

## 2.4 PLANNING ISSUES – COMMUNITY HEALTH

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### Chapter Objectives:

1. To develop and implement health objectives and strategies in coordination with land use and transportation objectives.
2. To support the priorities in the Community Health Improvement Plan.

### 2011 Community Health Improvement Plan priorities:

- Support health behaviors that promote well-being and prevent disease
- Increase access to high quality, holistic preventive and treatment services across the health care system
- Support and create health promoting neighborhoods, towns, and cities
- Promote social, economic and educational environments that optimize health

### Chapter Focus:

Community Health is a new planning issue in the 2040 Plan that provides an overview of community health, Kane County health planning, and strategies to reach the County's goal of having the healthiest residents in Illinois. The overall theme of the 2040 Plan is *Healthy People, Healthy Living, and Healthy Communities*, illustrating the vital importance of health when considering community design and the overall quality of life. Preventing disease before it starts is critical to helping people live longer, healthier lives and keeping health care costs down. Poor diet, physical inactivity, tobacco use, and alcohol misuse are just some of the challenges we face. We also know that many of the strongest predictors of health and well-being fall outside of health care. Our housing, transportation, education, workplaces, and environment are major elements that impact the physical and mental health of Kane County residents.

By considering the health impact of all plans, programs and policies, the County and local government can ensure that all residents have the opportunity to live longer, healthier lives. Most land use and transportation decisions are made at the local level, not state and federal. By working with local and regional government policy makers and land use and transportation planners, Kane County can reach our goal of having the healthiest residents in Illinois.

This chapter examines:

- Overview of Public Health
- Community Health Assessment
- Kane County Community Health Improvement Plan
- Kane County Health Planning

## Overview of Public Health

What is Public Health? Most people think about going to the doctor or receiving individual services when asked about health. Public Health is focused on entire populations, not just individuals. It examines trends and looks for methods to prevent disease, while medicine tends to focus on treating disease. Using a wave as an example, public health looks at the wave as a whole, but in medicine the focus is on the individual drops of water. Figure 27 gives more examples of how public health differs from medicine.

Public Health has had a substantial impact on the health of residents over the past 100 years. Overall life expectancy has increased by 30 years, with 4.5 years of that attributed to advances in medicine. The remaining 25.5 years are attributed to advances in Public Health: sanitation, water quality, vaccines, prevention, protection, and promotion of healthy living.<sup>1</sup> Public Health planning in Kane County follows this population-level focus, where services are focused on entire populations rather than individuals and emphasizes the social determinants of health.

There are many factors, or determinants, that affect health and have a tremendous influence on health outcomes. The physical environment, social and economic factors, and clinical care all play a part in an individual's health. Figure 28 demonstrates how these factors influence health and represent areas where the department can concentrate efforts to eliminate health disparities in the County.<sup>2</sup>

Several factors are primarily addressed through land use and transportation planning, illustrating the link between the built environment and public health. For example,

### Figure 27

#### Medicine:

- Health is defined as the absence of disease
- Prevention is focused on changing attitudes and beliefs of individual patients to change their actions
- Focus is at an *individual* level

#### Public Health:

- Health is defined in terms of social, physical, and mental health
- Prevention means restructuring how people live so the easy choice is the healthy choice through policy, environment, and systems change
- Focus is at the *population* level

<sup>1</sup> Turnock, B.J. Public Health: What it is and How it Works. 3<sup>rd</sup> Ed. Sudbury, MA: Jones and Bartlett Publishers, 2004.

<sup>2</sup> "Overcoming Obstacles to Health" Robert Wood Johnson Foundation  
<http://www.rwjf.org/files/research/obstaclestohealth.pdf>

**Figure 28**



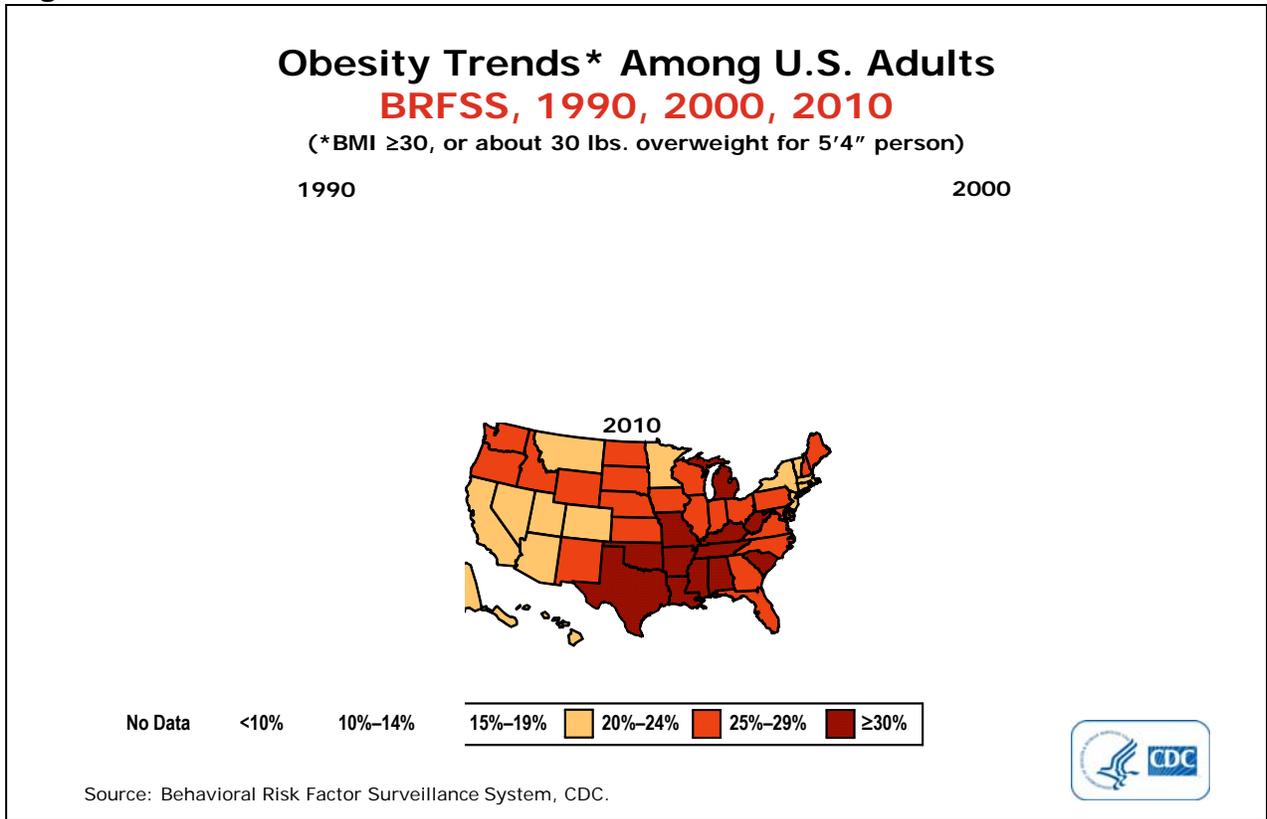
neighborhoods that are designed to make walking the easy choice encourage people to walk to their destinations instead of drive. Conventional auto-oriented land use patterns generally require residents to drive to destinations, and limited or no walking/biking infrastructure additionally minimizes opportunities for alternative means of travel.

