Cook County DEPT. of **Public Health**
Promoting health. Preventing disease. *Protecting you.*

Participants at the January 21, 2016 WePLAN Community Health Partner Committee Meeting worked together to identify priority health issues for the community health improvement plan as part of WePLAN2020. Participants engaged in a multi-step process, first individually determining key issues, and then working in small and large groups to identify consensus priorities. Participants were asked to consider priorities that were either:

- Health Outcomes: A situation or condition of people which is considered undesirable, is likely to exist in the future, and is measured as death, disease, or disability, or
- Equity/System Issues: An issue that is focused on the social and structural determinants of health, which are the complex, integrated, and overlapping social structures and economic systems that are responsible for most health inequities, including the social environment, physical environment, health services, and structural and societal factors. Social determinants of health are shaped by the distribution of money, power, and resources, and require intervention on a multi-sectorial, multi-discipline, multi-component level.

In determining priorities, participants considered extensive assessment findings and statistical health data, as well as their own experience, work expertise, and knowledge of their communities. Several key questions that helped participants to arrive at potential priority issues included:

- What is the extent of the impact of the issue? Who is affected?
- What disparities exist that drive these conditions or issues? What is the source of disparities?
- How much of a burden is placed on the community, in terms of disease, disparity, years of potential life lost, potential worsening of the problem, financial or other social impacts?
- What are the consequences of not addressing these conditions or issues? What are the benefits? Would other problems be reduced in magnitude if the problem were corrected?
- Can the issue be addressed with existing knowledge and resources? How resource-intensive are the interventions?
- What is currently being done to address these issues or conditions? What opportunities exist to address them?

After identifying priorities individually and through small group discussion, participants engaged in a large-group process to rank their chosen issues. Each potential priority was evaluated according to:

- IMPACT – Does the issue or condition have great impact or low impact on health? Would addressing it make a big impact on health and health inequity/structural determinants?
- OPPORTUNITY to act – Are groups currently working on this issue? Are there many or few opportunities to advance the work? Is this aspirational, or something we could 'make happen' now?

Highest priority issues were identified as being both high impact and great opportunity (1st priority), and high impact but lower opportunity (2nd priority). The group determined the following health conditions and structural determinants of health as priority action issues for the public health system to address:

- **Chronic disease**
- **Economic Development and Living Wage**
- **Mental Health**
- **Structural Racism**
- **Transportation & the Build Environment**

Additionally, participants discussed values and approaches to the work on priority issues that were critical for success in advancing equity. They determined that a focus on systems change and working in true collaboration across silos must be the approach employed in addressing our priority issues.