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# Public Health Makes Sense... Prevention Makes Cents®

**Cook County Department of Public Health**  
1996 Annual Report

John H. Stroger Jr., President  
Affiliate, Cook County Bureau of Health Services



The total cost of health care in the United States is estimated at \$1 trillion dollars with more than \$100 billion spent on injuries, \$70 billion on cancer and \$135 billion on cardiovascular diseases. These costs will only rise without more prevention strategies.

By implementing more effective prevention programs, researchers say 20% of our national health care expenditures could be saved. By preventing illness and disability, we not only improve the quality of life but we save billions of dollars that would otherwise be spent in providing medical care.

We are continually challenged to provide public health services that address complex issues such as AIDS, infant mortality and lead poisoning.

Our public health programs are not only fiscally wise, but also are socially responsible. At the Cook County Bureau of Health Services, we know prevention works and makes sense.

John H. Stroger, Jr., President, Cook County Board of Commissioners  
Ruth M. Rothstein, Chief, Cook County Bureau of Health Services



John H. Stroger, Jr.



Ruth M. Rothstein



Karen L. Scott, MD, MPH

In the field of healthcare, much attention surrounds diseases and conditions like AIDS, cancer and low birth weight babies. The Cook County Department of Public Health focuses its attention on the prevention of such diseases and conditions. In the pages following, we have outlined several public health programs that are working...working to reduce the number of babies that die before their first birthday, the number of unimmunized children, the number of people with tobacco-related disease, and those becoming infected with HIV.

1996 was a year of concentrated efforts to increase and improve our services. We are confident that our efforts have paid off in the lower incidence of disease and in reducing medical care costs.

I'd like to acknowledge our staff, the Cook County Bureau of Health Services, Cook County government, community groups and volunteers in their efforts with us to improve the health of the public in suburban Cook County.

Karen L. Scott, MD, MPH  
Director, Cook County Department of Public Health



## Public Health Makes Sense

### Childhood Immunizations

Immunizations are the cornerstone of children's preventive health care, yet many of suburban Cook County children are not properly protected from life-threatening illnesses like measles, pertussis and diphtheria. Over the past year, the Cook County Department of Public Health (CCDPH) has been working to increase immunization rates of suburban children to 90% by the year 2000.



#### Infant Immunization Initiative (I-3)

The I-3 program has established public-private partnerships and coalitions to facilitate improvements in immunization rates by increasing public awareness and providing parental and provider education.

#### Private Provider Immunization Project

In an effort to address several barriers to immunizations, health department staff have been conducting immunization assessments for private medical providers, assisting them in identifying missed opportunities for immunizations, and providing instruction on immunization computer software applications.

### Prevention Makes Cents

Every \$1 spent on the measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) vaccine saves approximately \$21 in health care costs.

Every \$1 spent on the diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis (DTP) vaccine saves approximately \$29 in health care costs.

Source: American Academy of Pediatrics

## Public Health Makes Sense

### Dental Health

According to a survey conducted by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Illinois Department of Public Health and the University of Illinois College of Dentistry, only about half of Illinois' children visit a dentist on a yearly basis. It is recommended that all children see a dentist by their first birthday and twice a year thereafter. Good dental health contributes to a person's overall health status.

#### Dental Sealants

The department has been providing dental sealants to low-income suburban children in an effort to reduce the incidence of cavities. Dental sealants are a plastic resin material bonded to the chewing surfaces of back teeth. In 1996, the dental



division increased the number of sealants applied to children's teeth by 42%.

#### Preventive Care for CEDA Head Start Children

In 1996, 794 children were examined and treated in the Community and Economic Development Association (CEDA)/Head Start program.

#### Baby Bottle Tooth Decay

To prevent the earliest form of tooth decay and future dental problems, parents in department clinics are taught if they put their babies to sleep with a bottle, it should be filled only with water. Parents are also taught methods to discourage their baby's use of the bottle after 1 year of age.

### Prevention Makes Cents

For every \$1 spent on dental sealants, \$2 is saved in treating cavities.