Local elected officials can encourage development that provides amenities for walking and biking either through policy or codes. Local policies that increase opportunities for physical activity improve the health of residents and eventually lead to a decrease in chronic diseases related to being overweight or obese.

Figure 29 illustrates the epidemic of obesity in the United States. The first map shows the percentage of adults that were considered obese in 1990. The percentage has increased dramatically, with many states having greater than 30% of adults falling into the obese category by 2010. Without a multi-disciplinary approach to reversing the toll of obesity, the numbers will continue to rise.

A principal focus of future health planning in Kane County is aligning planning efforts with land use and transportation planners in the County. Through the Quality of Kane initiative, the Kane County Board has made a formal decision to integrate the three planning disciplines and highlight the importance each has on the community. By including a chapter on community health in the Kane County 2040 Plan, Kane County is demonstrating a commitment to integrating the planning efforts of the three disciplines and ensuring that public health is considered in land use and transportation planning. The health of all residents in Kane County is vital because they are our most important resources; they should have the ability to enjoy the healthy communities created as a result of this plan.

**Figure 29**

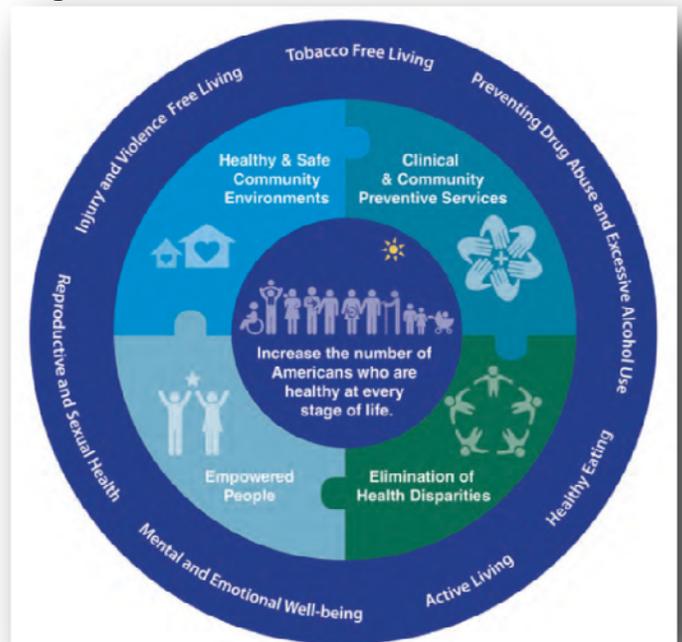


In June 2011, the U.S. Department of Human Services released the National Prevention Strategy.<sup>3</sup> This Strategy is a plan for the federal government, but also is a call to action for various other organizations to focus on four strategic directions (Figure 30):

- Healthy and Safe Community Environments
- Clinical and Community Preventative Services
- Elimination of Health Disparities
- Empowered People

The strategic directions outline recommendations for what can be done, provides key indicators to measure

**Figure 30**



<sup>3</sup> National Prevention Council, *National Prevention Strategy*, Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the Surgeon General, 2011  
<http://www.healthcare.gov/prevention/nphpphc/strategy/report.pdf>

progress, specific actions for federal agencies, and specific actions for partners including state and County health departments, non-profit organizations, health care systems, and private citizens.

The Strategy takes a holistic approach to helping people live healthier lives and encourages cross-sector collaboration in community planning and design to promote health and safety. A key component is the elimination of health disparities. All residents should have the opportunity to live long, healthy, independent, and productive lives, regardless of their race or ethnicity; religion; socioeconomic status, or other characteristic. Health disparities are often closely linked with social, economic, or environmental disadvantage. Clear evidence exists that with appropriate focus and investment, health disparities can be eliminated while simultaneously improving the health of all Americans<sup>4</sup>.

The National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) created the *Ten Essential Services for Public Health*, which serves as a framework for local health departments. The department uses it as a model for serving and supporting County residents, with all positions aligned with these services. Figure 31 provides a description of the essential services. A key component of the services is a focus on population level health. This focus helps guide and strengthen the department's commitment to looking at the health needs of the entire community and guided work on the community health improvement plan update.

**Figure 31**

***Ten Essential Services of Public Health***

- 1. Monitor health status and understand health issues facing the community,*
  - 2. Protect people from health problems and health hazards.*
  - 3. Give people the information they need to make healthy choices.*
  - 4. Engage the community to identify and solve health problems.*
  - 5. Develop public health policies and plans.*
  - 6. Enforce public health laws and regulations.*
  - 7. Help people receive health services.*
  - 8. Maintain a competent public health workforce.*
  - 9. Evaluate and improve programs and interventions.*
  - 10. Contribute to and apply the evidence base of public health.*
- National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO)***

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<sup>4</sup> National Prevention Council, *National Prevention Strategy*, Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the Surgeon General, 2011

## **Community Health Assessment**

### ***Introduction***

A community health assessment is an important tool in setting priorities, guiding health, land use and transportation planning, program development, coordination of community resources, and creation of new partnerships to improve the health of the population. The results are used to define improvement areas and guide a community toward implementing and sustaining policy, systems, and environmental conditions that improve community health. The results also assist the community in prioritizing needs which lead to the appropriate allocation of available resources. The health assessment provides an evidence-based core foundation for improving the health of a community.

To understand what the major health issues are in the County, an examination of health data provides a snapshot of where planners and policy makers must focus their efforts. In 2011, the department completed the Kane County Community Health Assessment and started updating the 2006 Community Health Action Plan. The five hospitals in Kane County, the INC Board, United Way of Elgin, Fox Valley United Way, and the Kane County Health Department initiated a formal partnership to jointly fund and participate in the 2011 Kane County Community Health Assessment. The partners worked together to identify community health improvement priorities and strategies. A comprehensive collection of health, economic and community data was assembled through a variety of methods. These included a phone survey of 2,000 residents, data sets from local, state, and federal agencies, and input and feedback from nearly 250 residents through focus groups, community meetings and an online survey.

The results were used to define improvement areas and guide the department and community toward implementing and sustaining policy, systems, and environmental conditions that improve community health. The results will also assist the community in prioritizing needs which lead to the appropriate allocation of available resources. The 2011 Kane County Community Health Assessment provides an evidence-based core foundation for improving the health of a community.

