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**MAYOR EMANUEL AND THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH EXPAND SCHOOL
VISION PROGRAM**

The City's school-based vision program will be expanded to every school in Chicago after being approved today by the City Council.

Since the program's inception in 2013, the Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH) has provided comprehensive vision services to 250,000 students and provided over 126,000 pairs of eyeglasses to Chicago Public School (CPS) students. Services were only available to every CPS elementary and high school, including charter and option schools. The approved ordinance allows CDPH to extend these vision services to students in need at any school.

"Every child in Chicago, no matter where they live or learn, deserves quality vision care to help them thrive in the classroom," said Mayor Emanuel. "We cannot expect our students to become lifelong learners if they are unable to read what is on the chalkboard in front of them."

Many schools previously ineligible for the CDPH vision program have a large concentration of low-income children. At schools supported by the Big Shoulders Fund, for instance, 85% of students receive free or reduced-price lunch. In some of those schools, the figure is 100%.

"More than 80% of learning occurs visually, which makes vision a critical factor in a child's education," said CPS Chief Health Officer Kenneth Fox. "We rise and fall as one city. No child should go without access to necessary and preventive eye care."

Research shows that early access to eye care promotes lifelong learning and health. And providing free health services in schools frees up families' resources for housing, food and other factors in health."

"Excellence in the classroom starts with good health, including good vision, which enables students to focus on their school work," said CDPH Commissioner Julie Morita, MD.

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“Expanding this program to more low-income students is part of our ongoing efforts to advance health equity and provide essential services to all communities.”

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