Message From The Commissioner

This month the Chicago City Council made great strides in advancing policies that will directly impact the health of our residents. The changes include strengthening tobacco related fines that will hold business more accountable when they sell illegal tobacco. We are also eliminating the use of tobacco vending machines from our City, an important goal outlined in Healthy Chicago. Other key policy highlights this month include a change to our licensing codes that will now allow vendors to sell fruit, vegetables and other healthy foods from stationary carts. These carts will be placed in important public places throughout our city, such as transportation stops, and businesses that want to offer healthier food choices on an ongoing basis. The Food Cart ordinance was developed as part of the City’s response to ending food desserts and combating the Obesity epidemic. It is these and other policy achievements we have made that are helping pave the way for a healthier Chicago and a healthier you!

Bechara Choucair, M. D.

- CDPH and the Chicago Safe Start collaborative honored individuals and organizations with the 2012 Community Spirit Award for their outstanding efforts to Prevent Childhood Exposure to Violence (CEV) in Chicago. The event took place during the City’s 6th Annual Prevent CEV Week. The 2012 Community Spirit awardees included Ms. Melba Miles, Mr. Rogers Jones, and Ms. Masooma Khan for their special efforts as individuals. The Chicago Children’s Advocacy Center and the Chicago Children’s Museum were awarded for their work as local organizations. (Violence Prevention)

- Five new farmers markets will open next month providing access to fresh and healthy foods in Chicago’s west side neighborhoods. The farmers markets are a result of partnerships between the City of Chicago and several partners, including Kraft Foods and Safeway Foundation each donating $75,000 to cover the costs of opening and maintaining the markets for the next five years. All new farmers markets will accept LINK cards. To find a farmers market in your neighborhood, visit [http://tinyurl.com/6tebr69](http://tinyurl.com/6tebr69). (Obesity Prevention, Heart Disease & Stroke)
• The Committee on Health and Environmental Protection held a hearing on May 1st on the effects of sugary beverages, their relationship to obesity, and potential strategies for decreasing the number of people affected by chronic diseases associated with obesity. Commissioner Choucair and several other public health and obesity prevention experts provided testimony during the hearing. Commissioner Choucair noted that obesity prevention is a top priority of the Healthy Chicago public health agenda because it is a chief underlying preventable cause of death in the U.S., increasing the risks for heart disease, cancer and stroke, as well as for other conditions, including diabetes, hypertension and osteoarthritis. To read the Commissioner’s full testimony visit: http://tinyurl.com/7edepaj. (Obesity Prevention, Heart Disease & Stroke)

• On May 9, Chicago City Council passed an ordinance that includes several measures that may deter the use of tobacco. Under a business license reform ordinance, fines for the sale of tobacco to a minor and unstamped cigarettes are increased, a fine is introduced for retailers concealing unstamped cigarettes, and tobacco vending machines are prohibited. (Tobacco Use)

• The CDPH Public Health Emergency Preparedness program regularly provides training on community preparedness to both professionals and community residents. Since the beginning of the year, CDPH has conducted seven trainings on personal and family preparedness for community organizations and community members, including seniors; six psychological first aid trainings for mental health providers, community based organizations, and health care providers; and has conducted 16 trainings and exercises on chemical, radiological, infrastructure protection and explosives preparedness with Chicago hospital and healthcare system partners, reaching over 1200 participants. Organizations interested in learning more about preparedness training can contact Theresa Browley at (312) 742-7919. (Public Health Infrastructure)

• On April 26th CDPH convened the first meeting of the Chicago Area HIV Integrated Services Council (CAHISC), which will provide guidance for $39 million in funding to deliver HIV prevention, care and housing services to Chicago and nine collar counties. Integrating prevention, care, and housing services for HIV is aligned with the National HIV Strategy designed by the White House Office of National AIDS Policy. The new Chicago Area HIV Integrated Services Council is expected to lead to a more comprehensive planning process and a more effective use of resources across the HIV continuum of services. (HIV Prevention)
- Illinois may soon become one of the first states to require hospitals to adopt an infant feeding policy that promotes breast feeding. Every Illinois hospital providing birthing services would develop an infant feeding policy aligned with the Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative, a pro-breast feeding initiative of the World Health Organization and the United Nations Children’s Fund. The House approved this bill, HB4968, on March 31, and it is currently awaiting a Senate vote. (Healthy Mothers & Babies, Obesity Prevention)

