



Leadership

Toni Preckwinkle
President
Cook County Board of Commissioners

Israel Rocha, Jr.
Chief Executive Officer
Cook County Health
LaMar Hasbrouck, MD, MPH, MBA
Chief Operating Officer

Board of Directors

Lyndon Taylor
Chair of the Board

Hon. Dr. Dennis Deer, LCPC, CCFC
Vice Chair of the Board

Robert Currie
Raul Garza
Ada Mary Gugenheim
Joseph M. Harrington
Karen E. Kim, MD, MS

Mike Koetting
David Ernesto Munar
Heather M. Prendergast, MD, MS, MPH
Robert G. Reiter, Jr.
Otis L. Story, Sr.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Sept. 29, 2022

Media Contact: Kim Junius

Email: ccdphmedia@cookcountyhhs.org

New national report shows 4 in 10 American adults have obesity

Cook County Public Health shares data and efforts to address disparities and improve health

FOREST PARK, Ill – Cook County Department of Public Health officials today shared [local data](#) and efforts to address obesity in suburban Cook County. This was in response to a national report called the [State of Obesity 2022: Better Policies for a Healthier America](#), issued by the Trust for America's Health (TFAH).

“Besides putting people at increased risk for COVID-19 complications, obesity is associated with diabetes, heart disease, stroke, arthritis, sleep apnea, and more than a dozen cancers that can lead to premature death,” said CCDPH Chief Operating Officer, Dr. LaMar Hasbrouck. “Obesity is second only to smoking tobacco as the leading cause of preventable deaths. These are compelling reasons to continue to address the obesity epidemic.”

Obesity rates continue to climb, and now, 4 in 10 American adults are obese. Some populations have higher rates than others. Nationally, Black (50%) and Hispanic (46%) adults have the highest rates and whites (41%) and Asians (16%) have the lowest. A similar pattern is shown in Illinois although the rates are lower among these groups. The rates are 41%, 34%, 31%, and 12% for Black, Hispanic, white and Asian Illinoisans, respectively. The overall rate for suburban Cook County adults is 30 percent. Data on race and ethnicity is unavailable.

“This data highlights the importance of taking a comprehensive approach that provides equitable access to resources for obesity prevention and control,” said CCDPH Chronic Disease Prevention and Control Director Amy O'Rourke. “For more than a decade, CCDPH has been partnering with organizations to implement policy and environmental solutions promoting access to affordable, healthy foods and active living for all.” As a part of the community health improvement plan for suburban Cook County, CCDPH is currently working to:

- Expand access to healthy, locally sourced emergency meals to communities with high food insecurity rates and that have been disproportionately impacted by COVID-19.
- Implement the Good Food Purchasing Program, a food procurement strategy, to transform the local food system towards one that is transparent and racially equitable, investing in local food producers and businesses of color while ensuring healthier food options are served and sold at Cook County Health, Cook County Juvenile Temporary Detention and Cook County Sheriff.
- Support implementation of legislation that promotes healthy beverage and food options for school children.
- Provide direct support to south suburban municipalities to advance local complete streets policies and active transportation plans that promote biking and walking options and use of public transportation within communities
- Share local health data through the newly released Cook County Health Atlas to inform decision-making and monitor health improvements.

###