

MARCH 20,2007
COOK COUNTY BOARD MEETING

THE NATIONAL NURSES ORGANIZATION COMMITTEE OFFICIALS protested the severe personnel cuts at County Health Facilities. Their numbers filled the Board room so visitors were not allowed in until after 10;45 when the nurses were asked to leave. Their mantra was: "We will be back."

Seventy-seven boxes were recently discovered, each stuffed with about 2,500 billing forms never mailed to Medicare, Medicaid or private insurance companies. The Chief of Staff, Dr, Robert Simon, reported there could be 40 Or 50 similar boxes hidden elsewhere. These bills will be scanned to see if any money could be recovered. Medicare and Medicaid have billing deadlines which may have expired. The unpaid bills may amount to \$130-200 million. At best only forty-two million may be recovered. The hospital is looking for a vendor to collect bills.

The hospital Chief of Staff Operating Officer, Mr. Tom Glaser, reported the collection problem exists because of shortfalls in infrastructure and personnel. He was asked if there was a system in place so this doesn't happen again. He answered, "Not yet, but we are working on a system. The people who were working on the old system are gone." There is an eight million shortfall this year already.

There was a discussion about County Hospital parking fees. The hospital may not be receiving the money it should. It was suggested they talk to the University of Illinois about their profitable system.

A county employee received \$1,000 for stress suffered from work. The Board members did not want to pay and start a precedent but realized the cost of continuing the case would be prohibitive. The lawyer's bill is already very expensive.

It was suggested since the city pays for Pace shelters there should be more non smoking ads.

There was a discussion on the possible reasons so few companies bid for contracts. Only one bid for snow removal of the hospital parking lot. Maybe the procedure should be simplified.

Arline Doblin