

Chicago Tribune



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BREAKING NEWS AT CHICAGOTRIBUNE.COM

COOK COUNTY HEALTH FOUNDATION

Expansion nixed amid spending questions

Report: Fundraising arm sought powers without board OK

By A.D. Quig
Chicago Tribune

Long-held plans to expand the power of the nonprofit entity established to raise money for Cook County's public health arm have been scrapped "amid questions about its scope and appropriateness," according to an outside report obtained by the Tribune.

The nonprofit Cook County Health Foundation — established 14 years ago to fundraise for and support Cook County Health, or CCH, the county's health division — spent nearly \$80,000, entered into contracts and hired attorneys with ties to the foundation's leaders, sometimes without full foundation board approval, the report stated.

A key piece of the external report, produced by the law firm of Riley Safer Holmes & Cancila, focused on a proposed master services agreement last year in which the foundation would expand its powers to undertake or manage clinical trials for, or in partnership with, CCH.

As questions were raised about the proposal, attorneys for the outside law firm sought to interview Cook County Health's chief executive officer, but he refused to be interviewed and the negotiations over the proposed deal he helped spearhead were abruptly terminated, developments the outside attorneys said "certainly raised red flags."

After learning the Tribune had obtained the report, the foundation's executive director, Sylvia Zaldivar, denied any impropriety about the plans and said the report contained inaccuracies.

In addition, Zaldivar said she remained committed to the idea of the master services agreement and added that she thinks it would benefit both the foundation and CCH, which includes Stroger Hospital and other facilities across Cook

Turn to *Expansion*, Page 5



The O'Hare rebuild is mired in negotiations and potential changes. At stake for Chicago is its status as a key air hub and a crucial driver of the city's economy. Here's how another airport finished its construction thanks to political will.

A BITE OFF OF THE BIG APPLE

By Sarah Freishtat
Chicago Tribune

A few years before Chicago reached an agreement with the city's airlines to overhaul O'Hare International Airport, New York officials jump-started a rebuild of LaGuardia Airport.

After years of discussion, planning and a design competition for the New York airport, in 2015 a development team got the go-ahead to begin the first piece of what would come to be an \$8 billion rebuild of most of LaGuardia.

Nine years later, two new lauded terminals at the airport are open, and the last of the terminal work is set to be



Above: A Southwest aircraft becomes the first to pass beneath a pedestrian sky bridge that connects gates with the new Terminal B at LaGuardia Airport in New York in 2021. **CRAIG RUTTLE/AP**
Top: Terminal 2 at O'Hare International Airport, which is slated to be rebuilt, is seen. **E. JASON WAMBSGANS/CHICAGO TRIBUNE**

finished this year.

In Chicago, the centerpiece of the O'Hare construction has stalled, mired in debate about cost overruns and how to move forward.

The O'Hare overhaul, negotiated by then-Mayor Rahm Emanuel in 2018, included a broad rebuilding and expansion of the airport. The heart of the project was replacing aging Terminal 2 with a gleaming new Global Terminal, and adding two satellite concourses.

Parts of the overhaul have been completed, but the key terminal rebuild has yet to get off the ground. O'Hare's two

Turn to *O'Hare*, Page 6

Swift end for bid to impeach Mayorkas

By Mary Clare Jalonick
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Senate dismissed all impeachment charges against Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas on Wednesday, ending the House Republican push to remove the Cabinet official over his handling of the U.S.-Mexico border as his trial concluded before arguments even began.

Democrats argued that both articles of impeachment were unconstitutional. The first article charged Mayorkas with "willful and systemic refusal to comply" with immigration law. The second article charged Mayorkas with a "breach of trust" for saying the border was secure. The votes were 51-48 and 51-49, both along party lines.

Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer said the House Republicans' case failed to meet "the



Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., speaks during a news conference in Washington on Wednesday after the Senate dismissed the impeachment case against Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas. **PETE MAROVICH/THE NEW YORK TIMES**

high standard of high crimes and misdemeanors" and could set a dangerous precedent.

"For the sake of the Senate's integrity and to protect impeachment for those rare cases we truly need it, senators should dismiss today's charges," said Schumer, D-N.Y., as he opened Wednesday's session.

Senate Republicans had argued for a full impeachment trial after the House narrowly voted in February to impeach Mayorkas for his handling of the border. The

House vote was the first time in nearly 150 years that a Cabinet secretary was impeached.

An outright dismissal of House Republicans' prosecution of Mayorkas, with no chance to argue the case, was an embarrassing defeat for House Republicans and embattled House Speaker Mike Johnson, R-La., who made the impeachment a priority. And it is likely to resonate politically for both Republicans and

Turn to *Mayorkas*, Page 11

26 more women file suits against ex-gynecologist

Lawsuits also allege Endeavor Health failed to protect them from doctor convicted of abuse

By Lisa Schencker and Emily Hoerner
Chicago Tribune

Another 26 women filed lawsuits against former gynecologist Dr. Fabio Ortega and Endeavor Health this week, with many alleging the doctor sexually assaulted them and that Endeavor failed to protect them.

A total of 60 former patients have now sued Ortega, Endeavor and/or Swedish Hospital, where Ortega previously worked.

Most of the 26 women behind the new lawsuits allege they saw Ortega for exams in 2017 — after Skokie police had already notified Endeavor they were investigating the doctor's behavior because of a patient complaint. The lawsuits allege that Endeavor — formerly known as NorthShore University HealthSystem — never told the patients that Ortega was under

criminal investigation, though police contacted the health system in early February 2017.

Most of the new lawsuits include allegations that Ortega fondled the women's breasts "under the guise of performing a breast exam" and made inappropriate comments. One of the women alleges that he rubbed her clitoris and licked the inside of her leg. Another woman alleges that he told her during her exam, "If I was your husband, I would have sex with you every day."

The 26 women who filed the new lawsuits all filed anonymously as "Jane Doe."

Endeavor's "institutional failures" resulted in the women "being subjected to medically unnecessary gynecological examinations by Ortega," most of the new lawsuits allege.

Turn to *Lawsuits*, Page 2

City Council delays bond deal

Mayor Brandon Johnson's \$1.25 billion bond deal and other high-stakes proposals got delayed, but they could resurface again on Friday. **Chicagoland**

Biden backs Ukraine aid push

President Joe Biden said Wednesday that he backs a proposal from the House speaker to provide aid to Ukraine, Israel and Taiwan. **Nation & World**

TODAY'S WEATHER High 60 Low 42

Complete Chicagoland forecast on Page 14

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