

April 2006

## Public health's voice strengthened at conference

By Sara Patkin\*

**N**early 600 professionals gathered at the Iowa Public Health Conference on March 28 & 29 in Ames with the common goal of "*Strengthening Our Voice: Making Public Health A Priority*," the theme of 2006 event. Drawing record numbers of attendees, students, exhibitors and poster sessions, the conference included presentations on as many as 56 different topics, ranging from avian influenza to food security to disaster preparedness.

Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH) Director Dr. Mary Mincer Hansen opened the event. During her remarks, Dr. Hansen celebrated 125 years of organized public health in Iowa and encouraged participants to take home some of the excellent ideas shared at the conference.

Along with University Hygienic Laboratory (UHL) Director Dr. Mary J.R. Gilchrist, Dr. Hansen also recog-



Dr. John Lumpkin of the Health Care Group at the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

nized 20 individuals and organizations who received awards from the Iowa Public Health Association for their work in public health.

Dr. Roz Lasker, director of the Division of Public Health and the Center for the Advancement of Collaborative Strategies in Health at the New York Academy of Medicine, was one of three featured speakers. In her presentation, *Reconnecting with Public Health's Hidden Strength: the Public*, Dr. Lasker called attention

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## Exercise helps prep for emergencies

By DeAnne Sesker\*

**P**reparing for a public health emergency was the topic of discussion on Feb.

17 for 65 state department leaders, staff and other response partners at the Iowa Department of Public Health's (IDPH) Pandemic Influenza Tabletop Exercise.

Participants at the six-hour meeting included representatives from state corrections, education, homeland security, human services, the Iowa National Guard, Indian Health Services, natural resources, public health, public safety, transportation, the 71st Civil Support Team and the University Hygienic Laboratory.

Divided into groups according to function, participants were given a scenario and specific questions to drive the discussion. Focus areas included continuity of operations, disease prevention and control, incident management, public information, surveillance, and workforce staffing for an extended emergency response.

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# WIC staff, clients win with IWIN

By Sandi Ryan\*

WIC (the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children) has been one of the Iowa Department of Public Health's (IDPH) most important and successful programs since its first clinic opened in Davenport in March 1974. Today, with a statewide network of 145 clinics, the Iowa WIC Program provides health care and a monthly food prescription, tailored to each client, to nearly 68,000 at-risk pregnant and breastfeeding women, infants and children under age five.

On November 28 of last year WIC took its latest momentous step. In a single day, the program replaced its existing database system, developed in the mid-1980s, with the Iowa WIC Information Network (IWIN)—a nearly paperless, Web-based system.

IDPH is happy to report that the powerful components of the IWIN system have improved all aspects of the Iowa WIC experience. IWIN is the first WIC data system in the US using Smart-Client technology to allow many clinics to connect to a single statewide database.

IWIN Clinic Services captures information about each participant. The system can plot and print children's growth charts and prenatal weight gain charts. New health and diet questionnaires automatically assign

nutrition risks, and fill in the nutrition care plan



and targeted information about feeding and physical activity behaviors. IWIN prints monthly participant checks, and records redemption information when each check is used. The system even monitors vendor pricing.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture supported IWIN's development with first-of-its-kind multi-state funding for Iowa and North Dakota. "We started with a program from the state of Pennsylvania," says Emily Roepsch, who led the software planning and development team. "We then told CIBER (the software development company) what elements we wanted to keep, add, or remove." The IDPH Information Management Team provided input on IWIN's architecture and technical specifications to assure in-house compatibility.

John Booth, project director from CIBER, is enthusiastic

about the multi-state project. "Staff in both Iowa and North Dakota were wonderful to work with, always patient and cooperative with each other," he says.

IDPH WIC program staff worked hard to ensure that IWIN would meet the needs of participants and local staff, and adhere to policies and regulations. Local staff tested the software at every step.

Local agencies appreciate IWIN's contribution to productivity and client service delivery. Colleen Johnson of the Siouxland District Health Department says, "Less time needed to write names, calculate BMI's and growth charts allows more time to actually talk with clients."

Participants appreciate receiving up to three months of benefits at a time. "I have a hard time getting a ride to come to

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# Stroke warning signs important to recognize

By Janet Peterson\*

Stroke is the leading cause of serious, long-term disability in the United States. Stroke accounted for 7.3 percent (1,955) of Iowa's deaths in 2004. Sixty-five percent of these were women. Nationally, deaths from stroke are also disproportionate, with three of every five occurring in women. Hypertension (high blood pressure) is the leading cause of stroke.

