

# ACCESS UPDATE

December 2008



The ACCESS Update is a bi-monthly information source from the Iowa Department of Public Health: Bureau of Health Care Access.

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## Healthy Homes for Iowa

By Mindy Uhle, Healthy Homes Coordinator at IDPH

Iowa's Healthy Homes Initiative officially started in September 2007 with funding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Housed in the Bureau of Environmental Health Services, the overall goal of the Healthy Homes Initiative is to facilitate a holistic approach to housing and health issues faced by Iowans. Activities of this initiative include: 1) Providing training on housing issues to local environmental health staff, 2) Developing educational opportunities and materials for rural and Spanish-speaking Iowans and 3) Facilitating a statewide advisory committee to determine the future of healthy homes in Iowa.



Howard County is ready to begin their healthy homes outreach project

A unique partnership between Iowa's Healthy Homes Initiative and the Bureau of Health care Access is providing the opportunity for five Critical Access Hospital (CAH) facilities to pilot a healthy homes tool lending closet. Eligible entities included CAH facilities located in communities with less than five thousand residents (according to the 2006 Census) that were declared disaster counties in 2008. Participating sites across Iowa will receive HEPA vacuums, carpet shampoos and shop vacuums to loan to families who are referred to the program. Sites will also provide educational materials, provided by the Iowa Department of Public Health, to each participant. For more information on the healthy homes tool lending closet, contact [Katie Jerkins](#) in the Bureau of Health Care Access (515) 281-6765 or [Mindy Uhle](#), Healthy Homes Coordinator at the Iowa Department of Public Health (515) 242-6131.

# Featured Article

On September 18, 2008, at the [Iowa Rural Health Association Annual Chautauqua](#), IRHA President Cheryl Clark presented The Jerry Karbling award to Pam Kulczyk and her family in honor and in memory of Carl Kulczyk. Carl was the Director of the Iowa Department of Public Health Primary Care Office for 14 years.

His roles and responsibilities put him in daily contact with hospitals, clinics, health care providers, and others involved in health care across the U.S. Carl was recognized in Iowa, Washington D.C., and across the nation as an expert in the arena of primary care and the medically underserved. He worked with high energy and passion to ensure communities could offer health care to their residents especially to the underserved, uninsured and underinsured. Carl had the unique opportunity to review and, mentor with physicians, mental health professionals and mid-level providers and to help them find a community and facility to practice.



Carl Kulczyk's family receiving award



"So Long Crabbies"! Carl's favorite farewell to his colleagues

Carl was persuasive, somewhat fearless and had a great capacity for laughter. One of Carl's memorable statements was "if they only knew they would make me king if they could..." Your family, friends, colleagues, and many who receive health care because of your dedication know and remember you as a "king" for your good work and outrageous sense of humor in a sometimes humorless world. Thanks Carl!

## PROFILE IN EXCELLENCE

The Mission of the [Iowa Rural Health Association](#) (IRHA) is to provide leadership in bringing individuals and organizations together to identify and address rural health issues.

Jerry Karbeling was a member of the Iowa Rural Health Association and served on the Board for five years. He was President from 2002-03. Jerry was Senior Vice-President for Public Affairs and Corporate Development for the Iowa Pharmacist Association and a practicing pharmacist in Polk City. He was a health care activist and exemplified community health care access for rural residents. The Jerry Karbeling Award is presented annually to IRHA members who carry on the tradition of and works of Jerry.

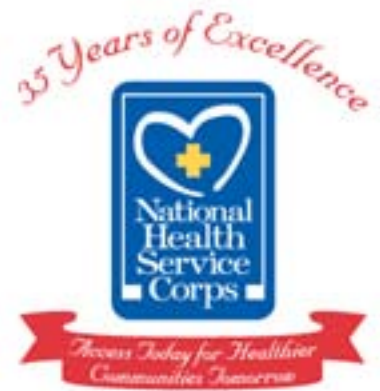
# National Health Service Corps

## National Health Service Corps in Iowa

By Doreen Chamberlin, Bureau Chief for the Bureau of Health Care Access at IDPH

[The National Health Service Corps](#) (NHSC) is a program of the United States Public Health Service (USPHS) in which health care personnel are placed in areas that are underserved. This is an important tool for recruitment and retention of health care providers in Iowa.

The NHSC recruits and places health care professionals at eligible sites within federally designated Health Professions Shortage Areas (HPSAs). NHSC recruits primary care physicians, nurse practitioners, physician assistants, certified nurse-midwives, dentists, dental hygienists, and mental health professionals. These providers serve in community-based systems of care in return for scholarship or loan repayment assistance.



