

New funding to help diabetes network increase membership

By Sandi Ryan*

The Iowa Diabetes Network (IDN), coordinated by the Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH), will be expanding, thanks to a grant from the Wellmark Foundation.



The Network is a statewide coalition of health care professionals, voluntary organizations, state governmental agencies, insurers, and interested associations formed to help bring diabetes funding into the state. It has advised and actively participated in activities of the state's Diabetes Prevention and Control Program for the past 10 years.

IDN's mission is to improve the quality of life of individuals living with diabetes and reduce the impact of the disease on all Iowa residents. To fulfill its mission, the Network has provided regular education opportunities for Iowa health care professionals, designed and distributed consumer and professional education and assessment materials, and developed the diabetes chapter of *Healthy Iowans 2010* to guide its activities.

Commenting on the Network's renewed promise to reduce the threat of diabetes for all Iowans, IDN Chair Sheri Buske said, "Our goal is to reach out to all areas of the state, recruiting new members who have a vested interest in diabetes. We hope to do this through community education programs, upgrading the IDPH diabetes Web site, and developing educational handouts

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Substance abusers given hope after jail

By Lonnie Cleland*

Since he was 19 years old, "Bryan" has been in and out of jail on theft and drug-related charges. He never finished high school and has bounced from job to job.

Thanks to the Jail-based Substance Abuse Assessment and Treatment Project, funded in part by the Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH), Bryan is now substance free and holds a full-time job. He also earned his GED.

According to a new report on the project released by IDPH and the Iowa Consortium for Substance Abuse Research and Evaluation, Bryan's story is not uncommon. Established in 2002, the project delivers and evaluates substance abuse treatment services for clients both during incarceration and after their release. So far, nearly 1,000 men and women have

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IDPH helps address transportation barriers to health care access

By Doreen Chamberlin*

The Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH) Bureau of Health Care Access is working with the Iowa Transportation Coordination Council to sponsor a series of workshops designed to improve transportation services and access to health care. These workshops respond to needs identified by communities in their Community Health Needs Assessment and Health Improvement Plans.

Hosted by local planning affiliates, the Iowa Mobility Action Planning Workshops will bring together regional transportation service providers and a wide variety of stakeholders interested in improving transportation services. Their job will be to identify transportation needs, barriers, potential resources, and ways to ensure access to those that need transportation. The results of the individual workshops will serve as a foundation for local action plans and future coordination efforts toward a statewide plan.

Donna Johnson, program manager in the Office of Public Transit at the Iowa Department of Transportation said, "Working in collaboration with other state and local agencies has enabled us to see all sides of the issue and develop a comprehensive plan for change." Other members of the Iowa Transportation Coordination Council include the Iowa Departments of Education, Elder Affairs, Human Rights, Human Ser-



vices, Public Health, Veterans Affairs, and Workforce Development, plus the Iowa League of Cities and the Iowa State Association of Counties.

Decision makers and representatives from all agencies that work with clients or members of the public to access services are invited to participate in the workshops. The Transportation Coordination Council is seeking representation from local public health, human services, schools, state and local government agencies, as well as the general public.

The 15 workshops, which are being held between April 4 and June 19, are free; registration is required. For more information, visit www.iatransit.com/regulations/coordination.asp or call Michele Frank at 515-239-1691.

**Doreen Chamberlin is the chief of the IDPH Bureau of Health Care Access.*

Workshop Schedule

April

4 – Mason City
13 – Marshalltown
18 – Des Moines
25 – Waterloo

May

3 – North Liberty
4 – Dubuque
9 – Burlington
11 – Decorah
23 – Spencer
16 – Sioux City
25 – Iowa Quad Cities

June

1 – Carroll
8 – Atlantic
16 – Fort Dodge
19 – Centerville



IDPH project featured at national conference

By Sarah Taylor*

Iowans Fit for Life, a multi-year pilot intervention project conducted by the Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH), was recently highlighted at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Annual Evaluation Workshop in San Antonio, Texas. Designed to reduce obesity and other chronic diseases in Iowans through increased physical activity and improved nutrition, the goal of the project is to develop model communities that can be replicated across the state.

