

# we PLAN FOR ACTION

*An Opportunity to Improve your Community*

**Cook County  
Department of Public Health  
Cook County Bureau of Health Services**



**Todd H. Stroger**  
President  
Cook County Board of Commissioners

Cook County Department of Public Health

1010 Lake St.  
Oak Park, IL 60301  
708-492-2000

**Stephen A. Martin, Jr.,  
PHD, MPH, C.O.O.**

**WePlan Staff:**

**Valerie Webb, MPH**  
vwebb@cookcountygov.com  
708-492-2018

**Jim Bloyd, MPH**  
jbloyd@cookcountygov.com  
708-492-2019

### *Vision Statement*

*The public health system will ensure the conditions people need collectively to be healthy in communities of suburban Cook County. To succeed in this task people and organizations that make up the public health system will work and plan together.*

## FIRST WEPLAN QUARTERLY FORUM HELD

### Regional effort proposes measures of community health for 2040

On September 10th as part of the ongoing implementation of the WePLAN community health improvement process, the Cook County Department of Public Health hosted its first forum for discussion of topics relevant to health of suburban Cook County. These meetings are planned to be held quarterly. The discussions will serve to increase the awareness of participants in the WePLAN Community Health Improvement process. The meetings are open to community members, members of task forces implementing WePLAN, and Cook County Staff.



**Richard H. Sewell, MPH**

The meetings are open to the public.

Speaking at this initial meeting was Richard H. Sewell, MPH, health policy expert from the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC). He presented an overview of a regional planning process being conducted by the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP). UIC has been contracted to identify

On The Web -  
**GO TO 2040** at  
[www.goto2040.org](http://www.goto2040.org)  
Download -  
**wePLAN: 2005-2010** at

[www.cookcountypublichealth.org/publications/wePlan](http://www.cookcountypublichealth.org/publications/wePlan)

the health indicators for the regional plan. Fifteen measures of community health have been proposed affecting eight million people in seven counties setting targets for the year 2040. Mr. Sewell told the group of 28 community leaders and CCDPH staff that this is an important opportunity for community members to become involved in the

**Continued, next page**

## TASK FORCES ACT ON THREE HEALTH PRIORITIES

Three community health priorities were identified in a community-driven strategic planning process convened by the Cook County Department of Public Health. These priorities are: **the prevention of youth violence; increasing access to primary health care; and prevention**

**of diabetes through promotion of healthy diet and physical activity.** The planning process used to develop these priorities emphasizes improvement of the local public health system through action by community members and a broad range of organizations. Separate task forces have been convened to focus

on each of these issues. Each task force is developing actions to improve community health. All are invited to participate in their important work. To get involved, please contact Valerie Webb or Jim Bloyd (contact info at the left).

The WePlan for Action welcomes and needs participation from all suburban Cook County residents. Only a diverse group of people working together can create the kinds of solutions needed to tackle the issues.

## RICHARD SEWELL

Cont. from front

wide-ranging effort. Some of the indicators drafted by Mr. Sewell include proportion of adults over 65 reporting good to excellent health and proportion of persons satisfied with the quality of life in the community; rate of workforce participation and civic engagement levels. Some measures addressed health risk factors by getting at rates of obesity and tobacco use in the population. Indicators also touched on income levels by

race, ethnicity and location, and student achievement in math, reading and writing. In a discussion afterward audience members described ways in which more community members could be engaged in formulating the health indicators, as well as other aspects of the plan.

### Save the Date

Next wePLAN Quarterly Meeting:

10 am - Noon,

Wednesday, December 3, 2008

Oak Park Public Library, 2nd Floor

834 Lake Street, Oak Park

Meetings are open

to the public.

## WEPLAN FOR ACTION TASK FORCE UPDATES

### Youth violence prevention task force

The mission of the Youth Violence Prevention task force is to expand service, program and agency partnerships throughout suburban Cook County that support youth and their families. Sue Avila, Coordinator of the Violence Prevention Program, Stroger Hospital Trauma Department, believes strongly in working across boundaries to change systems. "A collective approach is the only way to address violence," she said.

The task force has identified 71 violence prevention agencies with which its members have worked in the past. The task force wants to use these contacts as partners who can inform it about communities' needs. A brochure and letter has been drafted that informs the public of the wePLAN process. It raises aware-

Continued next page

### Access To Care Task Force

Venoncia Bate, Director, Community Health Access Program at Alexian Brothers Hospital Network and task force Chair, says that there is a misperception that suburban residents do not have problems accessing health care. "Community collaborations, such as wePLAN's Access to Care task force are more important now than ever. The community needs to be empowered and informed about available resources and how to access them."

