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## **Board of Health reviews community health improvement plan and Health Department's strategic plan**

The Kane County Board of Health today reviewed the priorities for community health improvement that were recommended by the Public Health Advisory Committee and the Health Department's leadership. As part of the Department's efforts to develop a new Community Health Improvement Plan, the Board also reviewed a draft of the Health Department's strategic plan. Both "roadmaps" will be crucial as the Health Department works to fulfill the vision of making Kane County residents the healthiest people in Illinois by 2030.

To conduct the community health needs assessment and develop the resulting community health improvement plan, the Health Department worked with partners from the county's five hospitals, two United Ways and the INC Board. A comprehensive collection of health, economic and community data was assembled through a variety of methods. These included a phone survey of 2000 residents, data sets from local, state and federal agencies, and input and feedback from nearly 250 residents through focus groups, community meetings and an online survey.

"As a result of our public-private partnership we were able to save resources for everyone and do more with the dollars we had. There has never been a more comprehensive health assessment performed in Kane County. This is truly the community's plan," said Paul Kuehnert, Executive Director of the Kane County Health Department.

Conducting a formal, organized assessment of community health needs and resources is a core service to taxpayers provided by local health departments across the country. The assessment identifies key health issues and concerns for the county population and helps set priorities for use of resources to improve the health of the entire community. Such prioritization is particularly important when resources are limited.

"Our assessment shows that Kane has the second-youngest population in the Chicago metropolitan area and the largest proportion of Latino or Hispanic residents of all Illinois counties," Kuehnert added. "At the same time, the fastest growing age group in our population is 45-64 year olds. So, our plan calls on the health system serving Kane residents to focus health improvement efforts across the life span and make sure that services are offered in ways that effectively reach our diverse community"

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The Kane County health assessment results pointed to six major threats to community health and well-being in Kane County at this time: obesity, chronic disease, infant mortality, childhood lead poisoning, communicable disease and poor social and emotional wellness. The draft community health improvement plan identifies four cross-cutting priorities for health improvement to address these threats:

1. Support health behaviors that promote well-being and prevent disease;
2. Increase access to high quality, holistic preventive and treatment services across the health care system;
3. Support and create health promoting neighborhoods, towns and cities;
4. Promote social, economic and educational environments that optimize health.

Each priority can be addressed through implementation of one or more evidence-based strategies that are described in the health plan.

Today's meeting follows an initial meeting with the Board of Health and Health Advisory Committee in September that included a review of the preliminary findings from the assessment. Going forward, a final draft of the community assessment and health improvement plan report will be available by end of January. Public comments will be solicited throughout the month of February, and the plan brought to the County Board of Health for adoption in March, 2012.

Also today, the Board of Health had an opportunity to review KCHD's updated mission statement and strategic plan. Both were formulated with input from the Health Advisory Committee, Board of Health, and all KCHD staff. The new mission statement reflects the Department's role as an active partner with the community, and focuses on systems and policy changes to really make a positive difference in our residents' lives.

You can find more detail about the assessment, Community Health Improvement Plan and the Strategic Plan on our website at [www.kanehealth.com](http://www.kanehealth.com). Keep up with the latest news about these and other important projects by visiting us on Facebook, following us on Twitter and subscribing to our "Health Matters" E-newsletter.

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