Roxane Joens-Matre, Iowans Fit for Life program evaluator, gave a presentation on the project. She was joined by CDC Nutrition and Physical Activity Project Officer Sarah Kuester, and Mary McKenna, a research scientist with the CDC Division of Adolescent and School Health. The presentation, "Reaching Youth in Community and School Settings," illustrated how a strong intervention design is related to a strong evaluation design.

Twelve schools and communities across Iowa have been selected to participate in the Iowans Fit for Life project, which involves healthy lifestyle interventions at all levels of the socio-ecological model including personal, interpersonal, school, community, and policy changes.



Lincoln Elementary students in Spencer participate in a potato sack race at a health carnival held as part of the Iowans Fit for Life school and community intervention.

The Fit for Life intervention includes community coalitions being formed to increase opportunities for physical activity and eating fruits and vegetables outside of the school day. For example, in Pocahontas, Iowa, the community coalition has started an after-school program for students at a wellness center in nearby Emmetsburg. The children receive a snack of fruits and vegetables for their bus trip to Emmetsburg, then swim, dance, or play games at the wellness center.

"The CDC program recognizes that community citizens and leaders determine the environmental supports and community practices in their regions," Kuester said. "The Iowa school-community inter-

vention is designed to be one model that brings a community together to encourage these healthy choices."

The Iowa legislature is considering a bill which, if passed, will expand funding of the Iowans Fit for Life project to six additional communities.

At the San Antonio conference, IDPH Nutrition Coordinator Carol Voss was awarded the "Good Neighbor Award" for sharing information with health professionals in Wisconsin.

**Sarah Taylor is the Physical Activity coordinator at IDPH.*



National Problem Gambling Awareness Week, March 6-12

National Problem Gambling Awareness Week is scheduled for March 6-12. It serves to educate the public and medical professionals about the warning signs of problem gambling and raise awareness about help that is available both locally and nationally. The www.npgaw.org Web site has a variety of materials available for download and local distribution for partners throughout Iowa.

For information and resources from the Iowa Department of Public Health, visit the Iowa Gambling Treatment Program Web site at www.1800betsoff.org. Materials such as posters, brochures, flyers, 1-800-BETS-OFF cards, videotapes, and curriculum guides are also available from the Iowa Substance Abuse Information Center at 866-242-4111 or gayb@mail.crlibrary.org.



Funding to expand Iowa Diabetes Network

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- all made possible through the Wellmark grant.”

Using the Wellmark Foundation funds, IDN will do strategic planning and hold recruiting meetings across the state. IDPH, as fiscal agent for the project, recently hired Shannon Heinen to coordinate the Network’s new activities.

“The Wellmark Foundation likes to work with existing or emerging coalitions to enhance the possibility of replication and project portability, and to help increase the capacity

of several organizations at one time by working with already successful coalitions like IDN,” said Matt McGarvey, senior program manager at the Foundation.

“IDN is a very dedicated group of people, passionate about diabetes,” Buske emphasized. “Increasing our membership will give us more credibility, combined experience, skills, and the ability to share more information.”

For more information about the strategic planning effort or to learn about IDN membership,

call 515-242-6204 or write sheinen@idph.state.ia.us.

**Sandi Ryan is the coordinator of the WISEWOMAN Cardiovascular Study in the IDPH Bureau of Chronic Disease Prevention and Management.*



Jail-based substance abuse treatment program life changing

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been provided with the tools they need to make a new start in life.

The effectiveness of these services is determined by the results of follow-up interviews conducted approximately six and 12 months after admission to the treatment programs. This year's report includes data on 904 of the 988 clients who participated in the program between Nov. 1, 2002 and Dec. 31, 2005.

At one year post-admission, the evaluation shows that more than 69 percent of project participants have remained abstinent from illegal substances of any kind, while 84 percent have remained arrest-free. More than 70 percent are employed; 56 percent hold full-time jobs.

