Message From The Commissioner

This month we are continuing our efforts on Healthy Chicago 2.0, a community health improvement plan for all of Chicago with a special focus on health equity. In collaboration with the Partnership for Healthy Chicago as well as community members and stakeholders, we have gathered and analyzed data, evaluated community themes and strengths, and evaluated the local public health system. Once we identify our priority areas, we will form action committees to tackle these issues.

Healthy Chicago 2.0 is a plan for all of Chicago and we want to work with our community partners to develop it, implement it and monitor its progress. We will also update you regularly on the work of Healthy Chicago 2.0 and hope you will continue to be engaged. By working collaboratively, I am confident we can make improvements in health equity so that all Chicago residents have the opportunity to live a healthy life. My goal is to have a health plan for the city that is community and data-driven that also fosters health in all policies. Health in all policies improves health by incorporating health considerations in decision making across sectors and policy areas that are not traditionally considered health-related.

To finish the development of Healthy Chicago 2.0, we will request that volunteers submit a statement of interest to be a member or a co-chair on the Healthy Chicago 2.0 Action Teams by April 21. These teams will work to develop the goals, objectives and strategies for Healthy Chicago 2.0. For more information or to apply, email sheri.cohen@cityofchicago.org.

Also, please join us at one of our Healthy Chicago 2.0 Community Conversations! For details, visit www.cityofchicago.org/health. We look forward to hearing your ideas and feedback.

Sincerely,
Julie Morita, M.D.
Healthy Chicago Implementation

- The Chicago Department of Public Health, in partnership with Active Transportation Alliance, LISC Chicago, World Sport Chicago and Gads Hill Center, will launch PlayStreets 2015 this spring. PlayStreets promotes physical activity and healthy living by transforming city streets and outdoor public spaces into safe play areas for children and adults. Between the north and south regions, PlayStreets will deliver at least 150 events across Chicago. Community-based organizations (CBO) will be responsible for holding 7-8 outdoor PlayStreets events beginning no later than June 27 and ending by September 7. Each event will provide at least three hours of continuous, physical activity including sports, games and other healthy group activities selected and coordinated by the CBO. Information on PlayStreets’ request for proposals is available at www.CityofChicago.org/HEALTH.

- Childhood Exposure to Violence (CEV) Prevention Week is April 20-24 and Chicago Safe Start (CSS), an initiative of the Chicago Department of Public Health, are teaming up with local community and health care organizations to raise awareness of CEV and combat the physical, social and emotional effect that exposure to violence has on youth, especially children 0-5 years of age. CEV occurs when a child is a direct victim of violence, a witness to violence or is affected by violence that occurs at home, in the community or within relationships that matter to them. CEV Prevention Week is an opportunity to learn about and reduce the risk factors that place children in the center of violence and strengthen the protective factors that can keep them safe. CSS and the CDPH Office of Violence Prevention will host the Community Spirit Awards on Monday, April 20 to honor individuals and organizations who work to prevent CEV in Chicago neighborhoods. CEV Prevention Week also features the “Take a Selfie” social media campaign via #StopCEV on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. For more detail, visit www.ChicagoSafeStart.org.

- Along with a handful of Chicago community-based organizations, the Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH) is co-sponsoring “Why Gender Matters,” a conference to address gender norms to improve health and wellness for young women in Chicago. The conference will take place on May 4 at the Gleacher Center on 450 North Cityfront Plaza Drive. Join CDPH for this interactive presentation and open discussion about key terms, concepts and research on gender norms. Keynote speakers at the conference include Riki Wilchins, executive director of TrueChild and author of three books on gender theory; and Dr. Scyatta Wallace, associate professor of psychology at St. Johns University and CEO of the Janisaw Company, a leadership development and life skills program for teen girls and young women.

