



WePLAN is the Cook County Department of Public Health's community health assessment and community health improvement plan. The following summary presents key findings from the **Local Public Health System Assessment (LPHSA)**. The **purpose** of the LPHSA is assess the components, activities and capacities of our local public health system – all that have a role in assuring the health of our residents, and to identify the extent to which the Essential Public Health Services (ES) are provided within our region. Conducted on September 1, 2015 with the assistance of the Illinois Public Health Institute, key informants and community partners engaged in review and discussion of national model standards of provision of the components of the ES. Each subgroup was asked to discuss the strengths and challenges of the system in meeting the model standards. Consensus scoring was then conducted on each model standard.

### Findings:

#### **The LPHS was seen as providing optimal services in traditional areas of public health activities for ES 2 Diagnose and Investigate Health Problems and Health Hazards in the Community and ES 6 Enforce Laws and Regulations.**

- Systems exist for disease surveillance and notification of public health emergencies, including partnerships between public health, hospitals and laboratory to support activities. Strong health codes, legal expertise and capacity to enforce laws and ordinances exist in the region
- Lags and gaps exist in the data available which may impact action to address problems. Further specific systematic action has not been undertaken by the LPHSA to address health inequities
- Additional capacity to enforce laws and technical expertise to draft new legislation is needed
- Making data more accessible and approachable for community members could improve the ability of all within the LPHSA to identify and address health problems and inequities.
- Increased advocacy and constituency building to gain wide support for improving and creating new laws to support population health is needed.

#### **Lower performing ES included ES 7 Link People to Needed Personal Health Services and Assure Provision of Healthcare When Otherwise Unavailable, ES 8 Assuring a Competent Public Health and Personal Healthcare Workforce and ES10 Research for New Insights and Innovative Solutions to Health Problems.**

- The Affordable Care Act (ACA) has provided health insurance coverage for uninsured individuals and the LPHS has done a good job enrolling newly eligible
- Geographic differences persist in access to services – in health care and other services; transportation access is seen as a barrier to access in suburban Cook County
- While agencies are engaged in workforce assessment there is a lack of coordination of these efforts across agencies
- Abundance of universities provide a robust research infrastructure there is a lack of resources to fund innovation and implement findings in practice
- There are limited opportunities for lower level, non-licensed staff in partner organizations.
- Efforts should seek to improve care coordination and interpreter services
- Better coordination and effort to assure professional development opportunities for all LPHS workforce
- Develop funding and incentives for continuing education for LPHS workforce
- LPHS should continue to strengthen bi-directional exchange between practice organizations and researchers; establish a research collaborative to foster coordination
- Communities should be engaged in setting research priorities

By leveraging the strengths and working towards improvement in the areas discussed above, the suburban Cook County LPHS can enhance its collective performance and effectiveness as a system to work toward achieving greater health and quality of life for its residents.