"The results of these programs rival the data we get from outpatient programs with less resistant and more motivated clients," said Project Director and IDPH Deputy Director Janet Zwick. "Based on this data, we are beginning to see just how much jail-based programs for this population can save us, not just financially, but also in the terrible cost to our society in human terms."

Three treatment agencies in Iowa are involved in this project, each providing services at different jails across the state: United Community Services, Inc., at the Polk County Jail; the Center for Alcohol and Drug Services, Inc., at the Scott



Therapeutic strategies in jail-based treatment programs may be the most effective interventions for people whose histories include both substance abuse and criminal activity.

County Jail; and the Jackson Recovery Centers, at the Woodbury County Jail.

Treatment programs in all three counties use a therapy approach called *New Direction: A Cognitive-Behavioral Treatment Curriculum*. Therapeutic strategies include motivational interviewing, relapse prevention, empowerment-based practices, group therapy, family counseling, and other programming designed to meet client needs.

The full report is available at: www.idph.state.ia.us/bhpl/.

**Lonnie Cleland is a program planner in the IDPH Division of Behavioral Health and Professional Licensure.*

Client Comments

- "The program gave me the answers I was looking for and some I didn't know I was seeking."
- "The jail treatment program is probably the best thing that's ever happened to me."
- "I have been through treatment before, but the way they taught, it totally turned me around."
- "The program helped me understand my thinking patterns and changed my life...they know what they are talking about."
- "It was a brilliant idea. It is a great alternative to sitting in jail not doing anything...It got me to get the chip off my shoulder."



Compliance measures and penalties aimed at preventing lead poisoning

By Angela L. Poole*

As outdoor temperatures rise and the days become longer, many folks start organizing their closets, cleaning out their garages, and preparing their gardens. Some tackle bigger home improvement projects – like remodeling .

Before you begin tearing down those walls, replacing those old windows, or scraping the paint off of the siding, be aware that your home improvement project may create a dangerous environment for the people living in your home.

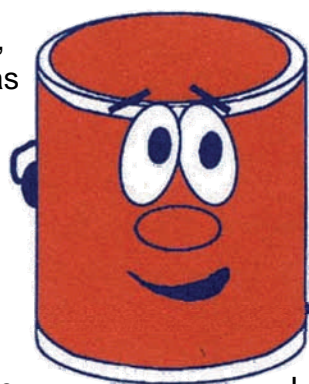
Remodeling, renovating, or repainting a home that was built before 1978 may disturb lead-based paint, which has the potential to poison the home's occupants. Dust created during construction projects may contain lead, which when inhaled or ingested, may cause lead poisoning, especially in children.

In an effort to reduce the potential of lead poisoning, the Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH) was granted the authority to implement the pre-renovation notification rule in 1999. Since that time, landlords and contractors who disturb paint in a home built before 1978 must provide the occupants with the

pamphlet, *Lead Poisoning: How to Protect Iowa Families*.

IDPH is taking a proactive approach in communicating requirements to local retail hardware and building supply stores, regional housing departments and city building officials. A one-page flyer summarizes Iowa law on this topic and provides guidance for filing forms and keeping records.

“Contrary to popular belief, lead poisoning is not just an urban



issue,” says IDPH

Lead Poisoning Prevention Bureau Chief Rita Gergely. “We have found that lead-poisoned children are dispersed throughout the state.”

According to the most recent data, Iowa’s rate of lead poisoning is approximately four times the national average. Nearly 60 percent of the homes in Iowa were built before 1960. Almost all of these homes contain some lead-based paint, which can harm children when

the paint is disturbed or in poor condition.

Since 2002, IDPH has conducted random spot checks of contractors to monitor compliance with the pre-renovation notification rule. Starting in 2005, civil penalties were issued to contractors who did not follow the requirements. The Iowa Code authorizes IDPH to impose a penalty of up to \$5,000 for each violation.

