



# Quick Reads

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## **Legislative Wrap-up**

The 2013 Iowa Legislative Session has concluded and I believe it was a good session for public health. A number of measures were signed into law by Governor Branstad that will help move Iowa forward in our efforts to make this the healthiest state in the nation:

- Vision screening for school children ([SF 419](#)) – At the request of legislators, I convened a group of stakeholders last fall to discuss a statewide vision screening program. The workgroup identified that the program must be cost effective and provide parents with affordable child vision screening options; be widespread and available to all Iowa children, yet not cumbersome to school personnel; and include a data collection system to provide follow-up to Iowa children with failed vision screenings. As a result of the workgroup's efforts, SF 419 was introduced and approved by the Legislature, and signed into law April 26. Lead staff are now working on administrative rules.
- Newborn critical congenital heart disease screenings ([SF 452](#)): The American Heart Association, led by Stacy Frelund, was the lead advocate for this requirement. According to the legislation, each newborn in Iowa will receive a screening for critical congenital heart disease as part of the newborn screening panel. Parents may object to the screening and the results of screening are not required to be reported to IDPH until funding is available to implement a data collection system.
- Expansion of [1st Five](#) and plans to integrate it within the Medicaid Medical Home Initiative: The legislature appropriated an additional \$1.0 million to the 1<sup>st</sup> Five Program and directed IDPH to first stabilize the funding for the seven coordinating sites that are already in existence. Currently, 13 counties have

services, and it is our hope the additional funding will provide for the creation of as many new sites as possible.

- Regional Autism Assistance Program: This is a new initiative that will be administered by the child health specialty clinics. The clinics are directed to enhance collaboration and coordination of educational, medical, and other human services for persons with autism, their families, and providers of services.
- A new medical residency training account has received \$2.0 million for a medical residency training state matching grants program that would be administered by IDPH. At this time, I am having preliminary discussions with the Governor's office regarding their intent for the program. The Governor has expressed support for expansion of eligible specialties to OB-GYN and emergency medical doctors. He believes these are important tools for improving Iowa's quality of life.
- IDPH received the requested appropriation of \$368,000 for several of our [environmental health programs](#), including the pool/spa, tattoo, radon, and tanning programs.
- The line items that directly support local public health agencies received status quo funding for FY 2014.
- During the entire month of June, IDPH is offering four weeks of free nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) in the form of patches and gum to Iowa smokers who choose to make a quit attempt using [Quitline Iowa](#). Quitline Iowa offers tobacco cessation coaching services over the telephone or the Internet, 24 hours a day. Smart, efficient budgeting is allowing us to provide this support for the first time in years.
- An EMS Task Force was established to review systems changes and provide a report to the legislature by December 15, 2013. IDPH is administering the task force.
- IDPH received \$25,000 for a new Director's Wellness Initiative that will provide additional funding to existing wellness programs, including Live Healthy Iowa's challenges.

### **Public Health's role in ACOs**

What is the role of [Accountable Care Organizations](#) in public health? I believe ACOs provide a growing and important opportunity to advance our initiatives, resulting in healthier individuals, communities, and the state as a whole. The IDPH [Bureau of Local Public Health Services](#) facilitated a webinar last month titled "[Enhancing Public Health Services by Partnering with ACO.](#)" [Webster County Health Department](#) Director Kari

Prescott discussed the Pilot ACO project Webster County has participated in for the past year, and illustrated how local public health can and should be involved in ACOs. More than 80 people attended the webinar, which was recorded. I encourage you to [view](#) this webinar to see how the partnership between ACOs and local public health can result in a win-win solution for everyone, especially the health of your community.

## **Coordinated care**

The Iowa Board of Regents has approved the creation of the [UI Center for Child Health Improvement and Innovation Center](#) (UI CCHII). The UI CCHII will exist to provide Iowa's child health community with the necessary knowledge, skills and resources to help all children achieve their optimal potential. This integrated pediatric health system will provide a coordinated network of resources and services centered on the child and family; it will improve population health outcomes for children by improving access to services, expanding the array of community based services available on a local level, and working to increase collaboration among systems.

## **Congrats and kudos**

Congratulations to the [IDPH Colorectal Cancer Program](#) on receiving the Bronze Quill award from the [International Association of Business Communicators](#) for the recent [colorectal cancer coaster campaign](#). In addition, the abstract "***Cheers to your health: Educating Iowans 50+ about colorectal cancer screening through drink coasters***" has been selected and confirmed for poster presentation during the 141st APHA Annual Meeting (November 2 - November 6, 2013) in Boston. These honors are especially notable, in that the campaign was done in-house on an extremely limited budget.

[Boone County Hospital](#) (BCH) recently received the National Quality Award from [The Center and the Federal Office of Rural Health Policy](#) (ORHP). Only eight hospitals in the United States received this award, which recognizes the excellent work of critical access hospitals (CAHs) throughout the country.

Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH) [HIV, STD and Hepatitis Bureau](#) Chief Randy Mayer is a recipient of the 2013 [Nicholas A. Rango Leadership Award](#) from the [National Association of State and Territorial AIDS Directors](#) (NASTAD). The award recognizes the state AIDS director, state and territorial health department staff member, or NASTAD staff member who best exemplifies the qualities of superior intelligence, dedication, and leadership in the fight against HIV/AIDS and/or viral hepatitis.

Congratulations to [Black Hawk County](#) Public Health Officer, Larry Sivesind on 40 years of service. Larry started his career in Waterloo's street department in 1973; shortly after, he was hired at the City Health Department. He was promoted to Health Inspector for the city in 1981. In 1987, the City Health Department merged into the Black Hawk County Health Department and Larry became a Health Officer for the county, where he continues today.

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

— *Dr. Miller-Meeks*