



Quick Reads

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2012 in review

As we near the end of 2012, I want to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays. As we review the past year, it is clear 2012 was a year of learning to do more with what we have, finding partnerships to best maximize our efforts, and prioritizing issues to best serve the public. I am proud of the accomplishments made and strides taken to strengthen public health in Iowa this past year, and am optimistic about our ability to meet the challenges that lie ahead.

Legislatively, 2012 saw the passage of [SF2318](#), the e-Health legislation. This was a high priority for Governor Branstad, as well as IDPH, and was successfully approved with the help of our stakeholders and the [e-Health Advisory Council](#). Public-private partnerships again played a key role in public health initiatives in 2012. A shining example of this collaboration is IDPH's work with the Governor's [Healthiest State Initiative](#) (HSI) to advance the objectives of the [Blue Zones](#) project. In April, IDPH and HSI highlighted the importance of mental wellness in achieving overall health with [Laugh Out Loud \(LOL\) Day](#). In August, this partnership took on a more serious tone as we met thousands of Iowans at the annual [Farm Progress Show](#) in Boone, focusing on the important issue of rural health. Additionally, [Community Transformation Grants](#) have been launched in 26 Iowa counties. The focus of these grants include tobacco free living; active living and healthy eating; clinical preventive services; and safe and healthy environments. These focus areas align with those of HSI.

In October, the state of Iowa was among nine employers recognized by the [Wellness Council of Iowa](#) for excellence in worksite health promotion. The state of Iowa proudly received the Silver Well Workplace designation for its commitment to the health and well-being of its employees.

I want to thank all my colleagues at IDPH, local public health agencies, and other partners for their efforts in 2012 and I look forward to working with you all in 2013. I believe public health's everyday contribution to the lives of Iowans is both significant and necessary to the future of our state.

IHIN goes live

Today, December 7, is a milestone in the development of the Iowa Health Information Network as the full query capabilities of the IHIN become functional. This development allows healthcare professionals to access a patient's health history, regardless of the many providers an individual might see. This secure information includes test results, allergies, medications, follow-up recommendations and more. Direct Secure Messaging works like email, but includes several extra layers of security. Hundreds of Iowa providers are already participating and through December 31, 2012, IHIN is offering Direct Secure Messaging [FREE](#) for six months to any health care provider who returns a completed [Participation Agreement & User Listing Form](#). For more information, email [Iowa eHealth](#) or call 866-924-4636.

Upcoming Legislative Session

The [2013 Iowa Legislative Session](#) begins Monday, January 14, 2013. I look forward to providing information about legislative issues affecting public health, as well as budget information in next month's Quick Reads. Remember, you can watch and hear [live video and audio](#) of the Iowa Legislature whenever the chambers are in session.

Congrats and kudos

Kudos to IDPH staffers Sieglinde Prior, Sandy Briggs, Don McCormick, Kala Shipley and Meghan O'Brien, who created resources for the [Smoke-Free Homes](#) project focusing on multi-unit housing. Minnesota is now working with the CDC to create a national Smoke-Free Homes handbook for public health professionals. Resources created by IDPH staff, including [signage](#) and the logo are being used for the national publication.

Congratulations to the Ida County Medical Reserve Corps (MRC), which was recognized by the national [MRC](#) for its efforts during National Preparedness Month. The Ida County MRC engaged the media during the month with weekly articles in local newspapers, each focusing on a different MRC volunteer's perspective. Topics such as making a plan, building a kit, protecting your business, and practicing fire safety were addressed.

Congratulations to [Lucas County Health Center](#) Chief of Staff, Dr. Kenneth Anderson, who was honored as the 2012 Jerry Karbeling awardee at the [Iowa Rural Health Association \(IRHA\)](#) and the [Iowa Association of Rural Health Clinics](#) joint Fall Meeting. The [Jerry Karbeling award](#) recognizes a worthy individual who has demonstrated

successful advocacy for rural health and a commitment to community service. Dr. Anderson is responsible for implementing numerous policies to improve patient care, including leading an initiative to successfully install electronic medical records, provide breast and cervical cancer screenings and cardiac screenings to uninsured or underinsured women, and serving as a mentor to other physicians in rural practice.

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

— *Dr. Miller-Meeks*