May is National High Blood Pressure Education Month. Coinciding with this observance is the Sixth Annual Professionals Preventing Stroke Conference. Sponsored in part by the Iowa Department of Public Health, the conference will be held on Saturday, May 6 at the Sheraton Hotel in West Des Moines. Participants will increase their knowledge of stroke, especially with respect to recent scientific work relating to cerebrovascular disease and stroke.

American Heart Association (AHA) Heartland Affiliate Community Heart & Stroke Director Shannon Rudolph points out that many people are still

Most major stroke warning signs appear suddenly. They include:

- Numbness or weakness of the face, arm or leg
- Confusion or trouble communicating
- Trouble walking, dizziness or loss of balance or coordination
- Trouble seeing in one or both eyes
- Severe headache with no known cause

unaware of the warning signs of stroke. "Stroke is treatable but people are not getting to the hospital within the first three hours of having symptoms."

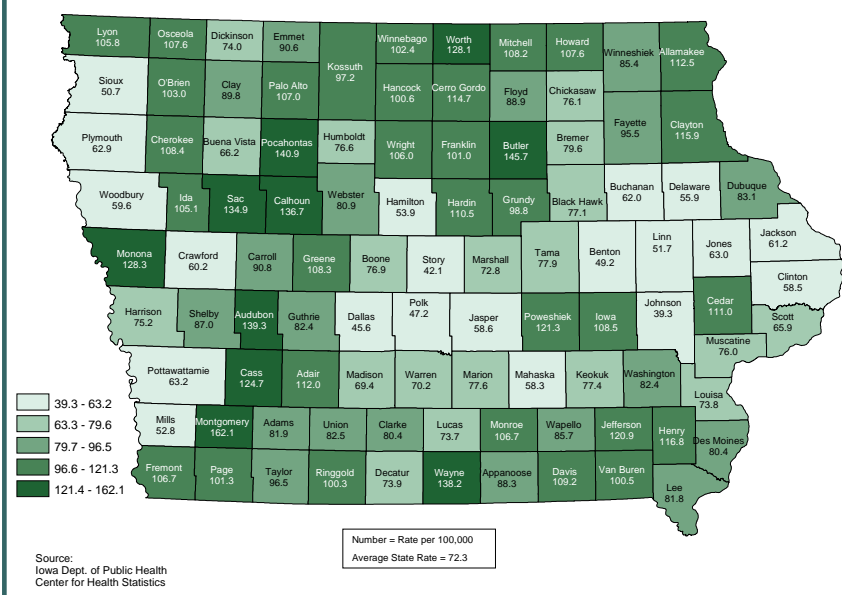
In 1997, researchers released findings from a study of patients admitted to an emergency department with possible stroke to determine their knowledge of the signs, symptoms and risk factors of

stroke. Of the 163 patients able to respond, 39 percent did not know a single sign or symptom. Patients above age 65 were 47 percent less likely to know any signs or symptoms of stroke, as opposed to 28 percent among victims under 65. Forty-three percent did not know any risk factors.

To view the study on patient awareness of stroke signs, symptoms, and risk factors, go to the American Heart Association's Stroke Journal at [stroke.ahajournals.org/content/vol28/issue10/](http://stroke.ahajournals.org/content/vol28/issue10/). For information about the conference, call AHA at 800-579-1977 or visit [www.idph.state.ia.us](http://www.idph.state.ia.us) and click on "Conferences."

\*Janet Peterson is the women's health coordinator in the IDPH Bureau of Nutrition and Health Promotion.

## Average Stroke Death Rates 2000-2004





# Public health conference inspires

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to the paradox that “the more successful public health is, the more invisible it becomes.” She emphasized the need to engage the community by valuing their experiential knowledge, providing opportunities for them to speak for themselves, and allowing residents and public health professionals to educate each other.

Dr. Lasker’s presentation will be soon available as a webcast on the Upper Midwest Center for Public Health Preparedness Web site at [www.public-health.uiowa.edu/icphp](http://www.public-health.uiowa.edu/icphp). Click on “Grand Rounds” and select “Current Session.”

The second day of the conference began with an inspiring speech by Dr. John Lumpkin, the senior vice president and director of the Health Care Group at the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. Referring to the research methods and community engagement activities by Dr. John Snow, who is regarded as the “father of modern epidemiology,” Dr. Lumpkin reminded public health professionals that “one of the most important things we do is provide information and help people connect the dots.” Dr. Lumpkin argued that public health professionals even today must think like Dr. Snow and do as he had done. Rather than simply removing the handle himself from the pump drawing the water that caused an outbreak of cholera in London in the mid-1800s, Dr. Snow attended a town meeting, presented the evidence, and convinced the authorities to shut down the pump.