“Childhood lead poisoning will cost Iowans \$24.7 million dollars for children who were born in 2005, so we need people to take this rule very seriously,” Gergely said.

Starting in April of this year, IDPH will increase compliance measures by including landlords and property managers in random spot checks. In 2007, IDPH will impose civil penalties for all violations.

For additional information, contact the IDPH Lead Poisoning Prevention Bureau at 1-800-972-2026.

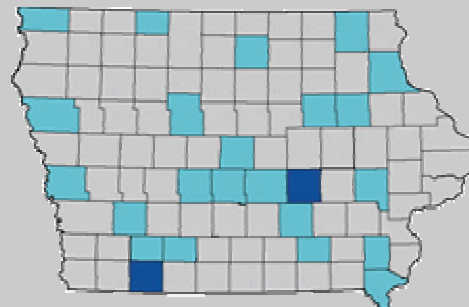
**Angela L. Poole is an environmental specialist for the IDPH Lead Poisoning Prevention Bureau.*



Harkin Wellness Grant Features

By Don McCormick*

As part of Senator Tom Harkin's (D-IA) continuing effort to promote healthy lifestyles in Iowa, he announced in September of last year that \$2.7 million had been awarded to 28 public and private organizations through the Harkin Wellness Grant (HWG) program with the Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH). Recipients of the HWG include community organizations such as counties, townships or cities, educational agencies and school districts, public health organizations, health care providers and community-based nonprofit organizations.



This issue of *FOCUS* features stories about two grant recipients, the lead agencies of which are located in the central county of Poweshiek and the southwest county of Taylor.

Scenes from innovative health interventions

Jan: Hi, Bob. What would you like to talk about?

Bob: Well, the other day I went to a movie theater and noticed that my seat was a bit snug.

Jan: I understand.

Bob: I know I need to lose some weight but my schedule doesn't allow me much time to work out.

Jan: Ok, Bob. Here's what I'm hearing. You're ready to do something about your weight. You also find it difficult to make time for exercise.

Bob: That's right. It's just work, work, work these days.

Jan: I can see that work is important to you. So is enjoying a movie more comfortably. Let's work toward a plan for weight loss that won't interfere too much with your workday.

How much do you

want to lose?

Bob: About 10 pounds.

Jan: Sounds good. What ideas have you considered so far?

Bob: Well, I could use the stairs more often. I could also park my car farther away from the office. Do you think that would help?

Jan: Those are great ideas! If you can do that consistently, I think you'll see some change. Tell me a little about your thoughts regarding the kind of food you eat...

"Bob," a fictional resident of Poweshiek County, is getting help through a counseling strategy called Motivational Interviewing. In this scenario, his facilitator, "Jan," would have received training in this "client-centered" approach at Grinnell Regional Medical Center Public Health with funding from a



Harkin Wellness Grant (HWG), administered by the Office of Healthy Communities at the Iowa Department of Public Health.

"It's all about meeting people where they're at and facilitating ownership of personal goals," says Denyse Gipple, HWG program director and Public Health coordinator at the Grinnell Regional Medical Center. "The facilitator determines what motivates the client and helps him or her develop action steps that will bring about the desired change."

The plan is to bring in a national expert on Motivational Interviewing to train dietitians,

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fitness center staff, P.E. teachers, school nurses, and others positioned to communicate with adults or children. Facilitators will attend a two-day seminar, followed by telephone coaching with the trainer once they are helping actual clients.

Another unique activity funded in part by the HWG is the Baseline Measurement of Adult Physical Activity in Poweshiek County. In this project, 100 volunteers are given an initial health assessment and fitness test, as well as a pedometer and nutrition/activity log. At the end of six months, the volunteers will be given the same fitness test to see if tracking their activity and nutrition helped improve fitness levels.

“The response to this program was astonishing,” Gipple said. “We advertised it only twice late last year in the local weekly community newspapers and had plans to continue recruiting volunteers well into the New Year. By January 6 we were completely full.” Gipple was disappointed to have to turn so many people away, but was glad for the opportunity to provide would-be volunteers with handouts on nutrition, recommended daily activity logs and other materials. “The applicants still showed a lot of interest in what we had to offer.”