Source: Cook County Department of Public Health Dental Division





## Public Health Makes Sense

### Maternal and Child Health

In 1996, there were 34,290 births in suburban Cook County. Of these births, 2,850 were born to teen mothers, approximately 2,500 babies were low birth weight, (under 5 lbs, 8 oz.) and an estimated 250 babies died before their first birthday. Reducing these numbers requires the ongoing commitment to preventive programs.



#### Prenatal Care

Early and comprehensive prenatal care is critical to improving birth outcomes. The Maternal and Child Health Division has been meeting with providers in suburban Cook County and has established partnerships for prenatal care and delivery services. The Family Case Management program (formerly Healthy Moms, Healthy Kids), assists pregnant and parenting women to assure a healthy birth outcome and a healthy first year of life.

#### Family Planning

The department has been focusing on the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Healthy People 2000 objectives. They include reducing unintended pregnancies and increasing the use of combined contraception methods that both effectively prevent pregnancy and provide protection against sexually transmitted diseases including HIV infection.

#### Teen Pregnancy

Several programs to reduce teen pregnancy and assist parenting teens were expanded or initiated in 1996. The Delay of Subsequent Teen Pregnancy Project teaches teen moms how to delay another pregnancy until they are ready emotionally, physically and financially. The Sisters Project works with teen mothers and their younger sisters to show the everyday difficulties involved with teen parenting. The Male Involvement Project's goal is to support and show young fathers how to participate in their child's life both during and after pregnancy.

### Prevention Makes Cents

The cost of providing prenatal care to a healthy pregnant woman is \$600 compared to the medical costs of \$2,500 a day for caring for an extremely premature baby.

For every \$1 spent to provide birth control for women who might otherwise not have access to it, \$4.40 is saved. The savings of \$1.8 billion a year is money that would have been spent on medical, welfare and nutritional services for women who would have unplanned pregnancies.

Sources: *Time Magazine*, 1990, *Family Planning Perspectives*, 1990

## Public Health Makes Sense



### Health Education and Outreach

Health education programs provide a very important, basic element of public health. Teaching people how to protect and improve their health by making changes in their behavior has been shown to reduce illness by 50%. Several special projects in 1996 furthered health education efforts.

#### Comprehensive School Health Education

A statewide effort led by the health department encourages the development of a comprehensive school health education program using a sequential prevention curriculum starting in kindergarten and continuing through grade 12. The department began a demonstration project with School District 155 in Calumet City in 1995. In 1996, more than 500 students in grades K-4 were reached with health education. The involvement of parents, teachers and the community has been instrumental in the program's success.

#### School-Based Health Center

The development of a school-based health center was completed in 1996 at Morton East High School in Cicero. This partnership between the health department, School District 201 and MacNeal Family Practice Residency Program has resulted in fewer students being excluded from school because of the lack of necessary immunizations and physical exams. Basic primary care services allow students to seek health care during the school day rather than miss a day of classes.

#### HIV Prevention Regional Coordination

As the Lead Agency for the HIV Prevention Regional Implementation Group, in Cook County, CCDPH collaborated with three municipal health departments and eleven community-based organizations to reach 87,200 suburban Cook County residents with prevention services.

### Prevention Makes Cents

For every \$1 spent on school based tobacco, drug and alcohol, and sexuality education, \$14.00 is saved in health care costs.

The current national lifetime medical cost of treating one person with HIV is estimated at \$119,000.

Sources: *U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*, *Journal of the American Medical Association*



## Public Health Makes Sense

### Health Policy

#### Reducing Access to Tobacco Products by Teens (RATT)

Each year, between 400,000 and 450,000 people die from tobacco related disease and illness making tobacco the number one preventable cause of death in the United States. According to the American Medical Association, more than 6,000 U.S. young people try tobacco each day, 3,000 of them make it a habit and 1,000 of them will eventually die as a result of using tobacco products.

With 75% of all adult smokers being addicted to tobacco before turning eighteen, health department staff recognized that an effective way to stop teenagers from starting to smoke is to reduce their access.