The third guest presenter was Deb Gauldin, a nurse, educator and entertainer originally from Iowa who now works just outside Chicago. Gauldin, who uses “R.N., P.M.S.” as an academic title after her



*Deb Gauldin, R.N., P.M.S.*

name, had the audience roaring with laughter through a mixture of stand-up comedy, songs and a touching slide show that reminded participants of the importance of their work.

Each year the conference also serves as an opportunity for statewide associations and agencies to hold meetings. More than 10 such gatherings were held during the conference, including the annual meetings for the Iowa Public Health Association (IPHA) and the Iowa Environmental Health Association (IEHA). IPHA president-elect Beth Hochstedler and IEHA president-elect Brian Hanft, who co-chaired the 2006 Conference Planning Committee, used the conference as an opportunity to turn the reins over to Jaci Miller of Cerro Gordo County Public Health and Tammy McKeever from Clay County Public Health. Miller and McKeever will be working hard over the next year to prepare for the 2007 conference, scheduled for April 3 and 4.

Questions or comments about the 2006 or 2007 conference can be directed to Sara Patkin at [m spatkin@yahoo.com](mailto:m spatkin@yahoo.com).

*\*Sara Patkin was the 2006 Public Health Conference coordinator.*

*“I appreciated the opportunity to take the theory and best practices away from the conference and apply them to the local public health agency where I work.” – Sonni Vierling, Visiting Nurse Services*

*“The sessions were outstanding. It was difficult to choose; there were so many great topics.” – Pam Mollenhauer, UHL*

*“I really appreciated the opportunity to receive information on world-wide epidemiology such as avian influenza and others.” – Karen Doughan, Child Care Resource & Referral of Central Iowa*



Iowa Department of Public Health

Advancing Health Through the Generations

# Infrastructure, response plans tested in exercise

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"This exercise identified and reinforced the importance of state agencies to thoroughly understand their roles and responsibilities in resource coordination and management while functioning under an incident management system to support the primary response of our local partners," said Mary Jones, director of the IDPH Division of Acute Disease Prevention and Emergency Response. "It also identified the need for strong continuity of operations and continuity of government plans," Jones added.

In Iowa, the IDPH Bio-emergency Plan serves as the base plan for state public health response and is integrated into the State Emergency Response Plan managed by Iowa Homeland Security and Emergency Management (HLSEM). At IDPH, the Division of Acute Disease Prevention and Emergency Response leads the planning, training, exercising and response for the department and

provides technical assistance and consultation to local public health, hospitals and emergency medical services in preparing for and in response to public health emergencies.

During a public health emergency, the primary response is local. The Bio-emergency Plan and disease specific annexes outline the responsibilities

*"What we learned through this exercise is that the infrastructure and plans already in place for emergency response will serve us well, but there is more work to be done in preparing for an influenza pandemic. That is why we test our plans to identify gaps and make improvements."*

*– IDPH Director Mary Mincer Hansen, R.N., Ph.D.*

of IDPH for resource coordination and management (e.g., pharmaceuticals, specialized response teams, etc.) when local response capacities are limited or are becoming overwhelmed. The plan also outlines the department's responsibility for statewide disease surveillance, detection, prevention and control. One of the most important responsibilities of the state health department during a public health emergency is providing timely, reliable and accurate information to multiple response

partners and the public about the health threats an emergency may cause and how to protect ourselves from these threats.

The Bio-emergency Plan has disease specific annexes, one of which is pandemic influenza. Given the potential for 25 to 30 percent of the population being affected worldwide and in Iowa, responding to an influenza pandemic is expected to test response capacity and capability at the local, state and federal levels. For more information about pandemic influenza visit [www.idph.state.ia.us/pandemic/default.asp](http://www.idph.state.ia.us/pandemic/default.asp).

*\*DeAnne Sesker is the education/exercise coordinator in the IDPH Center for Disaster Operations and Response.*



IDPH Director Dr. Mary Mincer Hansen (foreground) participates in the Table-top Exercise held in Des Moines. Also pictured (l-r) are Dave Miller of HLSEM, Greg Fay of the Department of Administrative Services, Mike Beaman and Tom Baumgartner of HLSEM, and Col. Mike Harris of the Iowa National Guard.



