Achieving Health Equity through Health Department-Academic Partnerships & Community-Engaged Public Health Research: Healthy Chicago 2.0

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In 2016, the Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH) released Healthy Chicago 2.0 (HC2.0), a four-year strategic plan for the city’s public health system. The plan, developed collaboratively with diverse community organizations and city residents, places an emphasis on achieving health equity by focusing on root causes of health. The plan identifies 10 priority areas including reducing violence, economic development, improving educational opportunity, and data and research. Related to the research priority, HC2.0 and CDPH have been working closely with the Chicago Consortium for Community Engagement (C3). Established in 2009, C3 is a network of academic research institutions and community stakeholders that connects and leverages the resources of the community engagement programs of Chicago’s three Clinical and Translational Science Institutes (CTSIs)- Northwestern University, University of Chicago/Rush University, and University of Illinois-Chicago. In 2015, CDPH joined the C3 Executive Committee and together with C3 academic members and other community stakeholders have been working to better align the resources of the CTSIs with HC2.0 priorities. Objectives include the development of a citywide research agenda framed around HC2.0 priorities, the establishment of an Office of Research and Evaluation at CDPH (headed by new CDPH Director position to be collaboratively funded by the Chicago CTSIs), and initiatives to support the local dissemination of research findings directly to non-academic community audiences. We hope this systematic approach can serve as a model to develop other community-academic partnerships that include health departments and public health stakeholders to promote a full translational research agenda for CTSI programs nationally.