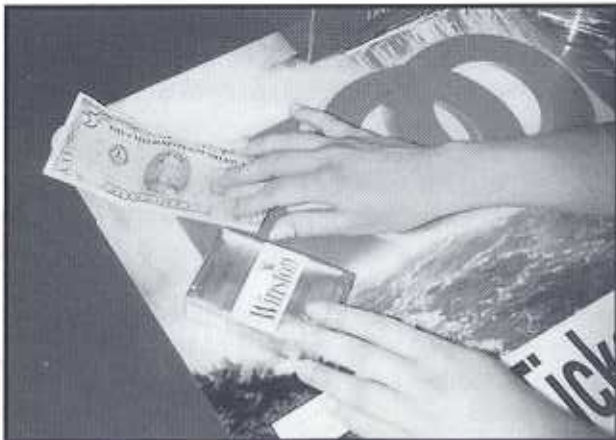
Meetings were conducted with municipal leaders to encourage the adoption of a local tobacco control ordinance that has proven effective in not only limiting access but in reducing the prevalence of teen smoking. The model ordinance requires merchants who want to sell tobacco products to obtain a separate tobacco license and bans the sale to and the possession of tobacco products by anyone under the age of 18. The ordinance is enforced through the use of quarterly unannounced compliance inspections. Penalties for violations range from fines to the suspension or revocation of a merchant's license. In 1996, health department staff conducted mock purchases of tobacco with the help of teenage volunteers. The data from the mock purchases was shared with local elected officials to further encourage the adoption and active enforcement of an ordinance.

In 1996, more than 20 municipalities adopted a tobacco control ordinance. To date, at least 40 suburban communities have ordinances in place impacting over one million residents.

### Prevention Makes Cents

In 1993, the estimated smoking-related costs for medical care were \$50 billion. 43% of these costs were paid by government funds through Medicaid and Medicare. On average, each pack of cigarettes costs Americans more than \$3.90 in smoking related expenses. Lost economic productivity caused by smoking cost the U.S. economy \$47.2 billion in 1990.

Sources: U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, U.S. Office of Technology Assessment



## Public Health Makes Sense

### Nutrition

Proper nutrition is vital to the health of all individuals and is particularly important for pregnant women and young children. The health department has expanded its nutrition-related programs beyond the scope of the Women, Infants and Children (WIC) program, a federally funded nutrition program providing food vouchers and education to eligible residents.



#### Breast Feeding

Extensive efforts have been put forth by health department staff to encourage pregnant women to breast feed their babies. Two former WIC Program participants were hired and trained to work as breastfeeding peer counselors. They educate their peers about the benefits of breastfeeding and provide supportive counseling by telephone. These efforts have resulted in a 44% breast feeding initiation rate of women in WIC clinics.

#### Nutrition Education in the Schools

Nutritionists promoted heart-healthy eating habits in local elementary schools, high schools, and daycare centers. In 1996, nutritionists presented classes to over 400 people on reducing fat in the diet and increasing consumption of fruits and vegetables.

#### Gardening

In an effort to educate clients of the nutritional benefits of growing their own fresh vegetables, thousands of seed packets were distributed in WIC clinics.

### Prevention Makes Cents

Because breastfed babies have a lower incidence of ear infections, diarrhea and other illnesses, each breastfed baby saves \$112 in Medicaid costs.

Poor nutrition costs society about \$150 billion a year in health care costs and time lost from work. If the average American child decreased his/her saturated fat intake by just 8 grams a day (the amount of fat in 12 ounces of whole milk), 2.3 million fewer Americans would have heart disease and \$24 million could be saved each year.

Source: American Dietetic Association, Center for Science in the Public Interest



## Public Health Makes Sense



### Environmental Health

Environmental health programs are some of the most effective public health services provided, yet many people take them for granted until a problem occurs. With 6,000 environmental health inspections performed in 1996, the department put forth every effort to protect suburban Cook County residents.

#### Restaurant Inspections

The department is responsible for the routine inspection of all restaurants in unincorporated Cook County. Additionally, 25 municipalities contract with the department to provide inspections and training to restaurant operators. Food handlers are taught proper food storage and preparation procedures as well as other sanitary practices to minimize the potential for disease transmission.