### ***Process***

To begin the assessment, the department selected key indicators which were important in updating the health action plan and aligned with the determinants of health. The County Health Rankings model for measuring health includes several determinants of health including:

- Physical Environment
- Social and Economic Factors
- Clinical Care
- Health Behaviors

**Figure 32. Contributing Factors to Health**

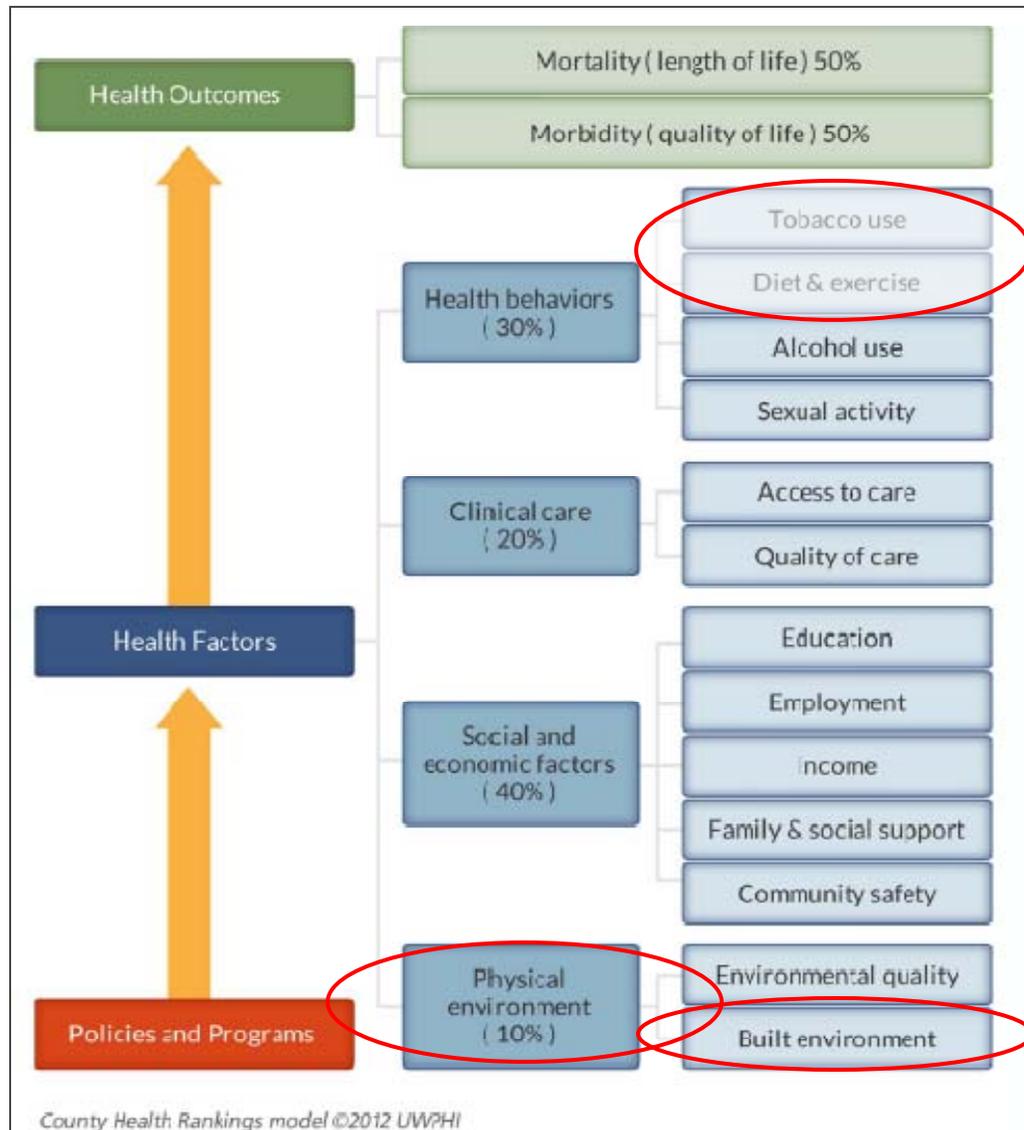


Figure 32 identifies the measures used in the County Health Rankings. A full 50% of the health factors considered in the rankings is made up of non-traditional health factors: physical environment and social and economic factors.

The factors highlighted by the circles demonstrate how land use and transportation are considered when determining overall health. For example, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) states that the way for people to maintain optimum weight is through regular physical activity. A complete streets policy which ensures that streets are designed and operated with all users in mind – including bicyclists, public transportation vehicles and riders, and pedestrians of all ages and abilities – provides a means for residents to engage in physical activity. Likewise, land use policies that promote open space, playgrounds, parks, and trails will contribute to recreational opportunities for residents.

Looking at Figure 32, health behaviors like tobacco use, alcohol consumption, and diet and exercise can be directly related to the physical environment and are affected by various land use policies and zoning regulations. For example, by increasing the number of outlets that offer fresh fruits and vegetables, the healthy choice is easier than if there is limited access to fresh produce in a neighborhood. People living in food deserts may not easily find healthy food options and often choose the unhealthy, easily accessible food prevalent in their community (ex. fast food). With tobacco and alcohol use, the density of outlets that offer tobacco and alcohol can be limited, making it more difficult to access these products which are known to have a detrimental effect on health. Local decision makers can ensure plans include walkable neighborhoods which provide residents with the necessary amenities (sidewalks, access to trails, complete streets) to incorporate exercise into a daily routine.

The Healthy Food Financing Initiative (HFFI) defines a food desert as “a low-income census tract where a substantial number or share of residents has low access to a supermarket or large grocery store” Low access is defined as living more than a mile from a supermarket or large grocery store.

<http://www.ers.usda.gov/data/fooddesert/about.html>

The County Health Rankings results were considered in the 2011 Community Health Assessment and helped shape the update to the Community Health Improvement Plan. More information about the rankings is available on the County Health Rankings website: <http://www.countyhealthrankings.org/> including specific data sources for the health factor measures.

Another source of data for the assessment came from a comprehensive phone survey. Beginning in March 2011, the Northern Illinois University Public Opinion Laboratory conducted a phone survey of over 2,000 adults and a separate child survey with over 400 parents of children under 18. The results of this survey were used to develop questions for focus groups held in October of 2011 and as part of the prioritization process for the community health improvement plan. In addition to the survey, the department used secondary data from a variety of sources (see sidebar). The data showed emerging issues in the County, and through targeted surveys and a recorded webinar, stakeholders and the public were invited to comment on the data and help identify priorities, or focus areas for the community health improvement plan. In addition, members of the Kane County Board and Health Advisory Committee participated in a retreat to review the data and discuss the results.

