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MAYOR EMANUEL ACCEPTS NATIONAL AWARD RECOGNIZING CITY'S HEALTH POLICIES

Announces town halls across the city to develop policies that further improve youth health

Mayor Emanuel today accepted the Gold Medal award from CityHealth, recognizing Chicago's work in developing and implementing policies that have been shown to improve health. CityHealth specifically recognized Chicago's efforts to make quality pre-kindergarten universal for all children, the passage of the city's first paid sick leave law, implementation of policies to promote walking and biking, and raising the age for purchasing tobacco products to 21. During his remarks, the Mayor announced a series of town hall meetings as the next step forward to identify innovative solutions that will further improve the health and well-being of Chicago's youth.

"Chicago is leading the nation when it comes to passing innovative policies to improve our health, as this gold medal and our recent successes show," Mayor Emanuel said. "But even with these successes, there is more that we can do, especially in communities facing the greatest health challenges. I am asking CDPH and our community partners to work together to identify concrete, evidence-based policy proposals that will help even more young people grow into healthy adults."

Chicago was one of only five cities in the nation to receive an overall gold medal—the only Midwestern city to receive this award—joining Boston, Los Angeles, New York, and Washington, D.C. Each of the policy areas identified by the CityHealth report corresponds with improvements made to local policy and programs, enacted as part of Mayor Emanuel's steadfast commitment to improving Chicago's neighborhoods and quality of life for all residents.

"We have enjoyed tremendous success since launching Healthy Chicago 2.0, from raising the purchasing age of tobacco to 21 to increasing vaccination rates among young people," said Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH) Commissioner Julie Morita, M.D. "CDPH and our partners stand ready to work with Mayor Emanuel and residents across Chicago to pursue policies that will help our children."

The town halls will focus on five key areas surrounding youth health: improving homes, empowering parents, promoting vaccines, reducing obesity and mitigating trauma. This aligns with the recent [Healthy Kids Spotlight report](#) from CDPH showing that even though there has been progress in each key area, significant health disparities remain.

"Chicago is already a national leader when it comes to implementing comprehensive health policies," said Ed Hunter, President and CEO of the de Beaumont Foundation, who presented the Gold Medal to Mayor Emanuel during Tuesday's event. "By issuing this call, Mayor Emanuel refuses

to let Chicago rest on its laurels and will seek even more ways to improve the health and well-being of Chicago's children.”

Five town hall meetings will be held from June to August to gather feedback from content experts and Chicago residents, including Chicago's African American and Latino communities, which often face greater health disparities. The first meeting will be in conjunction with the monthly Chicago Board of Health meeting on June 21. Following the town hall meetings, CDPH will release a comprehensive report detailing the feedback from participants and policy recommendations.

The Emanuel Administration has stood strong supporting initiatives that improve youth health like implementing the toughest, most comprehensive anti-smoking strategy in the country, instituting the highest cigarette tax in the country, and raising the age to purchase tobacco from 18 to 21. Further regulation was established to keep e-cigarettes out of the hands of children, banning flavored tobacco products near high schools while using tax funds to establish three new school-based health centers and other initiatives related to increasing mental health access for children and youth. As a result of supporting medically accurate, age appropriate sexual health programs, today Chicago teen births are at a historic low and more teens are being screened for sexually transmitted diseases. In addition to implementing universal per-kindergarten for all children, the Mayor has supported healthy habits for Chicago's children by increasing resources to expand vision, with over 55,000 children receiving no cost exams and glasses each year. In addition, dental programs will provide exams and cleanings for almost 90,000 children annually. Finally, the Mayor has guaranteed recess for all Chicago Public School students.

At today's celebration, CDPH shared the 2017 [Healthy Chicago 2.0 Partner Update](#), highlighting specific improvements that have been made in public health across Chicago.

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