in need of support. At least five of the nine members would also need to have experience or education in public health, which is vital for addressing issues such as COVID-19.

“The Board of Health has brought invaluable perspectives to the Chicago Department of Public Health,” said CDPH Commissioner Allison Arwady, M.D. “By adding standards related to diversity and expertise while providing clarity in our respective roles, we will make the board's role even stronger.”

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