# IDPH provides training guidance to hospitals

By John Carter\*

In an effort to assist hospitals with requirements for receiving federal grant funding for disaster and public health emergency preparedness, the Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH), Iowa Homeland Security and Emergency Management (HLSEM), and regional healthcare planners, have developed guidelines for hospital educational programs. The requirement being targeted is compliance with the National Incident Management System, also known as NIMS.

David Hempen, chief training officer at HLSEM points out the unique nature of Iowa's training efforts. "Because the federal government has not provided compliancy standards and training for hospital personnel, Iowa became the first state to develop NIMS complaint training and standards for hospitals."

During regional meetings held throughout the state in March, hospitals and regional staff were given a CD that contains the tools needed to hold this training. This includes PowerPoint presentations, course evaluations, examinations, and summary documents.

IDPH and HLSEM started collaborating on the training materials in the fall of 2005. The product they created, called the "NIMS Training Matrix," is unique to hospitals, local public health agencies, and EMS services. The courses included in this matrix are Basic and Advanced Incident Command System training, IS-700 (Introduction to the National Incident Management System) and IS-800 (Introduction to the National Response Plan). Both are important to understanding the Hospital Emergency Incident Command System (HEICS).

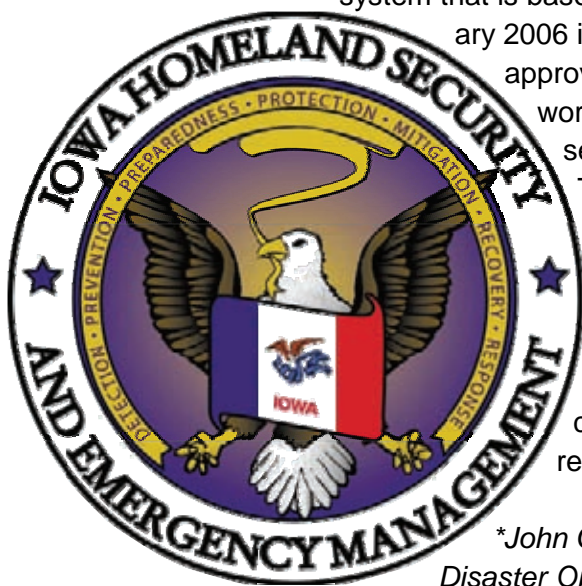
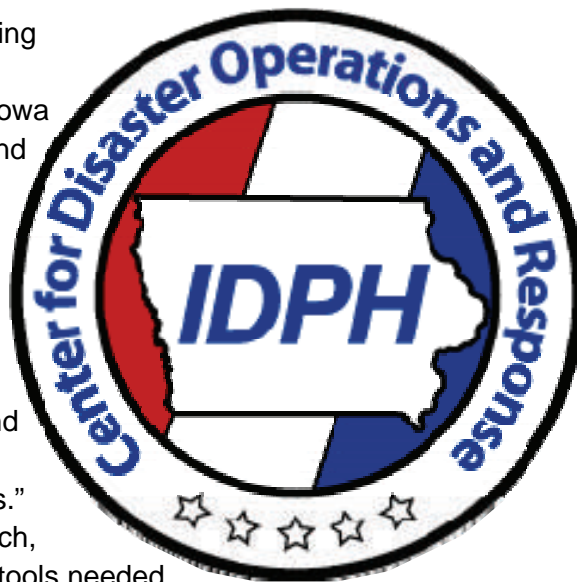
HEICS serves as an effective mechanism to direct a hospital disaster response. It is a standardized system that is based on the traditional Incident Command System. (See February 2006 issue of *FOCUS*.) Since HEICS is not recognized as an

approved FEMA course, however, the regional healthcare planners worked together to create a course that meets the requirements set forth by FEMA for their ICS-100 and ICS-200 standards.

These courses are titled "Basic HEICS" and "Advanced HEICS."

In addition, an abbreviated overview of the National Incident Management System was created. This course is only complete when taken with either the Basic or Advanced HEICS course. Once a student has taken both, he or she then completes the official FEMA IS-700 examination to finish the requirements for the course.

*\*John Carter is the medical services officer for the IDPH Center for Disaster Operations and Response.*



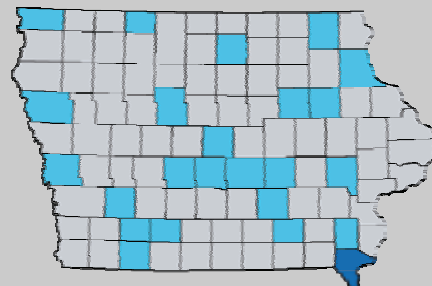


# Harkin Wellness Grant Features

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 a story about one grant recipient, the lead agency of which is located in the southeast county of Lee.



