

# Communities Putting Prevention to Work



CHICAGO, ILLINOIS  
Obesity and Tobacco Use Prevention

**Communities Putting Prevention to Work (CPPW) is an initiative designed to make healthy living easier by promoting environmental changes at the local level. Through funding awarded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in 2010, a total of 50 communities are working to prevent obesity and tobacco use—the two leading preventable causes of death and disability.**

“THIS PROJECT IS WELL-ALIGNED WITH OUR DEPARTMENT’S AIM TO MAKE CHICAGO A SAFER AND HEALTHIER CITY BY WORKING WITH COMMUNITY PARTNERS TO PROMOTE HEALTH AND PREVENT DISEASE.”

— *Bechara Choucair, MD, Chicago Public Health Commissioner*

## Community Overview

Chicago, Illinois, is tackling obesity and tobacco use in the community, which is home to more than 2.6 million residents. Obesity is a major problem in Chicago, where 36.2% of the city’s high school students and 61.2% of adults in the metropolitan area are overweight or obese.

Tobacco use also is a concern, as approximately 19% of Chicago adults and 12.5% of Chicago high school students are current smokers. Additionally, about 30% of high school smokers reported purchasing their own cigarettes.

Obesity and tobacco use are disproportionately prevalent among certain populations. Puerto Rican, Mexican American, and black children in Chicago are more than four times as likely to be obese as non-Hispanic white children. In Illinois, there is a pattern of heavier smoking in communities composed of residents who are black, live in lower-income households, and have less formal education. In addition to obesity and tobacco use prevention efforts aimed at the city’s entire population, certain initiatives target populations with the highest prevalence of obesity and tobacco use.

## Community Successes

If healthy options are not available, then healthy living is not possible. With the support of the CPPW initiative, Chicago has implemented a variety of changes throughout the community to make healthy living easier.

To decrease the prevalence of obesity, Chicago:

- Started promoting and supporting the adoption and implementation of comprehensive school-based policies and practices to create a healthier food environment in Chicago Public Schools.
- Supported the improvement of breastfeeding support practices and achievement of Baby-Friendly Hospital designation in all maternity hospitals in the city. Designated hospitals provide maternity services aimed at protecting, promoting, and supporting breastfeeding.



“WE NEED HEALTHY CORNER STORES IN OUR NEIGHBORHOOD BECAUSE THE ALTERNATIVE FOR ME IS TO GO TO THE GROCERY STORE SEVERAL BLOCKS FROM HOME TO MAKE PURCHASES. I LOVE THAT FRESH PRODUCE WILL BE AVAILABLE AT CORNER STORES IN MY COMMUNITY.”

— Cora, Chicago resident

### Community Successes *(continued)*

- Awarded \$800,000 total to 10 community-based organizations that are addressing obesity-related health disparities. Three of the organizations are working to increase healthy options in corner stores, three are supporting breastfeeding education, and four are working to implement healthy changes in schools. All organizations also are addressing walkability around schools and parks.

To decrease tobacco use, Chicago:

- Implemented a citywide public education initiative that, to date, has increased Chicago resident calls to the state quitline by more than 160%. Eligible callers receive subsidized nicotine-replacement therapy.
- Implemented smoke-free campus policies at nine mental health and substance abuse treatment facilities.
- Supported the Archdiocese of Chicago Catholic Schools in approving a tobacco-free campus policy, protecting an estimated 40,000 students and 2,500 faculty and staff in approximately 137 schools from secondhand smoke.
- Increased the number of smoke-free private and public multi-unit housing options available to Chicago residents. More than 500 local housing units have committed to going smoke-free by March 2012.

(The list above is a sample of all activities completed by the community.)

### Healthy Foods More Accessible to Chicago Residents

Chicago has made several major developments in efforts to increase access to healthy foods and improve the health of its residents. The city recently adopted an urban agriculture policy that makes growing and selling fresh produce in the city easier by allowing produce sales at community garden sites, many of which are in residential areas. The policy also fosters innovative food production techniques such as aquaponics, which is a system of cultivating both fish and produce. Additionally, Chicago convened a pre-planning workshop for a citywide food plan that brought together city agencies and community and civic groups with an interest in food systems. Feedback from the workshop is currently being incorporated into the city's upcoming planning process.

### Chicago Patients Now Screened For Tobacco Use

Chicago has assisted more than 25 Federally qualified health centers to integrate the Ask, Advise, Refer (AAR) model into their electronic health record systems to ensure that patients who smoke are consistently screened for tobacco use, educated about the dangers of tobacco, and referred to the quitline and other local resources for cessation support. Implementation of the electronic AAR model began in April 2011 and more than 24,000 patients have been screened.

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### Leadership Team

The leadership team includes high-level community leaders from multiple sectors, who have the combined resources and capacity to make healthy living easier. Members of Chicago's leadership team are key agents for change in their community. The leadership team includes representatives from the following organizations:

- Chicago Board of Health
- Chicago Community Trust
- Chicago Department of Public Health
- Chicago Public Schools
- Chicagoland Chamber of Commerce
- Consortium to Lower Obesity in Chicago Children
- Cook County Department of Public Health
- Illinois Coalition Against Tobacco
- Namaste Charter School
- Respiratory Health Association of Metropolitan Chicago
- United Way of Metropolitan Chicago

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### Additional Information

For more information, please visit [www.cityofchicago.org/publichealth](http://www.cityofchicago.org/publichealth) or [www.lungchicago.org/chicago-tobacco-prevention-project](http://www.lungchicago.org/chicago-tobacco-prevention-project).