



Quick Reads

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Budget update

The legislature adjourned on March 30, which means that the IDPH Executive Team is now in the process of working through budget-related issues. We are currently reviewing all final appropriations language, funding, and FTE allocations to determine the potential impacts on services and staff. At this time, I do not know if a reduction in force will need to be considered. However, here's what we do know about the Department's FY2011 budget:

- The department received \$3 million in one-time stimulus funding for FY2010 that is not available in FY2011. The stimulus funding in FY2010 was used to plug gaps in funding for critical public health services and reduce lay-offs.
- The Department's State General Fund appropriations for FY2011 were reduced by \$2,108,366 or 3.58 percent.
- The combined funding reduction, when taking the one-time stimulus funding into account, is \$5,108,366.
- The legislature did not fund salary adjustments in the standings bill. The department will have to identify funding within the existing FY2011 budget to cover merit increases and cost-of-living adjustments (COLA) for contract employees. Language passed in the Standings Bill prohibited merit increases and COLA for non-contract employees.

Closely connected to budget, the Governor's Office and the Department of Management are beginning to work with the cost saving strategies outlined in Executive Order 20 and the government reorganization bill. Over the next few weeks, I expect we will have a better understanding as to how the department will be impacted.

More than 30 IDPH retirements expected by June 24

By June 24, the Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH) anticipates losing 32 employees due to the [State Employee Retirement Incentive Program](#) (SERIP). It has been my great pleasure to serve with these individuals, some of whom I have known since I entered the field of public health. Bidding them farewell has been and continues to be especially hard.

While this unprecedented exodus of so many dear friends and colleagues will be difficult, it also presents us with some unique opportunities. In the coming weeks, the Executive Team will be making some tough choices about which positions can be filled. This will no doubt, affect our partners in one way or another. But such is the dynamic nature of public service, and public health in particular. I am confident that this process will make us all stronger and more flexible as we go about our important work of promoting and protecting the health of Iowans.

Please check your links to the IDPH home page

On June 1, the IDPH Information Management team will be making a change to the IDPH homepage that will allow for added functionality in the future. Most users will not notice a change. IDPH will still be accessible through the URL www.idph.state.ia.us. The longer address www.idph.state.ia.us/default.asp, however, will not bring up the IDPH homepage after May 30. The reason is that the ".asp" suffix will change to ".aspx." If your personal bookmarks or links on your organization's Web site currently point to the IDPH homepage at www.idph.state.ia.us/default.asp, please simply remove "/default.asp" from the address. Questions? Call John Warming at 515-281-7993.

New program protects environment, prevents drug abuse

A new solution for the disposal of unused or expired medications is appearing in pharmacies across the state. Supported by the [Iowa Pharmacy Association](#), the "TakeAway" program is an important advancement in protecting the health of Iowans. Not only do improperly discarded medicines often find their way into our water supply, but they also pose a danger to those who might abuse them. The Office of National Drug Control Policy reports that prescription medications are the drug of choice among 12- and 13-year olds, while a third of all new abusers of prescription meds are between the ages of 12 and 17. To find out where you can dispose of your unused or expired medications, visit www.iarx.org/takeaway to find a participating pharmacist near you.

Wellmark Foundation announces grant opportunity

The [Wellmark Foundation's](#) goal for its health philanthropy is to be a catalyst to bring groups together within a community to impact health improvement. In 2010, [funding efforts](#) will continue to focus on improving the health of communities in Iowa and South

Dakota through primary prevention efforts. Specifically, Wellmark's funding will seek to facilitate programs targeting childhood obesity prevention initiatives and community-based wellness and prevention. Letters of intent are due on August 25. For more information, visit www.wellmark.com/foundation.

Iowans Fit for Life staff member gets national recognition

Congratulations to [Iowans Fit for Life](#) Nutrition Coordinator Carol Voss for being recognized by the [Association of State and Territorial Public Health Nutrition Directors](#). In June, she will be honored with the 2010 award for Outstanding Leadership for the National Council of Fruit and Vegetable Coordinators. Among Carol's accomplishments has been her work with the "[Pick a better snack](#)" social marketing campaign and supportive classroom resources to encourage children to choose fruits and vegetables for snacks. "Pick a better snack" materials are used across Iowa and in programs in other states.

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

— Tom