## Grant provides resources needed for a healthier Lee County

According to the most recent health needs assessment data, nearly 38 percent of Lee County residents are overweight. If that figure weren't staggering enough, Lee County Health Department Wellness Coordinator Kellie Workman says, "Local healthcare providers estimate the overweight/obesity rate to be closer to 60 percent. They also estimate that obesity cases resulting in type 2 diabetes in adolescents are three times higher than they were just a few years ago."

Also alarming is the amount of poverty in Lee County. In Fort Madison schools alone, more than 33 percent of children are eligible for free or reduced lunches, while in Keokuk nearly 55 percent qualify. "We know there is a correlation between economic status and health risks," says Lee County Health Department Director Michele Ross. It doesn't have to be that way.

With help from a Harkin Wellness Grant (HWG),

administered by the Office of Healthy Communities at the Iowa Department of Public Health, children in Lee County are being given more opportunity for physical activity as well as education to develop better attitudes toward health and wellness.

The Kid Zone after-school program in the Keokuk Community School District is getting a boost from the HWG through a program called CATCH (Coordinated Approach to Child Health) Kids Club. Three times a week for a period of six weeks, Workman visits local elementary

The CATCH Kids Club materials were developed by the Flaghouse Corporation, a supplier of physical education equipment and products. "As a former teacher, I really appreciate the box of 300 physical activity cards," Workman says. "All I do is select one or two and add them to my lesson plan."

Workman is conducting the interventions herself to show teachers just how easy it is to implement activities like these into their existing after school programs. "This has to be sustainable. When teachers see the

*"With more than 800 individuals participating in the Lighten Up Keokuk Challenge, lives are being changed. Bad habits are being replaced with healthy ones and discouragement is being replaced with optimism."*

*– Jan Trimble, executive director of the Hoerner YMCA of Keokuk.*

schools to conduct two hours of nutrition education and physical fitness activities. Depending on the needs of the school, Workman usually spends one hour with children in grades K-2, and another hour with 3rd to 5th graders.

(physical activity) cards, they realize that there is so much more to do than just dodgeball or kickball," she said.

As for the material on nutrition, most of which is contained

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Iowa Department of Public Health

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in a workbook, Workman noted it also serves the purpose of educating teachers. "Some teachers aren't as familiar with advances in the science of nutrition as others, so it's great to see them learning right along with the children."

Teachers aren't the only adults benefiting from the HWG. In southern Lee County, funding is being used to promote Lighten Up Iowa, the statewide campaign that encourages local teams to compete to lose the most combined weight between mid-January and the end of May.

In northern Lee County, partners have developed a different kind of fitness challenge called Lee County's World of Wellness Get Fit. From early June to mid-August, teams will work their way toward a destination of their choosing based on the number of minutes of physical activity logged.

"Distance" is calculated at one mile per minute of exercise. For example, if a team selects Sydney, Australia, they need to log 9,000 minutes of physical activity to reach their destination.

To keep all fitness challenge teams motivated, Lee County Public Health has created a binder full of resources related to tracking physical activity, exercise, eating right, recipes for healthy foods, and for the World of Wellness teams, a world map. Ross pointed out that another benefit of the binders is that they open up the opportunity for dialog with the Lee County Health Department about other health related issues. "Since many of these teams started in worksites, faith based organizations, and other places where people gather, we are able to use our relationship to help them advocate for more wellness programs, such as cooking workshops or tobacco cessation programs."

Another activity supported by the HWG is the planning, advertising, and holding of monthly lunch-and-learn sessions at area hospitals. Topics include diet, exercise and awareness of specific diseases, with presentations by nutritionists and doctors based in the hospitals hosting each event.

The results of Lee County Health and



*Iowa Games Executive Director, Jim Hallihan (center) visited Lee County for the opening ceremony of the Lighten Up Keokuk fitness challenge. Also pictured (standing, l-r) are Cathy Holtkamp of ISU Extension, Kellie Workman, Traci Roth of Hy-Vee, (seated, l-r) Michele Ross, Jan Trimble, and Rhonda Schreck of Keokuk Area Hospital.*

their partners' efforts to promote their activities to the public are clear. Workman has appeared on the KOKX weekly radio program "Just for the Health of It," and has been invited to speak to a number of different groups, many of which have formed fitness challenge teams. "It gives me great satisfaction to say that if I hadn't been invited to speak, they might not have decided to form a team," Workman says.