### Secondary Data Sources

- 2010 U.S. Census
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- Illinois Department of Public Health
- Illinois Department of Employment Security
- Kane County Health Department
- Youth Risk Behavior Survey
- Other Kane County Offices & Departments

The 2011 Community Health Assessment (CHA) provided the department with rich, current data and this level of detail was previously unavailable. For the first time we were able to look at specific planning areas as a whole and at individual provider service areas so we could provide customized reports for all the community health assessment partners. The results yielded some startling information, including the mortality and obesity data for the County, which are detailed next.

### ***Key Results***

Analysis of the 2011 Community Health Survey data, secondary data, online survey results, and qualitative data, the 2011 Kane County Health Assessment results point to six major threats to community health and well-being:

- **Obesity**
- **Chronic Disease**
- **Infant Mortality**
- **Childhood Lead Poisoning**
- **Communicable Disease**
- **Poor Social and Emotional Wellness**

These issues contribute to a lower quality of life for many Kane County residents, as well as increased spending on health care costs. A selection of key results from the assessment follows.

Prior to 1900, most people in the U.S. died of infectious disease like influenza, pneumonia and tuberculosis. Over time, the number of those deaths decreased as public health environmental advancements increased water and air quality, made milk and food safer, and improved sanitation. Now there is an increasing threat to the health of communities in the form of chronic disease. The vast majority of deaths in Kane County in 2007, the most recent year for which we have complete data, were from non-communicable diseases. Non-communicable diseases include chronic diseases like cancer, heart disease and diabetes. Figure 33 shows how chronic disease accounts for 81% of all deaths in Kane County.

**Figure 33**

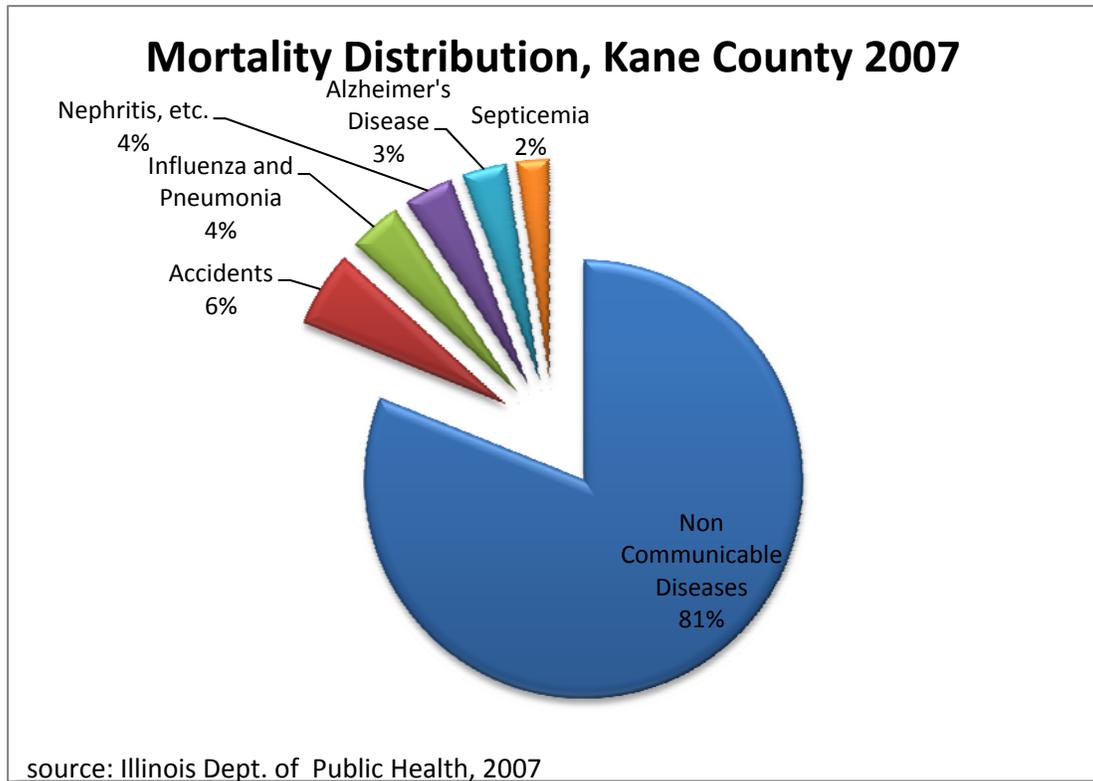
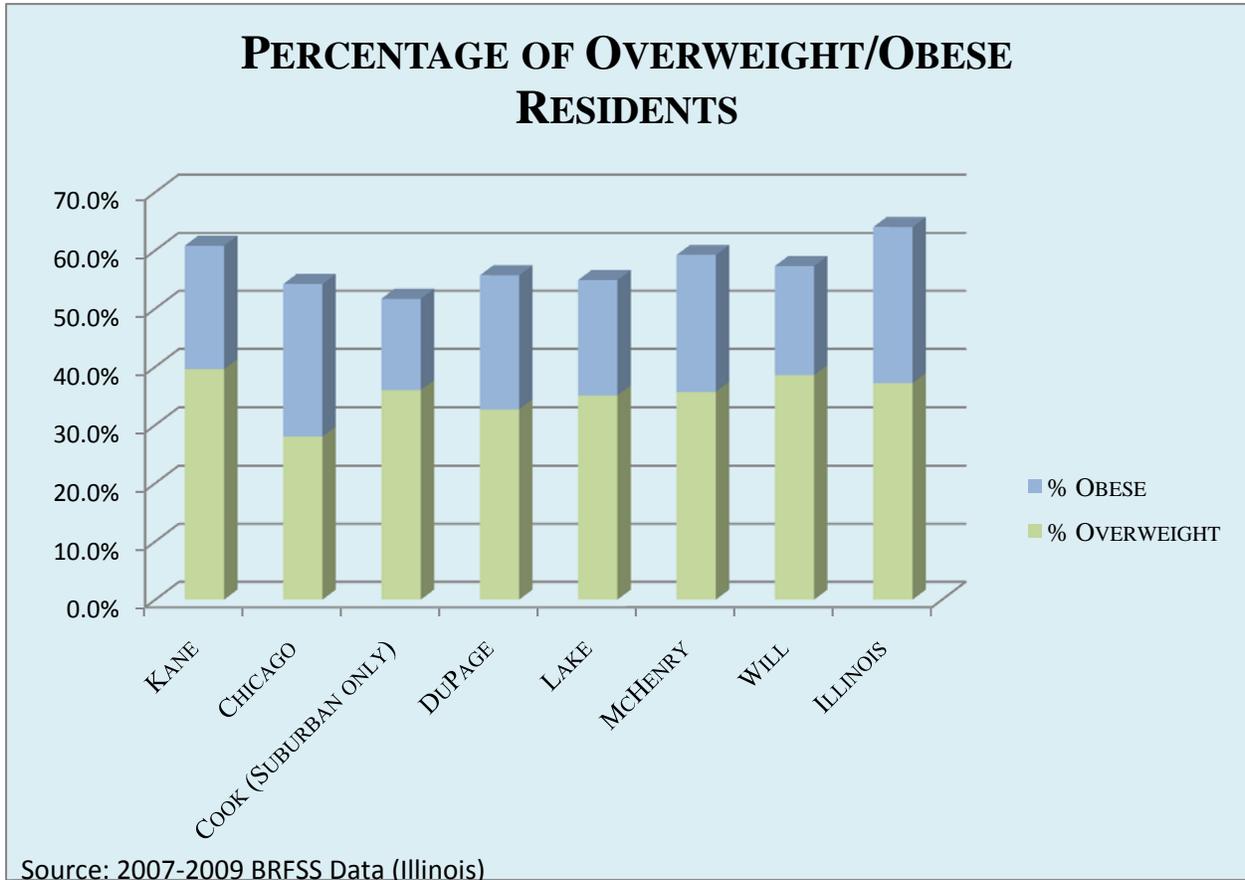


