



Quick Reads

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PHHS block grant update (includes attachment)

Since 1982, Iowa has benefited from the [Preventive Health and Health Services \(PHHS\)](#) block grant by being able to provide public health services that fill a clear need where there is limited or no state or federal resources. Iowa's grant is administered by IDPH and guided by a state advisory committee. There are nine different programs funded by the block grant. The President has eliminated the PHHS block grant in his FFY09 budget recommendation. This would have tremendous impact on public health efforts across the country, including here in Iowa. I encourage you make your voice heard on this matter by contacting our Iowa senators and representatives in Washington. The estimated financial impact to Iowa would be approximately \$1 million. For a [fact sheet](#) about the PHHS block grant and how it is used in Iowa, please visit www.idph.state.ia.us/do and look under "Informational Links." If you have additional questions about the PHHS block grant, contact either Judy Naber 515-281-7016 or Merrill Meese 641-456-5012.

Dr. Quinlisk named chair of national board

I'd like to congratulate IDPH Medical Director and State Epidemiologist, Dr. Patricia Quinlisk, on recently being named chair of the [National Biodefense Science Board](#) (NBSB). The NBSB was created by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to provide expert guidance and advice regarding activities to prevent, prepare for and respond to chemical, biological, nuclear and radiological health emergencies. Since joining IDPH in 1994, Dr. Quinlisk has provided excellent leadership in regard to responding to public health emergencies. I look forward to learning about the Board's activities and hearing from Dr. Quinlisk about how her

experience working with the Board might contribute to Iowa's public health emergency planning efforts.

Redesign project enters implementation planning stage

Last month, the [Redesigning Public Health in Iowa](#) project entered a new and exciting stage – planning for accreditation of the state health department and at least one local agency by July 1, 2011. To learn about the five [Implementation Committees](#) that are working hard to meet that goal, I encourage you to visit www.idph.state.ia.us/rphi and click on the newly added “Implementation” tab. I’d also like to point out that the Iowa Public Health Standards, which were finalized in December 2007, are now available in a user-friendly format under the “Standards” tab. Standards and criteria may now be downloaded by section or in their entirety.

Iowa selected for Retention Initiative

Iowa was one of eight states chosen to participate in the Medicaid and S-CHIP Retention Initiative. Subtitled “Achieving Stability in Medicaid and the State Children’s Health Insurance Program Coverage,” the focus of this initiative is on improving the retention of eligible children and adults in Medicaid and SCHIP by encouraging these programs to adopt changes in policies & procedures designed to improve retention rates. This two-year initiative is led by the [Southern Institute on Children and Families](#) and funded by the [Robert Wood Johnson Foundation](#). The IDPH [Covering Kids and Families](#) project is taking the lead on moving this initiative forward.

Free colorectal cancer screening materials now available

March is National Colorectal Cancer Screening Awareness month. The IDPH [Comprehensive Cancer Control Program](#) is offering large and letter-size color posters promoting colorectal cancer screening, specifically targeting small communities and rural areas in Iowa. Postcards utilizing the same poster images are also available. To view samples of these materials, visit www.idph.state.ia.us/hpcdp/ccc_reports_publications.asp. To order materials, contact Holly Smith at 515-281-0925 or hsmith@idph.state.ia.us. Also be sure to take advantage of fact sheets, brochures and other information available from the CDC’s [“Screen for Life” campaign](#) at www.cdc.gov/cancer/colorectal/sfl.

Iowa among first states to provide EMS data to national database

My congratulations to the IDPH [Bureau of EMS](#) and its partners in making Iowa one of the first states to provide ambulance data to the National EMS Database. By providing this valuable data, Iowa is creating a way to improve ambulance services across the country. Iowa’s data will be combined with data from other states,

creating a national voice that will generate better services for the public. The process that Iowa followed began with local EMS agencies collecting data and providing the information to the Bureau of EMS. This team then stripped all privacy information from the data before transferring it to the [National EMS Information System Technical Assistance Center](#). To learn more, visit www.nemsis.org.

PBS documentary asks “Is inequality making us sick?”

“[Unnatural Causes](#),” a seven-part PBS series beginning March 27 sounds the alarm about our glaring socio-economic and racial disparities in health and seeks out root causes. While we pour more and more money into drugs, dietary supplements and new medical technologies, the series points out, there is much more to our health than bad habits, health care or unlucky genes. The social conditions in which we are born, live and work profoundly affect our well-being and longevity.

Conceived as part of an ambitious public education campaign conducted in partnership with leading public health, policy, and community-based organizations, it is hoped that Unnatural Causes will help foster a new and hopeful approach to the public's health. The first episode in the series begins on Thursday, March 27 at 9:00 p.m. For more information, visit www.iptv.org/series.cfm/19308/ep:101.

State Board of Health meets March 12

The next [State Board of Health](#) meeting is March 12. An agenda will be posted soon at www.idph.state.ia.us/do/board_of_health.asp. To view the minutes of previous meetings, please open the appropriate agenda and click on “Minutes” near the top of the page.

We want your best practices

IDPH is committed to telling the citizens of Iowa about the good things public health is doing to make a difference. To do this, we want to highlight your best practices/success stories. Please send your ideas to Don McCormick at dmccormi@idph.state.ia.us.

To everyone in public health and all our partners—keep up the great work!

Tom