



# *Quick Reads*

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## **I-WALK**

As the Iowa Department of Public Health looks for opportunities to partner with and build upon Governor Branstad's [Healthiest State initiative](#), I am pleased to announce an additional 12 communities will be chosen to participate in the Fall 2012/Spring 2013 [I-WALK](#) program. A specific focus will be on those communities who applied for non-infrastructure/planning funds through the Iowa Department of Transportation, but were not funded.

The goal of I-WALK is to help communities get kids walking and biking where it's safe to do so, and where it's not safe, to make changes. The number of students who walk to and from school has drastically declined in the last 40 years, which has led to health, transportation and social concerns in Iowa communities and nationally. By identifying safe routes to school, children become more physically active and, in turn, take an important step towards better health.

## **Child sex abuse prevention report**

The 2011 Iowa Legislature established the Child Sex Abuse Prevention task force – the first ever of its kind in Iowa to discuss suggested improvements to be made in laws and school policies to protect children. IDPH was one of many stakeholders involved in the task force, which has been led by [Prevent Child Abuse Iowa](#). Last month, the group released its [report](#). In addition to specific recommended steps, the report stresses that while legislative action is helpful in identifying and stopping abuse, all Iowans must begin to acknowledge that sexual violence is perpetrated by those who live among us and are our neighbors, relatives and caretakers of our children. With that knowledge, we can begin to see the behaviors that allow perpetrators to trick and coerce children into becoming their victims. We must be willing to “call out” those who commit such

atrocities, while at the same time are able to blindly convince us they are trustworthy. They should be supported in getting help, while being held accountable for their offenses or we will never end this tragic exploitation of our precious children.

## **I-SMILE report**

The [I-Smile™](#) dental home initiative is administered by the [IDPH Oral Health Center](#). The [2011 I-Smile™ annual report](#) was completed this month and shows the number of at-risk children receiving dental care has continued to increase each year since I-Smile™ began in December of 2006. In 2011, more than one and a half times as many children received care from a dentist than in 2005, and more than three times as many children received care from a Title V agency than in 2005.

Yet even with these achievements, there are areas that can be improved upon – including the number of children younger than 3 who receive dental care, the number of dentists who provide care for Medicaid-enrolled children, and the number of medical practitioners who include dental screenings and prevention at well-child visits. Oral Health Center staff and local I-Smile™ coordinators will continue to build upon the successful work already accomplished to ensure that oral health is a priority and that I-Smile™ can play a role in Iowa becoming the healthiest state!

## **AIDS drug assistance program**

The [IDPH Bureau of HIV, STD, and Hepatitis](#) is coordinating a process to write a new statewide HIV prevention and care plan this spring. New statewide plans are called for in the [National HIV/AIDS Strategy](#), and they are requirements of the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) (CDC), which provides funding for HIV prevention, and the [Health Resources and Services Administration](#) (HRSA), which provides funding for health care and drug assistance for HIV-positive persons.

The plan will reflect two major developments that have occurred in the past year. First, a significant reduction in funding for HIV prevention for low-prevalence states like Iowa, as a result of the National Strategy's call to redistribute federal HIV prevention funds to the geographic areas with the highest prevalence of HIV. In accordance with this, Iowa will lose up to 55 percent of its CDC funding over the next five years. The second development was the release of the results of a major HIV prevention trial ([HPTN 052](#)) that showed antiretroviral treatment could reduce the risk of HIV transmission to uninfected partners by 96 percent. This has become known as "[Treatment as Prevention](#)," and will form the framework for the integrated prevention and care plan for the state.

The plan is due to CDC and HRSA by June 15.

## **I-SERV**

The [Iowa Emergency Registry of Volunteers](#) (I-SERV) is a preparedness program sponsored by IDPH that manages the recruitment, registration, selection and potential use of credentialed health care professionals interested in volunteering during a public health emergency or disaster. I-SERV was developed because while good-intentioned, spontaneous volunteers can actually hinder disaster response by creating health, safety and security issues, and at times, even interfering with response operations. By registering with I-SERV, volunteers become part of an e-mail alert system, and are only called upon to respond when activated to a disaster or public health emergency.

Late this spring or early this summer, I-SERV will unveil an entirely new system, using a new vendor platform, a new and improved logo, improved ability to manage teams, as well as individuals, and a new abbreviation (i-SERV). All current data will be migrated to the new system. I encourage health care professionals to consider joining I-SERV, and to look for the new system rollout later this year.

### **Congrats and kudos**

[Iowa's 1st Five Healthy Mental Development Initiative](#) was referenced as a best practice in a [Help Me Grow](#) national webinar focused on using academic detailing to change child health service delivery.

Betty Johnson, consultant with the [IDPH Office of Minority and Multicultural Health](#) in the area of prostate cancer awareness and education in the African American community, was a 2012 recipient of the Iowa Commission on the Status of African Americans' [Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Lifetime Individual Achievement Award](#).

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

*— Dr. Miller-Meeks*