Figure 34 shows adult obesity in Kane County as compared with other counties in the Chicago area. Kane County has the highest percentage of overweight adults and second highest percentage of adults who are overweight and obese. According to the County's 2011 Community Health Assessment, the number of adults who are considered overweight or obese<sup>5</sup> in the County has risen from 60.8% in 2008 to 63.9% in 2011. Obesity and overweight are major contributors to the development of chronic diseases such as diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease, and some cancers.

<sup>5</sup> Overweight is defined as having a Body Mass Index (BMI) between 25 and 29.9. Obese is defined as having a BMI greater than 30. <http://www.cdc.gov/obesity/defining.html> (Last accessed October 11, 2011)

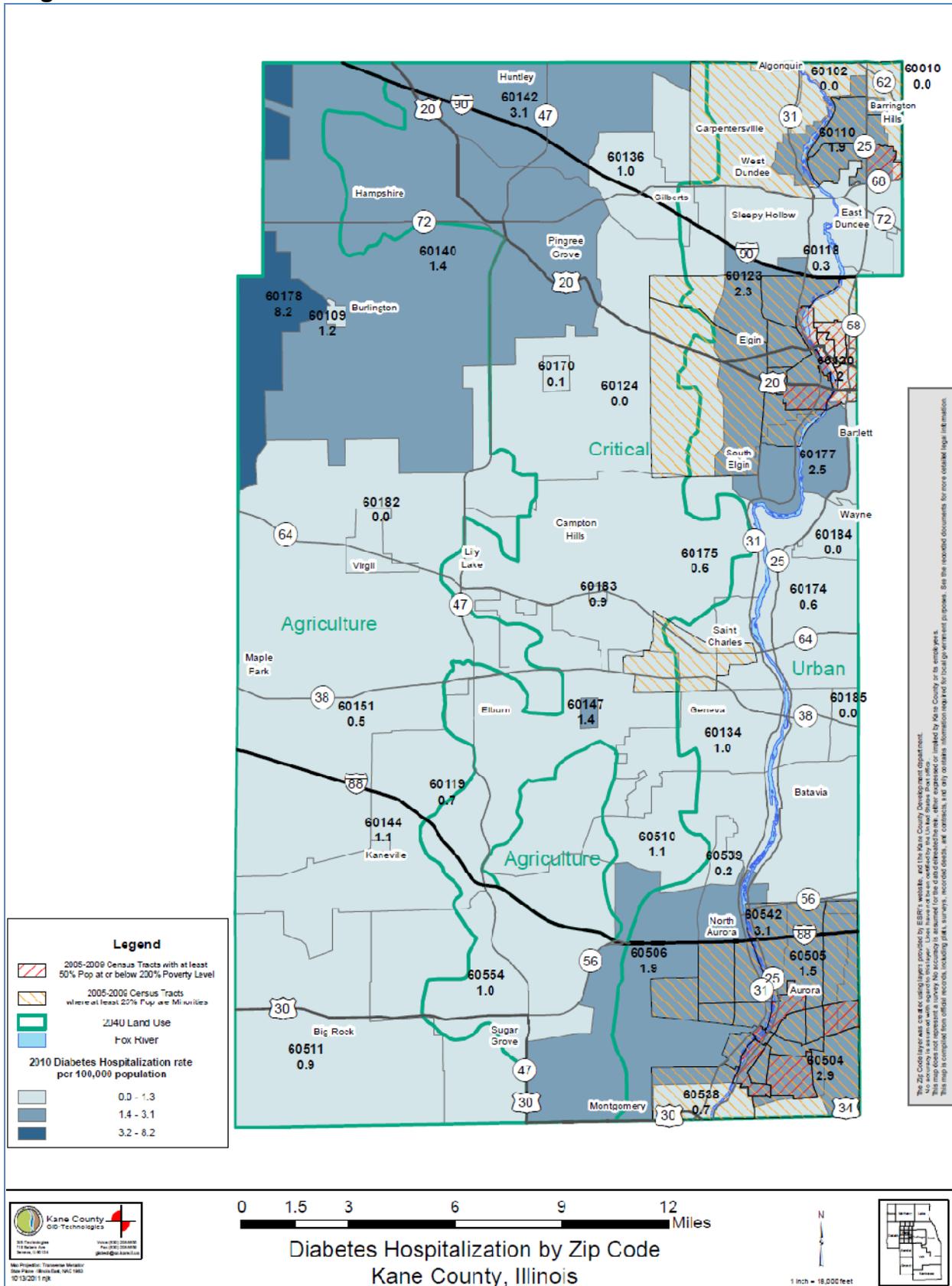
Figure 34



Using maps that overlay demographic information over health data or that divide the County into geographical sections helps the department identify areas that are disproportionately affected by health issues and allows it to concentrate efforts where assistance is most needed. It can highlight population differences and see disparities by geography and education and income levels. The following map (Figure 35) shows Diabetes Hospitalizations by ZIP code. It also indicates the areas of the County with low-income and minority residents.