#### Lead Poisoning

Each year in suburban Cook County, nearly 200 children with elevated blood lead levels are reported to the department. Lead poisoning can lead to learning disabilities and other damaging health effects. Department staff seek to assist families in finding the source of lead contamination in their home and then make sure this health hazard is safely removed.

### Prevention Makes Cents

The per case cost of foodborne illness in the United States is \$620.00.

It is estimated that by preventing lead poisoning in children, \$1,300 per child in medical costs and \$3,331 per child in special education costs could be saved.

Sources: *Journal of Food Protection*, 1989, U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

## Public Health Makes Sense



### Community Health

Programs in the division of Community Health strive to help residents prevent and deal with chronic illnesses; protect children from lead poisoning and serious injuries; screen recent refugees; and link HIV positive individuals with needed services.

#### Child Safety Seat Program

New parents are taught the proper way to restrain children in cars

through community-based classes. Low income families can purchase safety seats at a minimal cost through the program.

#### Well Woman Breast and Cervical Cancer Program

The Well Woman Program assists low income or medically underinsured women over the age of fifty in obtaining a mammogram and pap smear to detect breast or cervical cancer. Services are provided at no cost and if problems are detected, resources are provided. The program also teaches participants how to perform Breast Self Exam.

#### Primary Care Clinic

In cooperation with Loyola University Medical Center, the health department conducts a weekly primary care clinic in its Maywood office providing low income suburban residents with care for minor ailments and chronic diseases. More than 1,500 residents were served in 1996.

### Prevention Makes Cents

The cost of medical care for a woman whose breast cancer is diagnosed early is 1/3 to 1/2 of the cost if diagnosed later.

For every \$1 spent on child safety seats, society saves \$32.

Sources: *Health Resources and Services Administration, U.S. Public Health Service, Illinois Department of Public Health.*



## 1996 Operating Budget

Cook County Appropriation .....	11,458,233
Other Funding Sources* (by program):	
Basic Health .....	1,433,838
Breast & Cervical Cancer Detection .....	265,400
Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention .....	140,000
Child Safety Seats .....	84,405
Comprehensive School Health Education .....	30,000
Day Care/Nursing Consultations .....	9,500
Dental Sealants .....	141,000
Environmental Protection Programs	
Food Inspection/Intergovernmental Agreements .....	90,000
Tanning Facilities Inspections .....	19,250
Water/Well Inspections .....	36,100
Genetics .....	56,400
Health Promotion .....	233,800
Healthworks .....	226,629
HIV/AIDS	
Case Investigation .....	106,559
Counseling & Testing .....	290,769
Prevention Education .....	170,000
Region 8 Lead Agency .....	390,164
Ryan White CARE Services .....	479,168
Immunization Action .....	607,360
Infant Immunization Initiative .....	456,512
Maternal/Child Health	
Family Case Management .....	3,527,900
Family Planning .....	432,100
Outreach and Education .....	599,141
Primary Care .....	357,759
Problem Pregnancy .....	17,000
Service Fees .....	663,000
Refugee	
Health Services .....	67,000
Screening Exams .....	126,900
Sexually Transmitted Diseases .....	237,950
State Computer Information Link .....	87
Suburban Cook County Tuberculosis Sanitarium .....	19,800
Teen Pregnancy Prevention	
Delay of Adolescent Subsequent Pregnancy .....	153,700
Teen Parent Initiative .....	233,803
Vaccines Provided by Federal/State Sources .....	1,014,078
Vision and Hearing Screening .....	52,000
WIC/Nutrition .....	2,231,500
Total Other Funding .....	15,000,572
<b>Total CCDPH Budget.....</b>	<b>26,458,805</b>

\*includes grants, contracts and service fees

## Select Reported Communicable Diseases

AIDS .....	185	Measles .....	3
Chlamydia .....	1,819	Pertussis .....	45
E. coli 0157:H7 .....	43	Salmonella .....	332
Foodborne Illness Complaints .....	370	Syphilis -	
Giardia .....	227	Early .....	87
Gonorrhea .....	1,000	Congenital .....	18
Hepatitis A .....	92		
Hepatitis B			
Acute .....	46		
Carriers .....	266		

The Communicable Disease Division produces an annual communicable disease report which may be obtained by calling 708-445-2460.

