

November 10, 2020

Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot
City Hall
121 N. LaSalle Street
Chicago, Illinois 60602

Dear Mayor Lightfoot,

Today, on behalf of the Chicago Medical Society, one of the oldest and largest medical societies in the United States, we write to strongly advocate for the City of Chicago to allow health and fitness facilities that operate in strict adherence to public health guidelines outlined by the CDC and local and state officials, to open their doors at 5 AM, rather than the current 6 AM opening time.

The Chicago Medical Society represents more than 17,000 physicians and licensed healthcare professionals across Cook County. Since March, our physicians and licensed healthcare professionals have been working non-stop to provide care for our mutual constituents in the face of this devastating pandemic.

As you know, our healthcare professionals are not immune to managing fatigue, stress or their own personal medical issues. Be assured that many of them, as this pandemic wages on, have relied heavily on access to their own health and fitness facilities to help strengthen their immunity and for the maintenance of good mental health. Often, in the early morning hours to accommodate their work schedules.

To be specific, in traditional hospital settings, shift changes occur at 7 AM. Today, those shifts can run up to 16 hours – if not longer. We do not expect that to subside anytime soon. By resuming opening at 5 AM, the crucial extra hour would enable these healthcare professionals to participate in a positive regimen of fitness, exercise, relaxation, nutritional counseling and personal training.

Data demonstrates that health clubs are safe environments right now, which is important because prioritizing health and fitness is more essential than ever. We believe that the responsibility is equally shared between the facility and its members to ensure a safe environment. Our physicians and licensed healthcare professionals would not enter an environment that they felt was unsafe and we feel that it is critical to allow them the opportunity to get back into a regular fitness routine, offering innumerable benefits to both their physical and mental health, especially as we enter the winter months.

Mayor Lightfoot, we can only imagine the challenges you face as you continue to guide Chicago through this unprecedented pandemic. We consider ourselves to be your partner in that effort and thank you for your tireless leadership. It is not going to get any easier, but together, we will get through these challenging times. We would deeply appreciate that you consider this request for the sake of our members, our physicians and licensed healthcare professionals, who would be given an hour back in their morning to take care of themselves so that they can continue to take care of others.

Sincerely,



Tariq H. Butt, MD
President, Chicago Medical Society

CC: Ted Kanellakes, Chicago Medical Society Chief Executive Officer
Vishnu Chundi, MD, Chairman of the Chicago Medical Society COVID-19 Taskforce
Dr. Allison Arwady, Chicago Dept. of Public Health
Samir Mayekar, Deputy Mayor, Economic and Neighborhood Development