

# COOK COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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**Stephen A. Martin, Jr., Ph.D., MPH**  
Chief Operating Officer

## First of its kind Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance Survey for suburban Cook County

*Study finds suburban Cook County teens engaging in risky behaviors and unhealthy choices.*

The Cook County Department of Public Health (CCDPH), in collaboration with Children's Memorial Hospital's Child Health Data Lab and participating school administrators, conducted the first Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance Survey (YRBS) for suburban Cook County (SCC). The SCC YRBS is a part of a nationwide surveying effort led by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to monitor students' health risks and behaviors. The SCC YRBS was completed by 1,718 students in 20 public high schools in SCC during the fall of 2010.

"Results from this survey indicate 40 percent of students reporting they have ever tried smoking cigarettes and nearly one in four having had sexual intercourse in the past three months," said CCDPH chief operating officer, Stephen A. Martin, Jr., Ph.D., M.P.H. "This data provides school administrators, public health officials, legislators and parents with the evidence needed to make targeted changes in youth programming and future intervention services focused on health behaviors in suburban Cook County."

Students completed the 91 item questionnaire anonymously. The 91 questions were asked in areas of violence and injury, tobacco use, alcohol and other drug use, sexual health as it relates to poor decision making, obesity and nutrition and physical activity.

Key findings include:

- 26% of Public High School Students in CCDPH are overweight or obese
- Over 75% of high school students were not physically active for 60 minutes every day and 80% of high school students did not eat the recommended five servings of fruits and vegetables
- Nearly 30% of 12<sup>th</sup> grade students drank a soda or pop one or more times per day in the last week
- More than half of African American students watched TV 3 or more hours per day on an average school day
- 30% of students watched videos or played computer games for 3 or 4 hours per day on an average school day
- 70% of students attended P.E. classes every day
- 62% of students played on one or more sports teams during the last year
- 14% of boys in high school carried a weapon (e.g. gun, knife, club) at least once in the last month.
- 20% of 9<sup>th</sup> graders were bullied on school property during the last year
- 40% of high school students have ever tried smoking cigarettes
- 12% of high school students are already current smokers (smoked a cigarette during the last 30 days)

To review the results of the entire survey, please visit [www.cookcountypublichealth.org](http://www.cookcountypublichealth.org).

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