A three-member panel said that violence is a serious threat to the health of Cook County residents at the June 3rd wePLAN For Action quarterly meeting convened by the Cook County Department of Public Health. The panel also gave specific examples of policies and programs that can succeed at stemming violence. Panel members included Susan Avila, Violence Prevention Program Coordinator at the Stroger Hospital Trauma Unit; Monique Brunson, Director of Violence Prevention at the Cook County Department of Public Health; and Terry Smith SASS Coordinator at Sinai Miles Square Community and

Panel Calls for Policy, Community Change to Prevent Violence

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See Panel p. 3

Chronic Disease Prevention

CCDPH recently re-organized and expanded its membership on the Chronic Disease Prevention Task Force and convened a meeting on May 19, 2009 with additional regional partners to continue work on chronic disease prevention in suburban Cook County. The ACHIEVE initiative will play a significant role in helping coalition members work together to develop a county-wide comprehensive plan. This initiative, along with its direct link to

See Chronic p.2
Chronic cont. from p. 1


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race Ethnicity</th>
<th>Suburban Cook 2005 Firearms Deaths Among 15-24 year olds (Rate per 100,000 population)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>13.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Hisp White</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Hisp Black</td>
<td>78.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

change at the regional level.

Access To Care
The wePLAN Access to Care Task Force has undertaken three main tasks this quarter: coordinating an information-gathering trip to Stroger Hospital to address questions and concerns experienced by community health nurses of the Northwest suburbs when referring clients; developing and administering a Patient Navigator survey; and developing a report based on the results.

1. The Stroger Hospital tour was quite successful in informing and raising awareness of hospital policies, protocols and procedures. We learned about the IRIS system which is an efficient electronic referral system linking the hospital and its allied community health clinics and providers.

2. A survey was developed and distributed to Patient Navigators who we define as anyone who helps clients navigate the healthcare and social service systems. The survey asked respondents about community health resource referrals, best practices in making referrals, barriers in making referrals and cultural considerations in accessing referrals. Respondents were geographically dispersed throughout suburban Cook County and representative of healthcare and social service providers, health ministries and governmental entities.

3. The results of the surveys are being assessed. A report will be developed and policy recommendations will be made by the Committee based on the findings. The report will be disseminated at the Health & Medicine Research Policy Group’s Regional Health Care Safety Net meeting in late June.

For more information or to join the Access to Care Task Force please contact Venoncia M. Bate’, Task Force Chair at batev@alexian.net

Violence Prevention
In the past few months task force members have focused on completing the initial objectives set at the onset of the meeting process. With the assistance of Kim Junius of CDPH, the task force drafted a logo to be used on any communication efforts. The logo is in the final stages of approval and will be used on the upcoming resource guide.

Keith Winn added the final touches to the resource guide, which will highlight violence prevention programs and services throughout the suburban Cook County area. Several members of the task force participated in youth violence prevention trainings co-facilitated by the staff of the CDPH Office of Violence Prevention Coordination. These members walked away from the training with tangible information to use with their service groups.

The task force continues to meet every three weeks at the CDPH central office in Oak Park. You are welcome to join the task force or keep up with its efforts on the WePLAN for Action list serve [www.weplanforaction.seework.com].

Use the Basecamp collaborative tool website to post events, resources, news and comments about community health issues.
Mental Health Center.

Health Department data shows that violence is disproportionately experienced in suburban Cook County by people living in poor communities and communities of color. Towns with high rates of violent crime had a median household income of $33,000. In contrast, towns with a low rate of violent crime had a higher median income of over $100,000. To successfully prevent violence panelists called for policies addressing social conditions such as poverty, as well as individual-level interventions.

Terry Smith, who works with youth in crisis and develops mentoring programs, said that he challenges a ‘go along to get along’ complacency among some prevention workers he has seen. “It’s not the children who have changed, it’s the adults,” he said. He described a moment of self-examination as an example of the important effect that adults have on youth. “I caught myself kicking out kids playing basketball outside my house at two in the morning. I had to check myself. Otherwise I knew they could get in trouble.” Mr. Smith said mentoring is an important solution to preventing gang-related violence. Adults need to build relationships of trust with youth. Mentoring is powerful because youth have a strong desire to please adults they respect.

Susan Avila described data showing that violence is especially severe in the United States. In one measure of violence—homicide, the US rate among youth is ten times the rate of Canada. Despite 30,000 firearms-related deaths in the US in 2006, Avila said, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have been prevented from conducting research on some aspects of gun violence. Other forms of violence include war and suicide. Ms. Avila called for policy changes away from an emphasis on incarceration and toward mentoring youth instead. She cited a 2008 study in North Carolina that showed a higher rate of homicide among men after their release from prison.

Monique Brunson said CCDPH will play a role by publicizing existing resources. She is building a database on organizations and programs so that people can get up to date information. The Health Department will be releasing a report documenting the results of three community discussions held about violence. “We need to help communities know how they can change policy,” Ms. Brunson commented.