- On May 9, Chicago City Council passed an ordinance that includes several measures that may deter the use of tobacco. Under a business license reform ordinance, fines for the sale of tobacco to a minor and unstamped cigarettes are increased. The ordinance also introduces a fine to retailers for concealing unstamped cigarettes, and prohibits retailers from engaging in tobacco sales during an investigation. In addition, the ordinance prohibits tobacco vending machines. The ordinance may also impact violence, by requiring liquor licensees to report illegal activity on or within sight of their premises to the police and to fully cooperate with any investigation. (Tobacco Use, Violence Prevention)

- As part of Mayor Rahm Emanuel’s plan to eliminate food deserts, on May 9th, an ordinance was introduced to allow pushcart vendors to sell produce, nuts, grain, and bottled water on private plazas or in “limited public locations” on sidewalks and near mass transit stations. (Obesity, Heart Disease & Stroke)

- CDPH received $1,487,815 from HUD to be spent over three years on a Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA) Special Project of National Significance. This is a continuation of a program that has been operating for several funding rounds. A contract with a delegate agency provides rental housing and supportive services for pregnant seropositive women and their families. (HIV/AIDS Prevention)

- An estimated $150,000 is available to support PlayStreets, an initiative with Blue Cross Blue Shield of Illinois that provides children and adults with safe, supervised spaces to enjoy outdoor activities, such as sports, games, and dancing on a regular basis. Two $75,000 awards are available to fund a minimum of one, but no more than two, delegate agencies to oversee and coordinate the implementation of PlayStreets from June 1, 2012 through December 31, 2012. The RFP can be downloaded at http://tinyurl.com/6rzccrx. (Obesity Prevention, Heart Disease & Stroke)

- CDPH is promoting awareness of stroke warning signs during the month of May, National Stroke Awareness Month. On May 14, Commissioner Bechara Choucair discussed stroke on WCUI’s You and Me This Morning. CDPH is also collaborating to assist with the American Heart Association’s (AHA)
The Chicago Department of Transportation (CDOT), in partnership with the Mayor’s Bicycle Advisory Council, announced that it is hosting another round of public meetings to give Chicagoans an opportunity to review and comment on the draft Streets for Cycling Plan 2020. The plan identifies roadways throughout the City for innovative bicycle facilities so that all Chicagoans can feel safe and comfortable bicycling on our streets. For more information please visit: http://tinyurl.com/7dtkwls (Obesity Prevention)

The University of Illinois at Chicago is conducting a community-based research weight loss study for African American breast cancer survivors to determine if the weight loss program, called Moving Forward, is effective in decreasing body mass index and weight and in improving diet and physical activity habits. The effect of weight loss on blood pressure, cholesterol, and quality of life will also be evaluated. The Chicago Park District is implementing the weight loss program in Roseland/Pullman, Englewood, Austin, South Shore, and Lawndale, and is beginning with recruitment for Roseland between May 1 and June 15. To be eligible women need to be at least 18 years old and need to have been diagnosed with Stage I, II or III breast cancer and be at least 6 months post treatment. For more information, contact LaShante Griffin at (312) 996-6880. (Breast Cancer Disparities, Obesity Prevention, Heart Disease & Stroke)

On April 19, 2012 the CDC National Prevention Information Network hosted CDPH (@ChiPublicHealth) on a STD Awareness Month Twitter chat focused on youth. The chat highlighted CDPH’s Teen STI Prevention program. The one hour Twitter conversation reached over least 62,350 Twitter users and generated over 635,000 impressions. (Adolescent Health & HIV/AIDS Prevention)

On May 10, 2012 CDPH, CLOCC and Comcast partnered with HBO to host a private screening and a panel discussion in Chicago for HBO’s new documentary, Weight of the Nation. The 4 part documentary is part of a nation-wide campaign that focuses on the obesity epidemic in America. To learn more about the series and to watch the full series online for free, please visit www.HBO.com/theWeightofTheNation (Obesity Prevention)

On May 12th Commissioner Choucair, Paulina Guzman, Manager of Faith and Community Programs, Access Community Health Network, and Angela Walker, Mission Coordinator from Susan G. Komen for the Cure® appeared on WCIU’s METV 26 North show hosted by George Blaise to discuss the importance of breast cancer awareness and encourage screenings. (Cancer Disparities)

To get involved in the Healthy Chicago movement email CDPH at HealthyChicago@cityofchicago.org.