The Bureau of Health Care Access through the Iowa Primary Care Office (PCO) works with the federal [Bureau of Clinician Recruitment and Service](#) (BCRS). BCRS administers programs that provide direct support to health professionals. For more information about these programs, please visit: <http://www.hrsa.gov/bcrs/>.

Iowa has been using the NHSC loan repayment program and scholar program for a number of years. For a professional to access either program they must be employed in an approved NHSC site. An eligible site must complete an application that can be found at <http://nhsc.bhpr.hrsa.gov/applications/rrea.asp>.

Communities or facilities that have not used this program before should know there are specific eligibility criteria that must be met for NHSC assistance. The facility/community must be:

- Located in a federally designated health professional shortage area (HPSA) (A HPSA is a geographic area, population group, or medical facility that has been designated by the Secretary of the [Department of Health and Human Services](#) as having a shortage of health professionals.)
- Urban or rural communities serving high-need populations
- Accept Medicaid/Medicare assignments
- Maintain a discounted fee schedule that assures there is no financial barrier to care for those who are at or below 200 percent of the federally designated poverty level
- Function as part of a system of care that assures access to the full continuum of services (referral and hospitalization)
- Maintain full-time practice hours

Continued on 4

# National Health Service Corps Cont.

Continued from 3

To determine if your community or area in which the site is located is already designated as a HPSA, go to <http://hpsafind.hrsa.gov>.

If there is no designation in place, please contact us at the PCO about submitting a request for a designation. Through our shortage designation program the PCO can assist in identifying if your service is eligible for a health professional shortage area.

**New and existing sites need to know** that site designations by NHSC are only good for three years. This year a number of Iowa sites discovered the hard way that their site application was out of date. NHSC assumes sites will monitor this and renew at the time of their due date or HPSA update. With site staff turnover and other reasons some sites missed the requirement and it resulted in a loss of loan repayment to some health professionals. The PCO will be taking new measures to identify existing and new sites to increase communications and technical assistance so we can access this program to its fullest and not miss out on opportunities. New and existing sites that may have lapsed should be sure to complete their application in the next few months to assure they are approved. NHSC will be starting their loan repayment and scholar programs early next year. The FY 09 Loan Repayment Program (LRP) applications are available on-line. The FY 09 LRP application deadline is January 31, 2009. Funding preference is given to those applicants who submit timely and complete applications. Once the applications are reviewed funding starts with the highest HPSA scores. In FY 08 primary care disciplines were funded down to a HPSA score of 8. In FY 08 dental and mental health disciplines were funded down to a HPSA score of 9. In FY 08 a total of 864 new loan repayment awards were awarded by the National Health Service Corps.

The PCO is committed to assuring access to health care for all Iowans and can assist in determining if this program is a good fit for you.

## Communications Toolkit

This toolkit was designed to enhance the communication and dissemination of rural health services. The different Sections are applicable and usable for a variety of programs and organizations. Don't miss the opportunity to check it out at <http://www.ruralhealthresearch.org/alerts/update/121208.html>.

# Worth Noting

## Bureau of Health Care Access NEW & IMPROVED Web site!

Knowing technology and electronic exchange can readily bring information to the public, the Bureau of Health Care Access has taken the opportunity to develop a new format and design for our website.

Our goal was to un-complicate the web browsing experience, to utilize more linkages and valuable resources, and to increase visibility with more user-friendly features. Please take the time to go to the site and locate the resources valuable to you. [http://www.idph.state.ia.us/hpcdp/health\\_care\\_access.asp](http://www.idph.state.ia.us/hpcdp/health_care_access.asp)

## Stay informed on the Public Health Modernization Act

During the coming months, IDPH Director Tom Newton has encouraged all public health partners to stay informed on the [Public Health Modernization Act](#) (PHMA). In mid-January, the department plans to launch a new Modernization Web site. Until then, the best source of online information is the Redesigning Public Health in Iowa project Web site, [www.idph.state.ia.us/rphi](http://www.idph.state.ia.us/rphi).

A variety of publications will also be used to keep partners updated on the PHMA. They are:

- Director Newton's [Quick Reads](#) is aimed primarily at Local Public Health officials and staff. Published every three to four weeks, articles in Quick Reads are brief and often have Web links for more information. If you're not already on the mailing list send a blank e-mail to [join-quick\\_reads@lists.ia.gov](mailto:join-quick_reads@lists.ia.gov).
- Published bimonthly, the [Iowa Health Focus](#) newsletter is written for a broader audience. In-depth articles feature departmental news and topics of interest to public health partners statewide. To join the mailing list, send a blank e-mail to [join-iahealthfocus@lists.ia.gov](mailto:join-iahealthfocus@lists.ia.gov).
- During legislative session, IDPH produces weekly [Legislative Updates](#). To find out what happens in the House and Senate week to week, sign up by sending a blank e-mail to [join-idphlegupdate@lists.ia.gov](mailto:join-idphlegupdate@lists.ia.gov).
- For more up-to-the minute information about the Public Health Modernization Act, send a blank e-mail to [join-redesign@lists.ia.gov](mailto:join-redesign@lists.ia.gov).