Ross said that another feather in their cap is the fact that 100 percent of the members of the Board of Health and 100 percent of the Board of Supervisors in Lee County are members of fitness challenge teams.

Lee County Health Department's partners in HWG-funded activities include: the Central Lee, Fort Madison, and Keokuk Community School Districts; the Fort Madison and Keokuk Chambers of Commerce; Fort Madison Community Hospital; Hoerner YMCA in Keokuk; Iowa State University Extension; KAME Wellness Center; Keokuk Area Hospital; and Keokuk Hy-Vee.

*\*Don McCormick is the FOCUS editor.*





# Interns represent the future of public health

By Brian Coyle\*

The public health profession is continually adapting and responding to the needs of the people in Iowa. In the 1990s we dealt with such issues as health care and welfare reform and drug use. Today these issues are joined by new concerns, such as disaster preparedness, bioterrorism and assessing needs for nutrition and physical activity. The public health workforce must continue to evolve to this ever-changing climate. An important way to do this is to train the future workforce through internship opportunities, such as those at the Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH).

Internships at IDPH help foster ties with the academic community and provide students with a real world working environment. Internships also provide opportunities to network, improve public health skills, and introduce new ideas to existing programs. All of this allows for a terrific educational experience.

Katie Dickens, an intern with the Iowan's Fit for Life Program in the Bureau of Health Promotion, is a good example of this process. "Being an intern at IDPH has allowed me to experience every avenue related to public health. The activities have ranged from working on state plans, developing a statewide physical activity database, and helping with community forums. One program in particular I have enjoyed is working with the state legislature in promoting Lighten Up Iowa," Dickens says.



*IDPH Capitol Complex Emergency Response Planner Cindy Heick (left) accepts the Partners in Education Award from Marti Kline, director of Community Relations for the Southeast Polk Community School District. IDPH was recognized by the school district for funding their initiative to purchase Automated External Defibrillators (AED), train staff in CPR and use of the AED, and develop policy and protocols for a Public Access Defibrillation program.*



*IDPH "Fit For Life" interns (l-r) Jill Lange, Brian Coyle, and Pilar Logsdon recently put together a lunch-and-learn presentation focusing on the importance of conversations in the development of healthy communities.*

In addition to providing interns with valuable work experience, IDPH also strives to develop the public health official by promoting leadership. This specific skill encourages students to develop talents that affect decision making, coordinating and facilitating change in Iowa communities.

IDPH Physical Fitness Consultant Tim Lane says, "The department has benefited greatly from the service of interns. We could not have accomplished what we have without their energy, skills, and commitment."

While we do not know what health concerns lay beyond the horizon, we do know we will have a pool of talented, well-trained professionals to carry on the traditions of excellence in health services.

*\*Brian Coyle is an intern in the IDPH Bureau of Health Promotion and a student of public health at Des Moines University.*



# Outreach activity educates kids, parents

The annual Kidsfest Festival, a fund-raising event sponsored by Children and Families of Iowa, was held this year at the Iowa State Fairgrounds. From March 10 to 12, approximately 13,380 people attended the event, which included inflatable rides, games, entertainment and safety information.

This year the Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH) was pleased to be a part of the Kidsfest "Safety City." Joyce Allard, Sandy Briggs, Debbi Cooper, Janet Kent, Tiffany Lentz, and Don McCormick transformed themselves into a carrot, the tooth fairy, or Clickette the Safety Clown and spent the weekend educating children and parents on a variety of health and safety issues.

"Dressing up as a character is an effective way to gain and hold a child's attention," said Joyce Allard, IDPH Community Education coordinator. "During this two and a half day event, we were able to teach thousands of children about pedestrian safety, dental hygiene, and nutrition, while also providing an opportunity for parents to learn about issues such as lead paint and medicine safety."



*From l-r: Sandy Briggs, Clickette the Safety Clown (Debbi Cooper) and Don McCormick.*

Giveaway items included coloring books donated by Gemini Concepts of Cedar Falls and reflective headbands, wristbands, and belts donated by the Greater Des Moines SAFE Kids Coalition.

## Iowa Community Health Prize application deadline nears

Community program coordinators across Iowa are encouraged to submit the results of successful community projects for consideration for the 2006 Iowa Community Health Prize.

Since 1995, Iowa Health System and the Iowa Farm Bureau Foundation have partnered to help improve the health and well-being of Iowans and their communities by sponsoring the Iowa Community Health Prize. The result has been the investment of over a quarter of a million dollars in a wide-range of community projects such as heart health education, preventing child sexual abuse and improving medical access for at-risk Latino women.

