

we PLAN

FOR ACTION

An Opportunity to Improve your Community

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



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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.

FAITH & HEALTH MOVEMENT ORGANIZES IN REGION

Reverend Dr. Kirsten Peachey described the emergence of a faith and health movement in metropolitan Chicago on December 3rd 2008 at the quarterly meeting of the Cook County Department of Public Health's *wePLAN for Action*. Rev. Peachey highlighted the "moral outrage" of health inequities, "a broken health system" as issues of special concern. She explained that faith communities have unique strengths that help play an important role in finding solutions to these complex problems. Examples of these characteristics are a moral imagination, and the building of



Rev. Kirsten Peachey (left) discusses faith and community health with CCDPH wePLAN participants.

relationships, Peachey said.

Spearheading the faith and health movement in the Chicago area is the Center for Faith and Community Health Transformation, which Rev. Peachey co-directs. She

described the Center's mission to create long term social change so that it is possible for all people to be healthy. Peachey is also Director of Congregational Health Partnerships for Advocate Health Care. She-
Cont'd on reverse (Peachey)

WEPLAN FOR ACTION TASK FORCE UPDATES

At the December 3rd meeting, participants met in three groups as task forces addressing violence prevention, chronic disease prevention and improving access to care.

The youth violence prevention Task Force is

using the CDC's definition of violence, the group will identify populations for outreach activities. Identifying resources for families is the priority for this quarter, which will be contained in a guide edited by the task force. For the future the task force will begin to re-

cruit organizations that have a record of providing youth prevention services. Weplan participants can help this task force by sending information about youth violence prevention resources to Keith Winn (kwinn@cookcountygov.com).

BUILDING THE FOUNDATION FOR HEALTH

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.

“It is unreasonable to expect that people will change their behavior easily when so many forces in the social, cultural, and physical environment conspire against such change. If successful programs are to be developed to prevent disease and improve health, attention must be given not only to the behavior of individuals, but also to the environmental context within which people live.”

Promoting Health, Institute of Medicine (2000)

“Building the Foundation for a Healthy America” is the theme of National Public Health Week, April 6-12. Announced by the American Public Health Association, the theme hopes to establish the critical role public health must play as we focus our efforts on improving community health. The campaign emerged from the growing recognition that even though we spend more on health care than any other

nation, our country is falling behind in many important measures of what it means to be healthy. The effort aims to insert public health in to current policy discussions directed at addressing the problems within the US health system. Visit www.nphw.org to learn more about the campaign and the role public health must play in building the foundation for a healthy America.

Peachey cont'd from front

Encouraged the audience to explore the writing of Gary Gunderson, Stephen Post, Jill Neimark and Rev. Otis Moss, Jr. The authors' ideas form a part of the inspiration for the Center. The ability of the Center to ‘catalyze’ will be used in four areas: Community, congregation, leaders and connections. The Center will hold an annual conference along with quarterly meetings. It's web site is up at www.chicagofaithandhealth.org.

Members of the audience discussed the benefits that a faith and health movement can bring to the work of the wePLAN community health improvement process. One participant appreciated the Center's concept of “the causes of life” as a helpful way to discuss community health and disease. Others said wePLAN work would benefit by increasing coordination and alignment of resources. WePLAN participants stated that with faith partners they can learn to build more relationships, and identify who is missing from the discussion. The fallout from the economic recession was a concern. The assistance connecting to community members offered by a faith and health movement was valued as well.

For information about the Center's first annual meeting on January 26th call 847-384-3744 or visit the Center's web page.

TASK FORCE UPDATES

cont'd from front

The **Access To Care Task Force** is recruiting new members, compiling a resource guide, and scheduling presentations on how to access resources. In addition, it is refining messages to be aimed at specific audiences. The task force is meeting early in 2009 to develop new strategic actions. It will rotate meeting locations and offer teleconferencing, in order to facilitate participation and ensure the Task Force reflects the ethnic and geographic diversity of suburban Cook County. The southern suburbs are currently underrepresented on the Task Force.

The **Chronic Disease Prevention Task Force** will begin the development of an advisory council in the next three months. CCDPH has submitted a grant proposal

to the National Association of County and City Health Officials that would fund the advisory council. The purpose of the ACHIEVE grant is to “strengthen a coalition of community partners and develop a community action plan that addresses chronic disease prevention through policy, systems, and environmental change strategies.” Active Transportation Alliance (Formerly Chicago Bicycle Federation) Director of Programs, and Task Force Co-Chair Melody Geraci, and several others, provided a letter supporting the proposal. Participants liked the ideas of having regional conferences to raise awareness, and identify best approaches to preventing chronic illness.