

Local Health Departments are Preparing for the Health Impacts of Climate Change

October 2017

Chicago Department of Public Health

Project Summary



The National Association of County and City Health Officials, with funding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), selected

the Chicago Department of Public Health (IL) as one of 11 local health departments to better understand how city and county health departments are preparing for the health impacts of climate change. The goal of this project was to highlight local efforts to prepare for and build resiliency to the health impacts of climate change and to share these success stories to support new and ongoing initiatives in other LHDs. The project sought to identify best practices and provide real-world case studies. LHDs play an important role in connecting health impacts with the effects of climate change. This project highlights only a few of the many departments actively engaged in climate change efforts.

Background

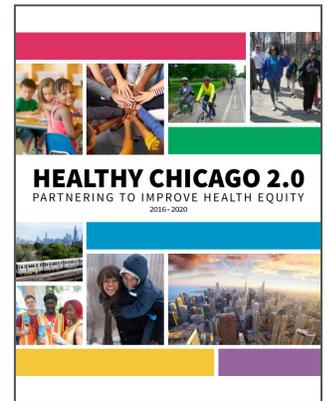
Chicago is the third-most populous city in the United States, with 2.7 million residents.¹ Located 578 feet above sea level on the southwestern shore of Lake Michigan, Chicago also has two rivers, the Chicago River and the Calumet River, that flow entirely or partially through the city. Chicago is an international hub for finance, commerce, industry, technology, telecommunications, and transportation. The mission of the Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH) is to promote and improve health by engaging residents, communities, and partners in establishing and implementing policies and services that prioritize residents and communities with the greatest need.

Climate Challenge

Climate change is predicted to impact Chicago in a variety of ways, including increases in temperature, adverse impacts on human health and welfare, decreased air quality, an increased frequency of vector-borne and water-borne disease outbreaks, and changes in precipitation patterns.²

Goal

Through Healthy Chicago 2.0, CDPH works to minimize the negative effects of climate change and its impacts on public health. Healthy Chicago 2.0 is a four-year plan providing 200 actionable strategies to improve health equity, focusing on both traditional health issues and social determinants of health. The health department developed several objectives to address this overarching goal and has achieved a number of successes so far.



OBJECTIVES

- Coordinate with partner organizations to collect data that can inform education, advocacy, resource development, and planning efforts related to minimizing and responding to climate change;
- Launch public education campaigns to address the response to climate change;
- Ensure emergency response plans address the health impacts of climate change on vulnerable populations and assure essential health services for these populations in an emergency; and
- Expand efforts to support community-specific systems and strategies to prevent and respond to climate change.

Achievements and Successes

- Developed and launched Healthy Chicago 2.0,³ a four-year plan providing 200 actionable strategies to improve health equity, focusing on both traditional health issues and social determinants of health;
- Used predictive analytics to predict emergent health issues among populations at highest risk for health effects of climate change and extreme weather events, thus allowing officials to minimize these negative impacts;
- Partnered with the Chicago Office of Emergency Management and Communications and other First Responders to develop a comprehensive All Hazards Emergency Operations Plan;
- Collaborated with city hospitals and other health care agencies to conduct syndromic surveillance to anticipate outbreaks or other factors that can inform CDPH planning efforts;
- Worked with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response on the emPOWER Initiative—data mapping using Medicare data, severe weather tracking, and GIS to “better anticipate, mitigate, plan for, and respond to the potential electrical needs of at-risk persons with access and functional needs prior to, during, and after a disaster”;⁴
- Participated in a collaboration to develop an urban sensing network made up of sensor nodes that relay environmental data in real time on airborne pollutants and climate factors; and
- Awarded a 2017 ENERGY STAR Partner of the Year for accelerating and promoting energy efficiency strategies through local programs and policies. Chicago is the first major city to receive this award.

References

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3. City of Chicago. (2016). Healthy Chicago 2.0: Partnering to Improve Health Equity 2016-2020. Retrieved August 15, 2017, from <https://www.cityofchicago.org/content/dam/city/depts/cdph/CDPH/Healthy%20Chicago/HC2.0Upd4152016.pdf>
4. Office of the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness & Response. HHS emPOWER Map 2.0. Retrieved September 13, 2017, from <https://empowermap.hhs.gov/>

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NACCHO

National Association of County & City Health Officials

The National Connection for Local Public Health



The mission of the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) is to be a leader, partner, catalyst, and voice with local health departments.

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