Adolescent Health

Obesity Prevention
A number of area hospitals and health systems have joined together to launch one of the largest collaborative Community Health Needs Assessments (CHNA) in the country. With plans to cover much of Chicago and Cook County, the assessment will actively engage a diverse set of stakeholders from across the county to better understand the health issues facing residents in the surrounding communities and develop solutions to help address them. Historically, hospitals have conducted CHNAs independently, but new regulations and a deeper understanding of health indicators and the associated social determinants are driving the need for greater collaboration. The Chicago Department of Public Health is one of the participating organizations that will help facilitate the assessment process. A two-year process, the assessment involves rigorous data collection and joint planning to design creative interventions that address some of the city’s and county’s most challenging health issues. Often broad themes emerge from these assessments such as obesity, chronic disease, access to care and mental health. Public Health Infrastructure

- On April 12, the Chicago Department of Public Health will launch a public awareness campaign to promote the Chicago Medical Reserve Corps (CMRC), a local volunteer organization with opportunities for residents of all professional backgrounds. The campaign features digital advertisements that direct residents to illinoishelps.net, where they can register for the CMRC. Emergency Preparedness

- On May 1, the Chicago Department of Public Health will launch its annual “Prepare Chicago” campaign, which encourages residents to prepare themselves and others for public health emergencies. The campaign features multimedia advertisements throughout the city, including bus shelter ads in 15 different languages. Emergency Preparedness

- For National Infant Immunization Week 2015 from April 18-25, the Chicago Department of Public Health will launch a public awareness campaign that features radio public service announcements in English and Spanish that encourage parents to get all recommended vaccines for their children. Immunizations
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Healthy Chicago Policy Highlights

- SB1800, a bill introduced by Illinois State Senator Heather Steans to empower CDPH to require low-risk food establishments to submit self-inspection reports, has passed unanimously out of the Senate’s Committee on Public Health.

- CDPH has given support to several state bills including ones that modify the process for obtaining religious exemptions for school immunization requirements, allow more ex-offenders to work in the healthcare field after a set amount of time had passed and adjust confidentiality laws to ensure that sensitive health information remains private.

- The state administration in Springfield has proposed $1.47 billion in cuts to Medicaid funding. Medicaid has improved the health of Illinois residents by lowering child and adult mortality rates, expanding the use of prenatal care and other preventive services, cutting depression rates, extending the lives of people with HIV, drastically reducing out-of-pocket medical expenses for low-income families and achieving countless other health advances.

- Members of the Chicago City Council have proposed ordinances on issues including powdered alcohol, antibiotics in food and the recycling facilities that accept catalytic converters.

Healthy Chicago Public Schools

Access to Care

Early this month, the Chicago Community Health Forum released the “Healthy Smiles, Healthy Growth” report on the oral health and overweight/obese status of third grade children in Illinois. Dental screenings and height/weight measures were completed by dentists and dental hygienists following the Basic Screening Survey (BSS). The report reveals positive trends in the last decade. Specifically, the report found that the expansion of school-based dental sealant programs have played a positive role in expanding availability of dental sealants to all children. The presence of dental sealants in third graders had almost doubled in the last decade. Around 50 percent of Illinois’ third grade students had at least one dental sealant present in a permanent molar. In Chicago, 57.2 percent of students were found to have dental sealants present. Chicago hosts one the largest school-based dental sealants programs in the country and provided services to 113,000 CPS and charter school students last year.

School Health Infrastructure

Last month, CPS’ Office of Student Health and Wellness (OSHW) launched the district's five-year strategic plan, “Comprehensive and Coordinated Health Education Plan (CCHE).” The plan aims to enable students to establish and practice health-enhancing behaviors over a lifetime in order to become healthy, successful adults. During the 2015-16 school year, 25 elementary and high schools will pilot the CCHE plan using the CPS Health Education Scope and Sequence curriculum framework. For more information, email healtheducation@cps.edu.

Get the Word Out

- The Change Institute, part of the Healthy HotSpot initiative led by the Cook County Department of Public Health, is hosting the “Building & Sustaining Healthier Communities” forum on May 13-14. The event aims to provide local and state organizations knowledge and skills related to advancing policy, systems and environmental change in order to address health inequities by preventing and controlling tobacco use and promoting healthy eating and active living. For more information, visit www.midamericacphp.com.