**THE RAPID GROWTH OF CHILDHOOD OBESITY IS  
THREATENING TO MAKE THE CURRENT YOUNGER  
GENERATION TO BE THE FIRST IN HISTORY TO HAVE  
A SHORTER LIFE EXPECTANCY THAN THEIR  
PARENTS.  
ROBERT WOOD JOHNSON FOUNDATION**

Figure 35



**Figure 36**

### **Kane County Fit for Kids**

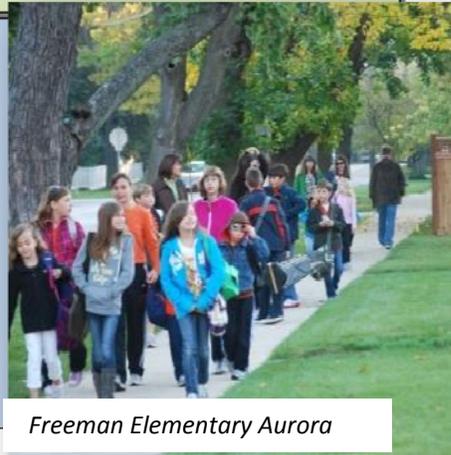
A major planning initiative to reverse the toll of childhood obesity was started in 2008 with the launch of the Fit for Kids campaign. This campaign brought together leaders of nine sectors (Schools & Education, Mobility, Food Policy, Faith Community, Economic Strength, Family, Culture & Community, Built & Natural Environment, Healthcare & Medicine, Recreation & Lifestyle) to shape the Making Kane Fit for Kids initiative to reduce childhood obesity. In the three years since the County Board launch, it established a public-private funders' consortium to secure funding and authorize grants for local change efforts and released its Fit Kids 2020 Plan of 54 endorsed community-focused strategies to promote policy, environmental, and infrastructure change, with a focus on families disproportionately affected by obesity and chronic disease.

In 2009 the department was awarded a \$360,000 multiyear grant by Healthy Kids, Healthy Communities, a program of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. More than \$330,000 has been awarded to the community to support policy and environmental change strategies such as worksite wellness, joint use agreements, community gardens, and comprehensive municipal plans. Through financial assistance and technical expertise, the department is committed to implementing the policies and strategies outlined in the Fit Kids 2020 Plan. To learn more, visit: <http://www.makingkanefitforkids.org/>

#### **Select Grantees**

##### **Making Kane County Fit for Kids Funders' Consortium**

- Four Farmers' Markets that received equipment to accept Link cards for the SNAP program
- Food Bank consortium to purchase refrigeration units, allowing them to offer fresh produce to clients
- New playground equipment, climbing wall at several parks, schools
- Employer-based wellness program
- Support for creating, improving church, school, community gardens



*Freeman Elementary Aurora*



*Bike Train, Fabyan Elementary Geneva*

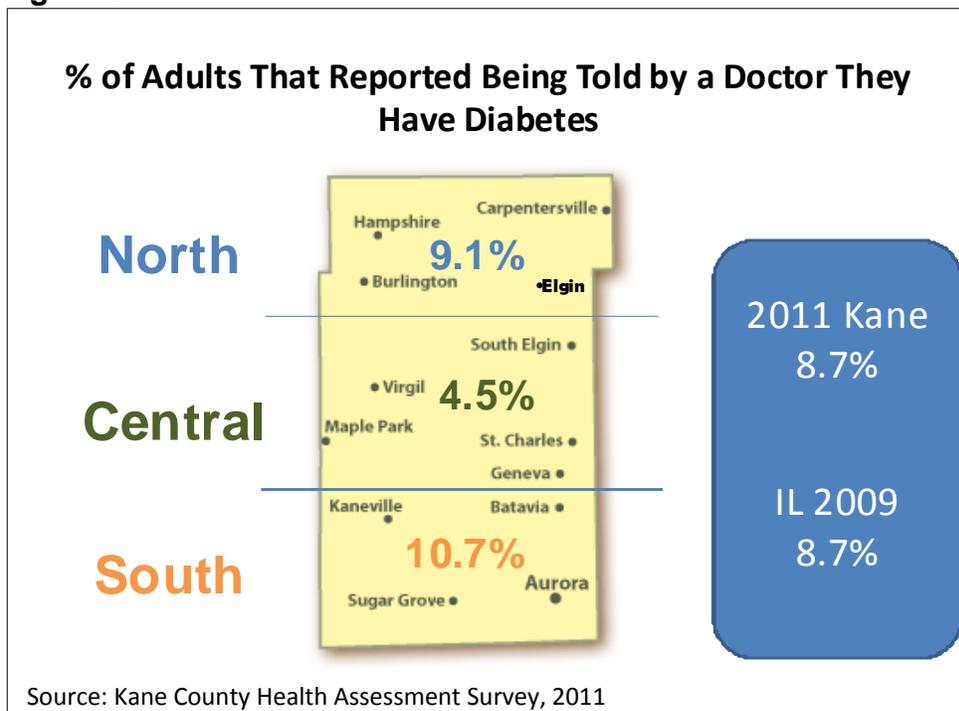


*Empty Car Line, Storm Elementary Batavia*

International Walk to School Day promotes the idea of providing children with more physical activity while at the same time reducing traffic and the results of traffic such as pollution and automobile accidents. Walk to School Day can plant a seed that walking can be fun, promote friendship and bonds for both students and parents, and lead to increased physical activity at school and at home. In Kane County, 49 schools were awarded mini-grants for participating in Walk to School Day through the Making Kane County Fit for Kids Funders' Consortium.

In Kane County, there are communities which are disproportionately affected by health problems, including diabetes, stroke, infant mortality, and heart disease. Figure 37 shows the percentage of adults in each planning area who have been told by a doctor that they have diabetes. There is a striking difference between the Central area and the North and South areas. The overall rate is the same as the state, but breaking down the information by planning area shows that certain sections of the County are higher than the state.

**Figure 37**



Another difference identified in the assessment is the diagnosis of angina/coronary heart disease and income, seen in Figure 38. The highest rate is found in people with the lowest household incomes. This information can be used when analyzing areas of the County where residents may need more physical activity and/or access to fresh produce. Coronary heart disease is associated with a lack of physical activity and a poor diet, both factors that are part of health behaviors, but tie in with the built environment.<sup>6</sup> If people live in a community with plenty of options for exercise and access to fresh produce, they have more opportunities to choose health-promoting behaviors.

<sup>6</sup> "Heart Disease: Prevention: What you can do" Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [http://www.cdc.gov/heartdisease/what\\_you\\_can\\_do.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/heartdisease/what_you_can_do.htm)