Organizations working with Grinnell Regional Medical Center Public Health on these and other activities include Iowa State University Extension, the Grinnell College Fitness Center, and Poweshiek County’s Healthy Choices

Coalition. The Coalition is made up of a group of local agencies interested in topics such as fitness, substance abuse and tobacco.

Community school districts in Poweshiek County also play a major role in health initiatives funded by the HWG. School programs include: KidsWalk-to-School, a national campaign that encourages children to walk to and from school in groups accompanied by adults; Go The Distance, the youth-focused version of the popular Lighten

Up Iowa campaign; TV Turn Off Week, which encourages children to cut down on screen time April 24-30 and lead healthier lives; and body image training, in which school nurses and P.E. teachers lead discussions about the way the media portrays ideals of beauty. “We want to show kids a competing viewpoint to what they see on TV and provide a picture, not of beauty, but of good health,” Gipple said.

Gipple hopes other communities in Iowa benefit from hearing about Poweshiek County’s efforts to be a healthier place. She knows the importance of sharing ideas, pointing out that she learned about KidsWalk-to-School, Go The Distance, and TV Turn Off Week at the Governor’s Conference on Public Health: Barn Raising V. “With so many good ideas out there, why reinvent the wheel?” Gipple asked.



Poweshiek County Wellness Initiative Coordinator Lexie Byers guides a community volunteer through a fitness test.

(HWG features continue on page 9)



Training, cross-promotion keys to health in Taylor County

Remember the TV ad in which a woman told two friends about a hair product and they told two friends, who told two friends, and so on? Something like that is happening in Taylor County. The “product” is health.

“We don’t have to do any recruiting,” says Kim Brantner, education director at the Iowa State University Taylor County Extension office. “People tell their friends and neighbors and that means we’re pretty much full all of the time.”

Brantner is referring to the Growing Strong Families program, one of several initiatives sponsored by Taylor County WIL (Wellness in Lifestyle) and funded in part by a Harkin Wellness Grant (HWG). Through this program, two community educators visit 80 households per month in Taylor County to talk about family resource management and parenting strategies. Thanks to the HWG, administered by the Office of Healthy Communities at the Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH), these educators are now also trained to talk about nutrition.

“We’re trying to get families at a young age to practice healthy lifestyle behaviors,” Brantner said. “It’s exciting to see all the family members in the same room – in *their* living room – for a lesson about eating right.”



Sixth graders get carrots, celery, and cheese during a break from standardized tests at Lenox Community School. Providing healthy snacks to kids is one of the many ways the HWG is being used to promote health in Taylor County.

Health promotion, and indeed cross-promotion, takes place through a number of other venues in Taylor County. Besides providing healthy snacks and health literature in 35 company break rooms, Taylor County WIL has also posted calendars with upcoming health events sponsored by a variety of organizations in Taylor County. Activities are also announced in the Bedford Times Press and Lenox Time Table weekly newspapers.

“People know what we’re doing. People are seeing, hearing, and breathing it,” Brantner points out. Rather than

focus on one or two special target populations, Taylor County WIL takes a broad approach. “Sometimes you get a bigger bang when you promote something across the whole county,” Brantner added.

Tim Lane, Taylor County’s HWG project consultant at IDPH agrees. “A broad knowledge of the project lets people take advantage of that awareness to coordinate and expand the project in ways we could never plan,” Lane said.

Preschools and child care providers are also important partners in creating a healthy

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Taylor County. In addition to receiving funds to purchase motor skills development equipment, teachers are introduced to Color Me Healthy, a nutrition and physical activity program which vividly teaches children good health habits.

“Rather than just pass along these teaching materials, our training sessions provide teachers the opportunity to get their hands around the activities. We probably look pretty silly jumping around and singing the songs ourselves, but it really does help with implementation,” Brantner says.