## Client Visits By Clinic Type

Adult Health .....	2,186	Well Child Care .....	3,335
HIV Anonymous Testing .....	3,994	Pregnancy Testing .....	4,282
Dental .....	13,357	Primary Care .....	1,524
Family Planning .....	12,992	Refugee .....	375
Immunization .....	25,489	Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STD) .....	5,098
Prenatal .....	10,232	Women, Infants and Children (WIC) .....	84,743

## Community Health Services

### Health Education Services

Group Attendance .....	18,595
General Outreach .....	28,504
HIV/STD Outreach .....	75,000

### Diabetes Services

Classes Held .....	35
Participants .....	537

### Lead Poisoning

Reported Cases & Investigations .....	193
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### Safety Seats

Persons Educated .....	572
Seats Distributed .....	720

### HIV Case Management

Average Monthly Caseload .....	170
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### Walking Program

Average Monthly Participation .....	60
Miles Walked .....	14,791

### Vision and Hearing Program

School/Pre-school Vision Test .....	20,867
School/Pre-school Hearing Test .....	24,607

## Public Health Nursing Services

### Case Management

Average Monthly Caseload .....	10,479
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### Teen Parenting Programs

Participants .....	320
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### Day Care Services

Nursing Consultations .....	300
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## Vital Statistics

### Births

Certificates Registered .....	23,410
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### Deaths

Certificates Registered .....	13,673
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# Environmental Health Services

## Day Care Facilities

Inspections Performed .....166

## Food Service Establishments/Retail

### Food Stores

Unincorporated Areas

Licenses Issued .....263

Inspections Performed .....708

Intergovernmental Agreements

Communities Served .....25

Food Facilities .....840

Inspections Performed .....2,163

Plans Reviewed .....28

## Mobile Home Parks

Licenses Issued .....37

Inspections Performed .....80

## Nuisance Complaints

Complaints Received .....184

Inspections and Enforcement Actions .....600

## Septic Tank Cleaners

Permits Issued .....40

Truck Inspections Performed .....42

## Private Sewage Disposal Systems

Plans Processed .....192

Lot Surveys Performed .....179

Installation Inspections Performed .....107

## Swimming Pools and Spas

Private Pools/Spa Plans Approved .....40

Inspections Performed (public pools) .....1,409

## Well/Septic System Evaluations

Evaluations Performed .....42

Inspections Performed .....81

## New Wells

Permits Issued .....247

Inspections Performed .....195

## Existing Non-Community Wells

Surveys Performed .....319

## Abandoned Wells

Wells Scaled .....178

## Water Supplies

Water Samples Collected

(non-community) .....796

Water Samples Collected

(private) .....9

Analysis Opinions Rendered .....1,166

## Tanning Facilities

Inspections Performed .....242

*Our Mission: To protect and promote health, and to prevent illness, disability and premature death among all residents of suburban Cook County.*

The Cook County Department of Public Health is the state certified public health agency for suburban Cook County exclusive of the cities of Chicago, Evanston, Skokie and Oak Park and Stickney Township where state certified public health departments are operated by the local unit of government.

The Cook County Department of Public Health is an affiliate of the Cook County Bureau of Health Services. Other affiliates include the Ambulatory and Community Health Network of Cook County; Cermak Health Services of Cook County; Cook County Hospital; Oak Forest Hospital of Cook County; and Provident Hospital of Cook County.

## Agency Administration

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Assistant Health Officer

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Statistics

The Cook County Department of Public Health gratefully acknowledges all agencies, organizations and individuals who supported our programs and efforts in 1996. Your assistance, cooperation and contributions continue to touch the lives of many suburban Cook County families and residents.

The 1996 Annual Report was prepared by the Division of Communications.

Editor: Caryn Stancik, MPA