



# *Quick Reads*

Thomas Newton, MPP, REHS  
Director, Iowa Department of Public Health

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## **Public Health Modernization Act moves forward**

The [Public Health Modernization Act](#) (PHMA) passed out of the House Human Resources Committee by a unanimous vote (21-0) last week. An amendment to address a concern regarding the confidentiality of files and reports prepared or maintained by the public health accrediting entity was added at that time. The bill is now awaiting debate on the floor of the House. Legislators seem to understand the value in creating a baseline set of organizational capacity and service standards for public health at the state and local levels; many have spoken highly of the bill and commended local and state public health officials for partnering on this important initiative.

The department's total requested appropriation for the Modernization Act for fiscal year 2010, after across-the-board reductions, was \$955,074. As it was necessary for IDPH to submit a status quo budget this year, we could only address funding for the PHMA by proposing to reallocate appropriations from existing programs. These were not easy decisions to make as all of the programs administered by IDPH serve an important purpose. However, when compared to the benefits of an enhanced statewide public health system, IDPH felt the funding could be better used to support the Public Health Modernization Act. Programs affected include: mother's milk bank; epilepsy education; perinatal program; child death review; plumbing board; children's vision screening; three safety net pilot projects; and stillbirth evaluation.

## **Federal stimulus package update**

With the signing of the \$789 billion [American Recovery and Reinvestment Act](#) stimulus package, Iowans are likely to see initiatives related to electronic medical records,

wellness and disease prevention. IDPH is waiting for further information from federal agencies about timing and amounts of any funds Iowa may receive or be able to apply for. The package includes \$2 billion for state health information technology planning initiatives, \$17 billion for Medicaid and Medicare to create incentives for providers to adopt electronic health records, \$1 billion for prevention and wellness programs, and \$500 million for health care workforce initiatives.

### **Public health to receive \$4.5 million in disaster relief funding**

IDPH learned late last week that state and local public health would receive \$4,550,000 to assist in recovery from this past summer's disasters. Substance abuse prevention and treatment efforts will receive \$3.1 million, while \$1.45 million will be designated for home and community-based public health services and family support home visiting. The funding will be available to presidential declared disaster counties.

### **NCHS state profiles now available**

The National Center for Health Statistics has issued a 2009 [state data profile](#) for each state, based on 2004-2006 data. The information allows state comparisons. On a scale from 1 to 50 (with 50 as the best possible ranking), [Iowa](#) has a high ranking (37 or above) in a number of maternal and infant health indicators. These indicators are pre-term birth rate (37), low birth rate (38), infant mortality (43), cesarean delivery rate (38), and teen birth rate (38). Rankings of age-adjusted death rates for leading causes of death show that Iowa is above the average for accidents (35), diabetes, (44), kidney disease (49), and septicemia (38). For more information on Iowa and other states, visit [www.cdc.gov/nchs/pressroom/data/2009\\_state\\_profiles.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/pressroom/data/2009_state_profiles.htm).

### **Wellmark Foundation announces funding priorities**

I urge all public health partners to look at the [Wellmark Foundation's](#) recently announced funding priorities for 2009. The foundation's agenda this year will continue to support projects in two priority areas: 1) childhood obesity prevention and 2) community-based wellness and prevention. An informational [teleconference](#) will be held on March 12 for the first of these priority areas, called *Growing Up LEAN: Living to be Energetic, Active, & Nutritious Grant Program*. People interested in the second priority area, the *Healthy Communities Grant Program: Supporting a Culture of Wellness and Prevention*, can learn more at a teleconference on July 29. For complete application information, proposal ideas, conference call-in information, and deadlines, visit [www.wellmark.com/foundation](http://www.wellmark.com/foundation).

### **Registration open for two conferences**

Registration is now open for two conferences scheduled for the second week in April. To learn about and register for the 2009 Iowa Public Health Conference, visit

[www.iowapha.org](http://www.iowapha.org) and click on “Events.” For information about the 32nd Annual Governor's Conference on Substance Abuse or to register, visit [www.trainingresources.org](http://www.trainingresources.org).

### **FLEX conference, April 28-29**

The 5th Annual [Medicare Rural Hospital Flexibility Program](#) (FLEX) conference, “Constructing Partnerships for the Future,” will be held April 28 and 29 at the West Des Moines Marriott. Focusing on the future of the Critical Access Hospital (CAH) program, the FLEX Conference is an excellent professional development experience to learn more about organizational change, patient safety, and quality. Presentations this year will include policy and ethics, cost reporting, balancing work and life issues while making a difference, implementing behavioral health and telemedicine in rural areas, and telling your story to the media. To register, visit [www.trainingresources.org](http://www.trainingresources.org).

### **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](mailto:dmccormi@idph.state.ia.us).

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