

# NEWS

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*... from the Illinois House of Representatives*

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FOR MORE INFORMATION  
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## **May Legislation Creating New Children's Environmental Health Officer Goes into Effect New Year's Day**

*New Position to Monitor, Improve the Health of Illinois' Youth*

**SPRINGFIELD** – State Rep. Karen May, D-Highland Park, hopes that the children of Illinois will be able to live in a better environment now that the Department of Public Health's Children's Environmental Health Officer will begin operations on Jan. 1.

“The quality of the environment we live in affects the health of everyone,” May said. “However, children are especially vulnerable because, pound for pound, they eat more food, breathe more air and drink more water than adults. As their bodies develop, children's environments can leave them susceptible to a range of disease, including asthma and certain types of cancer.”

The new Children's Officer of Environmental Health was created by House Bill 4067, sponsored by May and is set to begin operations on Jan. 1, 2006. Recently, Dr. Eric E. Whitaker, Director of the Illinois Department of Public Health, identified Tom Hughes, currently the Deputy Director of Health Protection in Illinois, to fill the position. His primary duties will be to monitor the health of Illinois' youth by identifying adverse health trends and locating areas that pose a significant health threat to children.

May expects the law will enable the state to capture more federal dollars. In the past, Illinois missed out on federal funding from agencies like the Center for Disease Control, but now with a point person on the issue of children's environmental health chances for are expected to improve. The creation of the Children's Environmental Health Officer will also help streamline services for children and prevent duplicative efforts by multiple agencies.

“A poor environment can have a catastrophic effect on the health of a developing child,” May stated. “I'm confident that this new officer will help the state move toward making sure that no child needlessly suffers a debilitating illness because their environment was dangerous or unhealthy. I will continue pushing for new laws that promote the well-being of our youngest citizens and by eliminating harmful environmental factors.”

May represents the 58<sup>th</sup> District which includes portions of Highland Park, Lake Forest, Bannockburn, Highwood, Lake Bluff, Riverwoods and Glencoe.