Of the 24 preschools and licensed child care providers in Taylor County, Brantner reports that 22 have taken advantage of the training sessions.

Other partners include the Taylor County Public Health Agency, the Taylor County Youth and 4-H Program, and the community school districts of Bedford, Clearfield, Lenox and New Market.

**Don McCormick is the FOCUS editor.*

Children act fast... so do help lines

By Debbi Cooper*

It was a warm summer evening and my husband and I were attending a birthday party a couple of blocks from home. We left our daughter (age 5) and our son (age 2) in the hands of a very capable baby-sitter. The sitter called us a short time later and said he had taken the children outside to play and that our 2-year-old had toddled over to a can of charcoal lighter fluid, picked it up, and took a big drink.

This all happened in the blink of an eye. By the time we arrived home, the sitter had already been given instructions from the Iowa Poison Control Center help line and our local ambulance was on the way. The story has a happy ending and my son has grown into a fine young man.

Research by the
Home Safety Council



shows that poisoning is the second leading cause of unintentional injury-related death in the home. Each year, unintentional poisoning from medicines and household chemicals kills about 30 children and prompts more than one million calls to the nation's poison control centers.

National Poison Prevention Week, March 19-25, aims to help prevent childhood poisonings by reminding people to check their homes. The three most important safety messages to prevent poisonings are:

- Use child-resistant packaging because it saves lives.
- Keep medicines, household chemicals, and typical garage items like antifreeze or lighter fluid out of reach and out of sight of young children. “Child resistant” does not mean child proof.
- Keep the poison control center number next to your telephone and call immediately if a poisoning occurs. In Iowa, the number is 1-800-222-1222.

Remember, the extra effort you take may save the life of a child you love.

**Debbi Cooper is an environmental specialist in the IDPH Division of Environmental Health.*



Iowa Department of Public Health

Advancing Health Through the Generations

Averting a nursing shortage in Iowa

By Eileen Gloor*

For the first time in recent history, registered nurses top the U.S. Department of Labor's list of the 10 occupations with the largest projected growth. According to the Iowa Department of Public Health's Center for Health Workforce Planning, the shortfall of nurses in Iowa is projected to increase from 8 percent (2,300 RNs) in 2005 to 27 percent (9,100 RNs) in 2020. This number is almost one-fourth of Iowa's current number of actively licensed RNs.

To plan for the future and advocate appropriately, it is important to look at the following factors affecting these figures:

Nursing supply

In Iowa, the driving forces behind RN supply and demand reflect every national trend. On July 1, 2005 there were 39,423 actively licensed RNs in Iowa; an increase of 959 RNs since last year. Approximately 92 percent reside in Iowa and 80 percent are employed in nursing. The largest cohort of RNs licensed in Iowa range in age from 45 to 54. Only 20 percent are younger than 35.

Nursing education

Last year 3,265 students were admitted to Iowa's pre-licensure RN pro-



grams, an increase of 22 percent compared to the previous year. During the same time 1,795 students graduated from Iowa's pre-licensure RN programs and 105 graduated from doctoral or academic master's programs; an increase of 13 and 15 percent respectively compared to the previous year. On Nov. 1 of last year, Iowa's RN programs reported 445 students on waiting lists.

Iowa needs additional faculty to accommodate increasing enrollments that now exceed 5,000 students in the basic and RN-completion programs. In 2005, the nursing programs in Iowa's baccalaureate and higher degree colleges and universities, and commu-

nity colleges, reported 106 faculty vacancies.

Workforce trends

RNs topped the list of health professions experiencing the greatest number of vacancies in Iowa's hospitals for the past five years. However, the actual number of RN vacancies in Iowa's hospital-based workforce has declined since 2000. Most Iowa hospitals rate RN turnover as low and are able to fill vacant RN positions in 30 to 60 days. Many long-term care employers report that vacant RN positions can require 60 days or longer to fill. In Aug. 2005, the University of Iowa's Model

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Grannies have a ball

By Jewell Chapman*

Hah! 'They' all thought six-player ball was dead in Iowa. Instead, it was only comatose.