Last year, recipients of the awards were recognized at the Governor's Conference on Public Health: Barn Raising V. The confer-

ence, organized by the Iowa Department of Public Health, is held once every two years.

For 2006, four prizes in the amount of \$6,000 each will be awarded to community-based, voluntary projects and programs that have exhibited an impact on the health and well-being of their communities. Prize funds can be used at the discretion of each project's management and are encouraged to be reinvested in the community.

Organized public health programs, clubs, church groups, schools, foundations, hospitals and any community group may apply. The deadline is May 1. For more information or to obtain an application, please visit the Iowa Health System Web site at [www.ihs.org](http://www.ihs.org), call 515-241-6161 or contact a county Farm Bureau office.



# Health in Iowa: a historical perspective

During this 125<sup>th</sup> year of organized public health in Iowa, *FOCUS* is proud to highlight major historical events in public health. This issue's installment comes to us from Dr. Ronald D. Eckoff. Before retiring in 2002, Dr. Eckoff held a number of positions at the Iowa Department of Public Health, including that of acting department director. He ended his career as the medical director for the Division of Health Promotion, Prevention and Addictive Behaviors.

## State Board of Health saves lives by distributing diphtheria antitoxin

Diphtheria was once the leading cause of death among children. Prior to the development of a vaccine and a statewide immunization program in 1925, this highly contagious disease was treated by administering antitoxins. The efficacy of the antitoxin to prevent death depended on how quickly it could be administered after the onset of symptoms. If given on the first day of the disease, for example, the antitoxin would prevent death 100 percent of the time. If the antitoxin were administered on the fifth day of the disease, however, there was an 18 percent chance the patient would die.

The role of public health in making sure that antitoxin was both available and affordable can not be underestimated in protecting the health of Iowans during the early 1900s.

During the July 1, 1908 – June 30, 1910 biennial period, the State Board of Health added a new department for the purpose of distributing diphtheria antitoxin to the people of the state. To do this, the board contracted with H.M. Alexander Laboratories, which agreed to furnish antitoxin for 50 cents for a 1,000 unit syringe package. The cost of a 5,000 unit package was \$2.00.

The board established distribution stations in all 99 counties

where the antitoxin could be purchased from selected druggists. Initially, there were 141 stations in 136 towns. Under normal circumstances, it must be pointed out, local druggists were reluctant to stock antitoxin due to the cost involved. Under this

*"The health of our township is good, with no epidemics to report. Most of the deaths have been of children, from diphtheria, four in all."*

*– James Grohorn, clerk, Windsor Township, Fayette County, Nov. 12, 1880.*

program the druggist could order directly from the laboratory and could return antitoxin that was about to expire. Furthermore, the druggist did not have to advance anything for the antitoxin, and instead remitted funds to the laboratory only once a month. The State Board of Health also maintained a supply of antitoxin that could be shipped to druggists in an emergency.

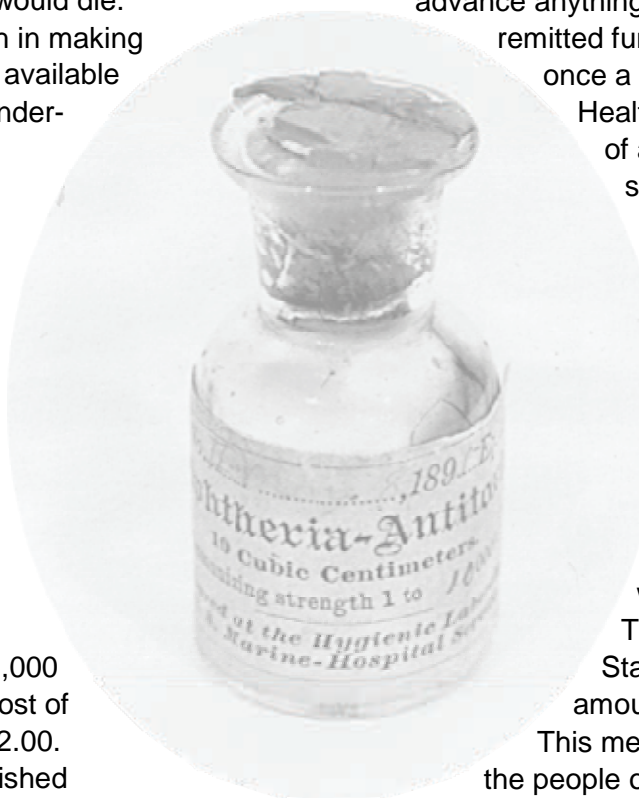
The 17th Biennial Report for the period ending June 30, 1914 indicated that the manufacturer and the State Board had shipped a total of 8,258 packages during the preceding four years.