**Figure 38**

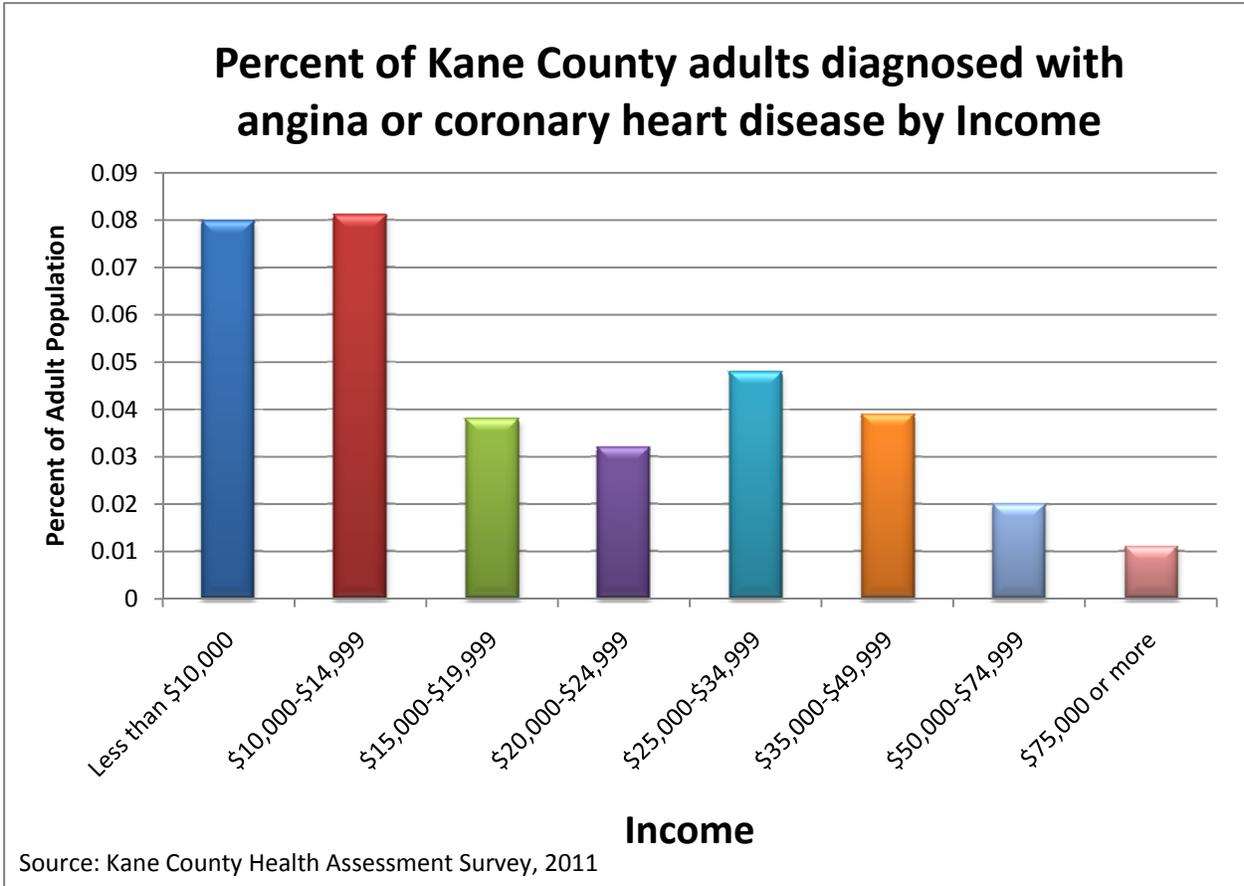


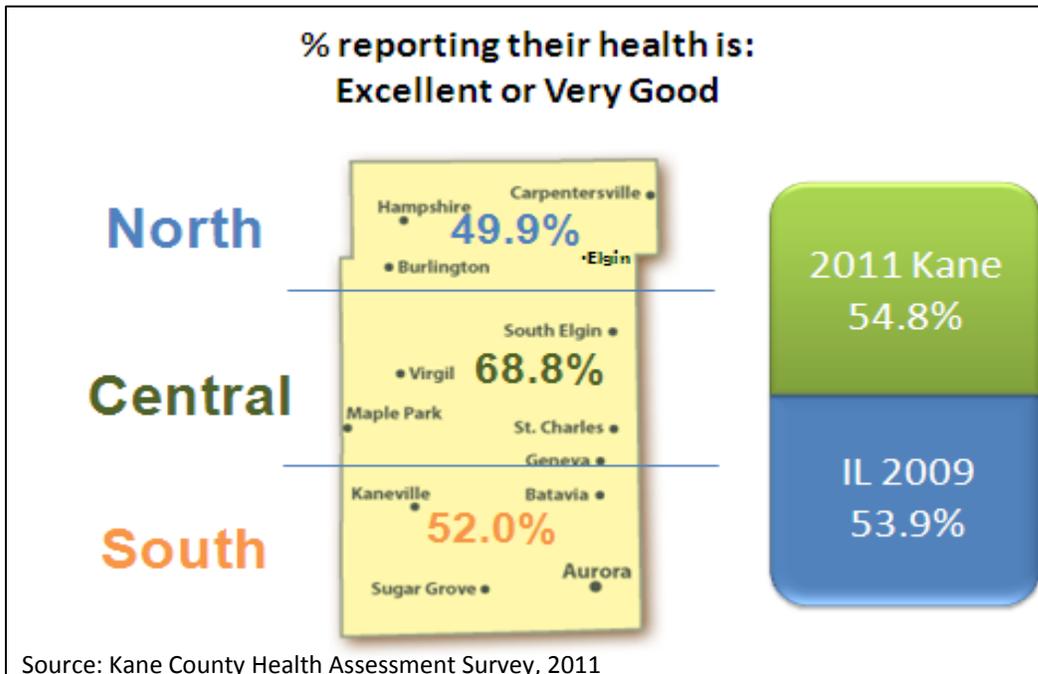
Figure 39 provides another example of the disparities found through the analysis of the data collected in the 2011 CHA. The question asked people if, in general, their health was poor, fair, good, very good, or excellent. The difference between the three planning areas of the County is striking, again demonstrating how the robust CHA provided more in-depth information than ever before and significantly improved the update to the Community Health Improvement Plan.

According to the 2011 CHA, results, 1% of children under 6 years old in Kane County have elevated levels of lead in their blood, which is the second highest percentage of Illinois counties. The housing infrastructure plays a key role in the health of residents as well. Providing affordable housing for all residents throughout the County will allow many people to live in healthier communities and lower their risk for health problems caused by the environment. Residents who live in substandard housing have an increased risk of being exposed to pollution, which can lead to health problems like asthma. In addition, homes built before 1970 may have lead paint, exposing families to lead. Lead exposure has negative impacts on the growth

To see the results of the 2011 Community Health Assessment, visit <http://www.kanehealth.com/planning.htm>

and development of young children and can be prevented by a combined effort of the health department, medical community, parents, landlords, contractors, and local decision makers.

**Figure 39**



### Kane County Community Health Improvement Plan

Once the assessment was completed, work started on updating the Kane County Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP). Part of the process included working with key members of the local health system and community to review the results of the assessment and determine the most pressing community health needs. The results pointed to six major threats to community health and well-being: obesity, chronic disease, infant mortality, childhood lead poisoning, communicable disease, and poor social and emotional wellness.