The Joy of Six, by Barb McPherson

Around this time last year, Barb McPherson noticed a void in physical activities for older women. Her male counterparts had formed teams for softball and other sports, but there did not seem to be anything similar for women. Now, McPherson is helping fill that void with Granny Basketball.

In addition to organizing a team in Lansing and maintaining a Web site, McPherson serves as a valuable resource for others who are interested in starting teams. In 2005 she organized a state tournament, and has another one planned for August of this year. McPherson will also be a featured speaker at the Governor's Conference on Aging in May.

Unlike conventional basketball, granny teams consist of two guards, two forwards, and two centers who remain in their designated courts. The floor is divided into three courts and players must learn to play without running or jumping. "Hurrying," however, is allowed.

McPherson is also the co-author of *Courting Girls: Reflections of an Iowa Six-on-Six Girls' Basketball Coach*. She wrote it with her father and published it for his 90th birthday.

A number of state employees and other like-minded individuals in Des Moines have laced up their sneakers for Granny Basketball, including some at the Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH). The oldest among them will be 78 this month.

When Tim Lane, wellness coordinator at IDPH, heard about the team, he immediately arranged for the State Employees Health And Recreation Committee (SEHARC) to provide a sponsorship of \$5.00 for each player. The check arrived in the mail the next



The SEHARC "Hot Pink Grannies" includes IDPH employees (front row, right to left) Jewell Chapman, Kathy Widelski and Nancy Jo Henning.

day and the SEHARC "Hot Pink Grannies" were off and... hurrying. Several non-state employees have also joined the team.

"I would never have imagined I could be a viable player for the grannies' team," said Nancy Jo Henning, who works in the IDPH Oral Health Bureau and is a former high school basketball cheerleader. "It has been a huge challenge both mentally and physically, but worth every minute of practice."

This year granny games will be played in Cedar Rapids, Lansing and Des Moines. Players have also been invited to show off their skills at the Governor's Conference on Aging in May and the Senior Olympics in June. For a full 2006 schedule, visit www.grannybasketball.com.

**Jewell Chapman works in the IDPH Bureau of Nutrition and Health Promotion.*



Future demand for nurses requires support

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RN Tracking System in north-central and north-east Iowa identified nursing homes as the work-site with the most RN full-time equivalent vacancies.

Nursing wages

According to data compiled by the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics in 2004, RNs in Iowa rank 49th on a table showing average annual salary for nurses in the

You can't tell legislators you need money for nursing education, faculty development, or improving the work environment for nurses unless you can say, 'This is what we know about the nursing workforce.'

Rebecca Bowers-Lanier, former deputy director of Colleagues in Caring

United States. The unadjusted salary for Iowa nurses was \$44,000. Once adjusted for the cost of living, Iowa ranks 42nd with an average annual salary of \$46,908.

Averting a nursing shortage in Iowa

Currently, Iowa is not experiencing a severe nursing shortage because many communities are successfully recruiting and retaining RNs. Statewide programs such as the Nursing Education Loan Repayment Program, administered by the Iowa College Student Aid Commission, provides opportunities for RNs who agree to work in Iowa after graduation and licensure to

have all or part of their student loans repaid. Another program benefiting communities is the Model RN Tracking System administered by the Carver College of Medicine at the University of Iowa, in which RNs in 47 Iowa counties have been included in a statewide Health Professions Inventory.

In 2005, the Iowa General Assembly approved funds of \$50,000 to initiate a Registered Nurse Recruitment Program. This registered nurse forgivable loan program, administered through the Iowa College Student Aid Commission, is a state-supported program for Iowans enrolled in programs that qualifies them to teach nursing in Iowa institutions.

For additional information please contact the IDPH Center for Health Workforce Planning at (515) 281-8309 or egloor@idph.state.ia.us.

* Eileen Gloor is an executive officer in the IDPH Center for Health Workforce Planning.

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Iowa Department of Public Health

Advancing Health Through the Generations