Participating in the task force are representatives of over ten healthcare and service providers. Meetings are held at different locations (and via conference call) around the county to accommodate members who are

Continued next page

### Chronic Disease Prevention Task Force

Co-Chairs Pat Welch and Meolody Geraci emphasize the importance of collaboration across 'silos' to make an impact on rising and unequal rates of diabetes. Ms. Welch, a leader in education from southern Cook County, said that by "combining efforts from both schools of thought, that might view a glass as half empty or half full" will "make a definite impact on preventive measures for chronic disease in our society." Ms. Geraci, Director of Programs, Education, Encouragement and Safety for the Chicagoland Bicycle Federation, is motivated to "find those natural areas of common concern between organizations [that] can only enrich

Continued next page

*"It is clear that no single organization has the depth of resources needed to improve community health to an optimal level. Ultimately, this is an opportunity for all of us to contribute to a goal that is achievable through collective action and a shared vision. Together we have the wisdom, expertise, knowledge, and commitment to make change."*

**Access Cont.**

located throughout the suburban Cook County. The task force developed and sent a survey to 50 primary care providers. Results of the survey will be gathered and developed into a resource list, which may be used as a tool for providers who serve un- and under-insured people. Task force members have shared their WePLAN talking points with healthcare and social service professionals.

Increasing access to primary care for the uninsured should lower use of local emergency visits for non-emergency care and promote preventive measures and chronic disease management resulting in better outcomes for the uninsured. Educating and developing community leadership, preparing a communication plan, and recruitment of membership are important goals for the task force. Venoncia Bate can be reached at [batev@alexian.net](mailto:batev@alexian.net).

**Chronic Disease Prev. Cont.**

and strengthen my work.” Participants have begun to focus their efforts on the needs of south suburban school communities and adolescents. Discussions have centered on promoting policies, developing allies, and identifying existing programs that have been successful or are promising. Members also identified ‘umbrella’ issues that must be addressed, such as racism and poverty. These issues, the social determinants of health, are “overarching mediators of population health and include economic, cultural and environmental conditions prevailing in society as a whole”\* that the task force should consider (Figure 1). Another related factor is underfunding of area schools, especially in the south suburbs. Underfunding leads to cutbacks in nursing and social work staff and even physical education, and hampers schools’ efforts to improve the health of children.

Principal Renee Sims of Hillcrest High School has hosted two task force

**Violence Prevention Cont.**

ness about youth violence and describes how people can get involved. Mid-term goals are to serve as a resource for violence prevention trainers and to lobby for trainings funded by local, state and federal agencies. Discussion of longer-term activities center on holding town hall meetings and a conference. Task Force participants are considering using a shared leadership style rather than having a single chairperson. Please contact Monique Brunson, CCDPH, at [mbrunson@cookcountygov.com](mailto:mbrunson@cookcountygov.com).

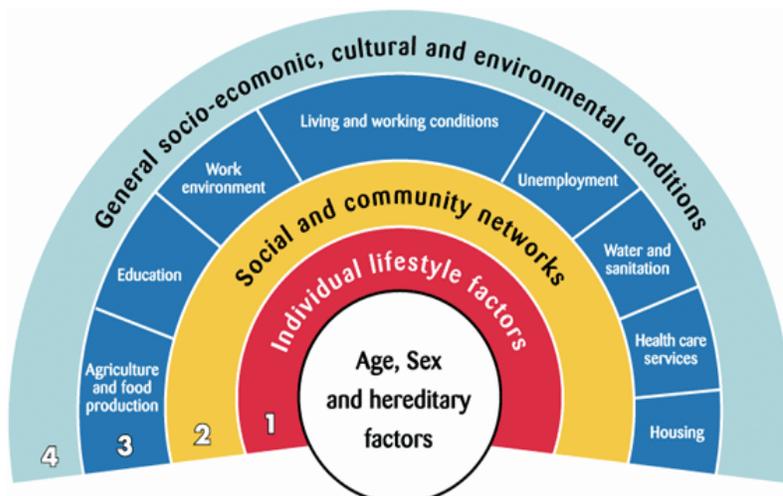
meetings. Next steps include developing goals, and a communications strategy. Future meetings will also take place by conference call. Please contact the Co-Chairs at [pwelch@bhsd228.com](mailto:pwelch@bhsd228.com) and [melody@biketraffic.org](mailto:melody@biketraffic.org).

\*Whitehead and others, *Challenging Inequities in Health*, (Oxford) 2001, p. 313.

**‘Principles of Success’**

- Systems Thinking
- Dialogue
- Shared Vision
- Data
- Partnerships & Collaboration
- Strategic Thinking
- Celebration of Successes

Source: National Association of City and County Health Officials  
[www.naccho.org/topics/infrastructure/mapp/mappbasics](http://www.naccho.org/topics/infrastructure/mapp/mappbasics)



**Figure 1. Model of the main determinants of health—Layers of influence**

Dahlgren, G. (1995) European Health Policy Conference: Opportunities for the Future. Vol 11 - Intersectoral Action for Health, Copenhagen: WHO Regional Office for Europe