The plan includes four overarching priorities which address each of the six top health threats and complement the goals and theme of the Kane County 2040 Plan **Healthy People, Healthy Living, Healthy Communities**. The priorities were developed by considering the root causes contributing to the health issues we face. In order to successfully address the health threats, we must focus our efforts not only on better access to medical care or personal behaviors but also on assuring that our social, economic and built environments contribute to good health. The priorities recognize the interconnectedness of our personal behaviors with the systems and environments we live in. To be successful in improving population health, we believe we have to address issues in each of these areas. The four priorities are:

- **Support health behaviors that promote well-being and prevent disease**
- **Increase access to high quality, holistic preventive and treatment services across the health care system**
- **Support and create health promoting neighborhoods, towns, and cities**
- **Promote social, economic, and educational environments that optimize health**

Within each priority, several strategies are identified to address major contributing factors to premature illness and death. The recommended strategies are supported by evidence of success or “evidence-based practice.” The Community Guide<sup>7</sup> published by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, includes more information about each of these strategies and the careful study and research that supports these strategies as being effective. Each strategy includes a measure as well as baseline data and the goal for the next five years. These measures and goals were determined and reviewed by stakeholders including the Community Assessment Partners, Kane County Health Advisory Committee, Kane County Board of Health, and Kane County staff members. Each measure will be tracked and reported on each year to provide an update on the progress made towards the 2016 goals. See Table 3 for an example:

**Table 3**

<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Measure</b>	<b>Outcome Objectives</b>	<b>Data Source</b>
Increase access to and consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables	Percentage of Kane County Adults who report eating at least five servings of fruits and vegetables per day. 2011 Baseline: 14.4% adults 25.5% children	Increase percentage by 2016 to 30% for adults and 40% for children	2011 Kane County Community Health Survey, Illinois BRFSS

Working collaboratively with partners in the assessment process, local elected officials, community residents and community based organizations, the CHIP is truly the community's plan for health improvement. All partners will be able to identify strategies that are most relevant to their work and can work to implement changes that will help Kane County be a healthier place to live, work, and play. The final plan will be approved by the County Board in spring 2012 and shared with the entire community. The plan will be evaluated and updated yearly to ensure there is progress toward the selected goals and objectives.

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.thecommunityguide.org/index.html>

## Kane County Health Planning

Health planning is a new undertaking for the health department and a full-time health planner position was created in 2010. The planning position is responsible for organizing a community health assessment and updating a community health improvement plan based on the assessment results. The planner also works with other departments and divisions at the County, through the Quality of Kane initiative and by serving on working committees to create and update plans. The department's vision is to have the healthiest people in Illinois by 2030 and the various health planning initiatives, focus on county-level programs, and community partnerships are driving forces leading to the achievement of that vision.

A key objective for health planning is to integrate Health Impact Assessment as part of projects, plans, and policies at the county and municipal level. Health Impact Assessment (HIA) helps policy makers analyze potential health impacts by bringing together scientific data, health expertise and public input to identify the potential—and often overlooked—health effects of proposed new laws, regulations, projects and programs. It offers practical recommendations for ways to minimize risks and capitalize on opportunities to improve health. HIA is a new tool that is gaining favor with planning professionals nationwide because it emphasizes the connection between the built environment and health. Although the assessments are focused on health, they can be most effective in the non-health field: building a new transit system, developing an agricultural plan, planning a city's growth or deciding where to locate a new school.

The County's commitment to the Quality of Kane initiative demonstrates the importance of aligning health, land use and transportation planning goals to bring us to a place where we have **Healthy People, Healthy Living, Healthy Communities**. Through the health planning position and

**Figure 40**

### Health Impact Assessment (HIA)

The Kane County Health Department and Development and Community Services Department jointly applied for and were awarded a grant in 2011 to undergo training and conduct an HIA. The HIA team is examining an amendment to the county's Farmland Protection Program. In 2012-2013, the Kane County Farmland Protection Commission and the Kane County Board will consider an amendment to Ordinance 01-67, the Farmland Protection Program. The proposed amendment, an implementation strategy of the 2040 Plan, will expand eligibility criteria to include small food producing farms, and ensure that acreage remains available for local food production. At present, 100% of participants in the farm protection program are conventional row crop and livestock producers situated in rural Kane. This policy balances investment in permanent farmland protection in all planning areas (agriculture: food and farms, critical growth, and sustainable urban corridors) and encourages local food production for the benefit of population health.

commitment to expanding the use of HIA, the department is working toward integrating health into all decisions (Figure 40).

In 2012, the Kane County Health Department is applying for voluntary accreditation through the Public Health Advisory Board (PHAB), to help meet our vision of having the healthiest residents in Illinois by 2030. According to PHAB, “The goal of the national public health accreditation program is to promote and protect the health of the public by advancing the quality and performance of all health departments in the United States through national public health department accreditation.”<sup>8</sup> This is the first time that public health departments can demonstrate their performance against a set of national criteria which aligns with the Ten Essential Services of Public Health. Accreditation will benefit residents because it will ensure the health department is meeting specific standards which were created to protect and improve their health. Three main requirements for accreditation are a community health assessment, a community health improvement plan, and department strategic plan, all of which were addressed in 2011.

In January 2011, the department started a formal Quality Improvement initiative, which is an integral part of the accreditation application and creates a culture of improvement within the agency. Quality improvement is a way that programs and procedures can be examined and improved to increase efficiency and improve outcomes. This benefits residents and the community because programs and services will utilize financial and staff resources more effectively, leading to an enhanced ability to meet the demand for services. The Health Department’s dedication to quality improvement is evidenced in several initiatives throughout the agency, ranging from improving staff response to emergency call-out drills, to reducing violations at food establishments, to tracking activities with community partners.

Ultimately, the health of Kane County depends on the health of all residents. The Community Health Improvement Plan calls on individuals, organizations, employers and communities to take action using the recommended policies and strategies to improve the health of Kane County residents and reach the County’s goal of having the healthiest residents in Illinois.

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<sup>8</sup> <http://www.phaboard.org/about-phab/> (Last accessed October 13, 2011)

## Chapter Policies

1. Support the actionable measures identified by the department and based on the results of the 2011 Community Health Assessment.
2. Promote the use of Health Impact Assessments with new or updated land use, transportation, and health policies, programs, and plans.
3. Increase access to and consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables.
4. Reduce tobacco use and exposure to environmental tobacco smoke.
5. Assure access to safe food and clean and safe water and air.
6. Coordinate the effective communication of tailored, accurate, and actionable health information to Kane residents across the lifespan.
7. Create environments that prevent excessive consumption of alcohol.
8. Increase the availability and variety of high quality, safe and affordable housing and compact, mixed-use developments.
9. Assure access to safe playgrounds, parks, trails, and open space.
10. Promote the implementation strategies in the Fit Kids 2020 Plan by encouraging municipalities and other organizations to consider them when creating or updating plans and policies.
11. Promote cross-sector collaboration to achieve community-wide wellness through partnerships with school districts, colleges, social service agencies, the faith-based community, non-profit organizations, hospitals, physicians, employers, park districts, municipal staff, elected officials and other organizations.