# Program Announcements

## [FLEX News](#)

The Iowa Medicare Rural Hospital Flexibility (FLEX) program has completed the Iowa State Rural Health Plan (SRHP). The document contains a variety of information and data which portrays rural Iowa with implications for health care. In the upcoming months the FLEX team will work with stakeholders to further integrate the SRHP and ensure it compliments the strategic plans of our partners.



Marvin Firch



Kate Payne



Diane Anderson

## [Iowa Health Workforce Center](#)

The Health and Long-Term Care Access Advisory Council, established in compliance with House File 2539 Health Care Reform legislation, held its first meeting on November 24, 2008. The council will focus on development of a strategic plan for health care delivery infrastructure and health care workforce resources. Work will include the continuous collection of data to provide a basis for health care strategic planning and health care policymaking. The council will assist IDPH in monitoring current needs, predicting future trends, and informing policymaking. The council's next meeting is schedule for January 23, 2009. For more information about this work, please visit: [http://www.idph.state.ia.us/hcr\\_committees/care\\_access.asp](http://www.idph.state.ia.us/hcr_committees/care_access.asp).



Michelle Holst

## [PCO News](#)

The Primary Care Office (PCO) is currently reviewing J-1 Visa waiver applications to fill the 30 slots allotted to Iowa. The J-1 visa waiver program increases access to primary health and mental health care in rural and urban communities that have shortages of primary care physicians and psychiatrists, by helping medical clinics recruit qualified foreign physicians.



Doreen Chamberlin

# Program Announcements Cont.

## [SHIP News](#)

The Iowa Small Hospital Improvement Program (SHIP) was awarded a \$671,307.00 grant for Fiscal Year 08-09. Seventy seven hospitals have contracted to receive SHIP funds. Please contact Katie Jerkins if you have not received your 08-09 SHIP contract.



Katie Jerkins

## [State Office of Rural Health](#)

The State Office of Rural Health (SORH) recently received notice from HRSA Office of Rural Health Policy for SORH FY 09 grant. The upcoming weeks will involve activities to complete the application. Data is being gathered and analyzed for the 2009 Governor's Designation for Rural Health Clinics (RHCs) process. Early next year the SORH will host conference calls with RHCs to update and discuss the process.



Gloria Vermie

## [Rural Health and Primary Care Advisory Committee](#)

February 18, 2009, the Rural Health and Primary Care Advisory Committee will host a Legislative Breakfast at the Capitol in room 116 from 7:30 a.m. to 9 a.m.



Katie Jerkins



Kevin Wooddell

**To learn more about the programs mentioned above go to**

[http://www.idph.state.ia.us/hpcdp/health\\_care\\_access.asp](http://www.idph.state.ia.us/hpcdp/health_care_access.asp)



# Calendar and Events

## **National Rural Health Association Policy Institute**

January 26-28, 2009, in Washington DC: "Change is coming to Washington – You need to be there too"

<http://www.ruralhealthweb.org/go/events/rural-health-policy-institute>

## **Legislative Breakfast**

February 18, 2009, the Rural Health and Primary Care Advisory Committee will host a Legislative Breakfast at the Capitol in room 116 from 7:30am to 9am.

## **Critical Access Hospital Peer User Group Meetings**

- January 6, 2009
- April 14, 2009
- July 14, 2009
- October 13, 2009

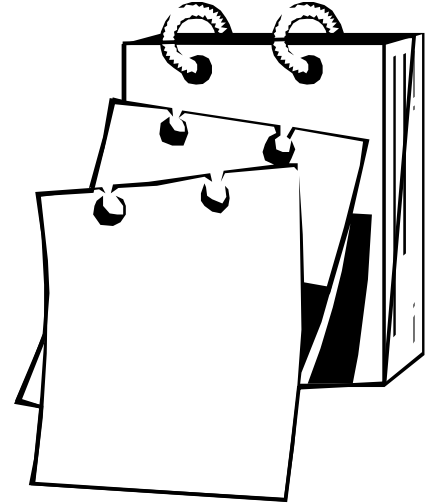
## **The 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Iowa Medicare Rural Hospital Flexibility Conference**

April 28-29, 2009, at the West Des Moines Marriott located in West Des Moines, Iowa.

## **2009 Iowa Public Health Conference**

April 7-8, 2009, at the Scheman Conference Center located in Ames, Iowa.

<http://www.iowapha.org/Default.aspx?pageId=127969>



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# ACCESS UP *date*

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