The regular cost of the antitoxins during this period would have been \$38,422.

Thanks to the efforts of the State Board, however, the amount actually paid was \$11,526.

This meant a savings of \$26,895 for the people of Iowa.

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# Conference highlights productive lives of elderly

The 27th Annual Governor's Conference on Aging will be held on May 22-23 at The Sheraton West Des Moines Hotel on 50th & University in West Des Moines. This two-day event is packed full of information and new perspectives for and about Iowa's older citizens. Each year, high-quality presenters and informative workshops have made this conference a "must attend" event for many older Iowans, professionals, and family caregivers.

This year's theme is based on the award-winning work of photographer Ed Kashi and writer Julie Winokur. This extraordinary team traveled across the country and captured the realities of "Aging in America." From seniors who took up rodeo after retirement to a group of single elders who formed their own RV club, we see very clearly that seniors in America still have much to offer and are still seeking to live productive lives.

For more details, visit the Iowa Department of Elder Affairs Web site at [www.state.ia.us/elderaffairs](http://www.state.ia.us/elderaffairs), call Carolyn Danielson at 515-725-3318, or write to [carolyn.danielson@iowa.gov](mailto:carolyn.danielson@iowa.gov).



## Diphtheria antitoxin distribution crucial in early 1900s

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This may sound like a small amount in 2006 terms. However, it is quite impressive when you consider that the total appropriation for the State Board of Health, including the Bacteriological Laboratory (now the University Hygienic Laboratory) was only \$19,800.

The intervention by the State Board is even more momentous in the number of lives saved. As one observer noted in the report above, "The benefits to the state in the way of lessening the severity of diphtheria cannot be measured. No estimate of the number of lives saved by having a supply of antitoxin in practically every neighborhood in the state can be made. When the old commercial prices prevailed, many druggists refused to handle antitoxin."

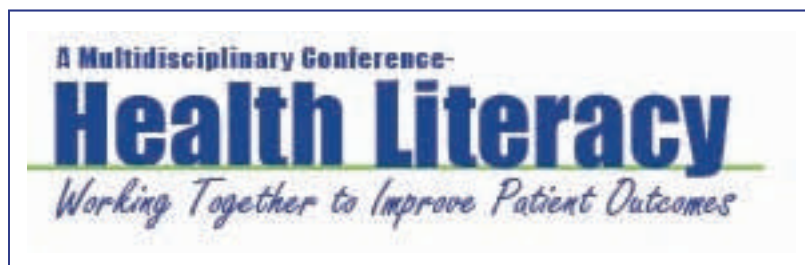
From 1914 to 1916, the market price of diphtheria antitoxins in the state totaled more than \$76,534. Of this amount, consumers picked up only \$23,356 of the bill, representing a savings of \$53,178.

The number of distribution stations increased steadily to as many as 300 by January 1917. The next year, the state began contracting with E.R. Squibb & Sons to reduce costs. Also, tetanus antitoxin, typhoid vaccine, and smallpox vaccine had been added to the contract. Under this new contract, 10,000 units of diphtheria antitoxin were sold to the state at \$3.35, representing a savings of \$8.65 off the regular price.



# ...and then some

## Health literacy conference scheduled in May



The Iowa Department of Public Health is proud to support and promote *Health Literacy: Working Together to Improve Patient Outcomes*, a multidisciplinary conference scheduled for May 17 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Hilton Garden Inn in Johnston. The conference will educate healthcare professionals on the topic of

health literacy and assist participants in developing action plans for their individual practices. The agenda will also include sessions on cultural competence, legal issues surrounding health literacy, as well as patient and healthcare professional panel discussions.

The target audience includes physicians, pharmacists, nurses, physician assistants, clinic personnel, dentists, healthcare administrators, pharmacy technicians, quality improvement personnel, and other healthcare professionals who communicate with patients. However, the true beneficiaries of this conference will be the patients that these healthcare professionals serve.

Register online at [www.iarx.org/IowaPharmacy/Events/healthliteracyconf.aspx](http://www.iarx.org/IowaPharmacy/Events/healthliteracyconf.aspx).

## WIC Program enhanced by new technology

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WIC," says one participant. "It's wonderful that I only have to come in once every three months!"

Other states will soon use this cutting-edge, Iowa-developed product. "Wisconsin is already using some pieces of the program," Roepsch says

proudly. Three other groups of states have expressed interest in IWIN.

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Iowa Department of Public Health

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