

Healthy Chicago 2025

Forces of Change Assessment

Identifies forces (trends, factors or events) that are affecting, or will affect, the health and quality of life of the community and the local public health system in the next five years. We obtained survey responses from 122 individuals and collected 784 forces that we organized into 15 themes.

Fifteen Forces Affecting the Public Health System: (listed in order of frequency of mentions)

1. Political Forces (local, state, federal)
2. Economic Trends
3. Built environment
4. Insurance & Healthcare
5. Populations Shifts
6. Environment
7. Data, Science & Technology
8. Criminal Justice/Community Safety
9. Racism & Discrimination
10. Mental Health & Substance Use
11. Immigration
12. Contemporary Life
13. Access to Resources
14. Giving/Partnerships
15. Education and Workforce Development

Key Takeaways

Threats:

- Racism and prejudice against people of color and those from other countries
- Programs and policies that are not based on what has been shown to work best
- Not including people of color and those most affected in decision making
- Poor health for older adults, people with disabilities and LGBTQ
- Policies developed or enforced by the federal government that threaten the health and well-being of Chicagoans
- Lack of opportunities and good jobs needed to achieve and maintain a healthy life
- Lack of investment in specific communities and gentrification

Opportunities:

- Strengthen collaboration across government, organizations, and communities
- Advocate for fair policies
- Strengthen programs to address racism and health inequities
- Educate about the connection between how people live (ability to live in a safe home, attend a good school, get a good job) and their health
- Use data to show what works and then replicate effective programs and policies
- Coordinate healthcare and social services interventions to better serve communities and individuals