

## **Healthy Chicago 2.0 Forces of Change Assessment Summary**

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The goal of the Forces of Change Assessment is to identify forces (trends, factors or events) that are, or will, influence the health and quality of life of the community and the local public health system. Threats and opportunities are also identified.

### **Process:**

The Forces of Change Assessment for Healthy Chicago 2.0 took place between October 2014 and January 2015. Outreach to the community occurred through emails, social media, and flyers. Five community conversations were held in different areas of the city. In addition, meetings with CDPH management, the Chicago Board of Health, and the Partnership for a Healthy Chicago added additional perspectives. One hundred and sixty-seven community stakeholders participated in the community conversations, with over 200 people contributing to the Forces of Change Assessment overall. At these meetings, stakeholders were asked to identify issues that are happening now or are likely to happen in the near future that will impact the health of Chicagoans. Following a discussion of issues, attendees identified threats (bad consequences) and opportunities (such as policies, programs, and strategies) that could occur as a result of the issues.

Following community conversations, data on forces, threats and opportunities from all meetings was synthesized. The Partnership then reviewed and refined the information. Finally, all feedback was further synthesized and analyzed for themes.

### **Overarching Themes:**

Forces related to health care, particularly access to care, were mentioned more frequently than every other topic, and were discussed at every community conversation. Issues pertaining to the cost of living and jobs, housing, and safety were the next most commonly discussed. Additional themes were grouped into the following main topics: education, food and food systems, policy/politics, homelessness, climate and the environment, data and technology, the aging of the population, stigma and discrimination and cultural competence. Key discussions within these topic areas are highlighted below.

#### **Health Care**

- The emergence of ACA and Medicaid Managed Care are strong forces of change.
- While ACA increases health care access for many, stakeholders also expressed concern that the ACA doesn't cover everyone, and discussed the difficulties many people have navigating the new health care landscape.
- The City mental health clinic closures and inadequate state mental health system are significant forces.

#### **Cost-of-Living and Jobs**

- Chicagoans face a lack of good-paying jobs with benefits and a gap between income and the cost-of-living.
- The prisoner re-entry population, youth, graduating college students, and persons with mental illness are particularly vulnerable.
- Workforce development and job skill programs are needed.
- Distress regarding notable economic inequities between neighborhoods, including housing, violence, aesthetics and the distribution of community resources was a related concern.

### **Housing**

- The high cost of living and property taxes has contributed to a lack of affordable and safe housing in Chicago.
- A lack of housing for the poor, rental housing and affordable housing in safe neighborhoods were specific issues.

### **Safety and Violence**

- Gun violence, intimate partner violence, bullying and police violence are community problems.
- An increase in abandoned buildings and children crossing gang lines because of school closures are concerning to stakeholders.

### **Education**

- CPS school closures, the fragmented education system, and a lack of quality and equal education regardless of address are key forces of change.
- Stakeholders also discussed other levels of the education system, from a lack of early childhood education to unaffordable higher education.

### **Food and Food Systems**

- A lack of access to healthy food, food deserts and unequal food opportunities are issues that threaten the health of Chicagoans.
- At the federal level, food marketing and food policies are problematic.
- The local food landscape is changing with the increase in community gardens and urban agriculture that bring many benefits to Chicagoans.

### **Policy/Politics**

- The Mayoral election and changes in state leadership are central public health forces in Chicago.
- A shrinking public budget, the introduction of new public health policies, and distrust in government affect the public health landscape.

### **Homelessness**

- Homelessness affects many populations.
- Families, men, the undocumented, and youth homelessness were identified as populations of greatest need.

### **Climate/Environment**

- Pollutants due to vehicle emissions, construction, tobacco and radon were mentioned.
- Climate change was also identified as a threat.

### **Data and Technology**

- Stakeholders discussed the increase in the use of social media and technology in general and the use of data and technology to address personal health and population health.
- Less socialization among groups, changes in brain development among children, and the exclusion of some groups in accessing health resources and information due to a lack of access to technology threaten public health.

### **Increase in Older Adults**

- The aging of the population has created a need for more health care, accessible housing, support services, and health promoting resources for older adults.

### **Stigma and Discrimination**

- Discrimination and stigma related to race, gender, poverty and mental illness are forces influencing the health of Chicagoans.

### **Cultural Competence**

- Stakeholders expressed concern with a lack of cultural competence across sectors, including the legal, educational, police, human services, and healthcare systems.