



Quick Reads

Thomas Newton, MPP, REHS
Director, Iowa Department of Public Health

Feb 12, 2008

Health Care Coverage for All bill

Last week, Senate Majority Leader Mike Gronstal and Rep. Ro Foege led a press conference announcing the introduction of the Health Care Coverage for All bill ([SSB 3140](#)) and its House companion ([HSB 636](#)). The bill is a result of the Legislative Commission on Affordable Health Care. Topics addressed in the bill include: Health Care Coverage for All (starting with children); Medical Home; Prevention and Chronic Care Management; Iowa Health Information Technology System; Long-term Care Planning and Advance Medical Directives; Quality, Transparency, Strategic Planning and Resource Development. The bills have significant impact on IDPH and the department continues to review them.

IPHA to hold Day on the Hill

Public health advocates from across Iowa will gather on Thursday, Feb. 21 for the [Iowa Public Health Association's Day on the Hill 2008](#). The event will begin at 10:30 a.m. with an advocacy training session at the Lucas State Office Building. Advocates will have a chance to speak with legislators during a lunchtime meeting and during special appointments. To register, go to www.iowapha.org and click on "Events."

Iowa Public Health Conference early bird registration ends March 3

IDPH is joining the [Iowa Association of Local Public Health Agencies](#) and other public health partners to host the [2008 Iowa Public Health Conference](#). Scheduled for April 1 & 2 on the Iowa State University campus in Ames, the conference is expected to attract more than 500 frontline public health professionals from across the state. This year's theme is *Public Health: Prevent. Promote. Protect.* Topics will include:

how neighborhoods and communities influence health; public health preparedness; health workforce shortages; health literacy; mental health; environmental health; oral health; sustainable food systems; and many others.

To take advantage of the early bird registration, go to www.iowapublichealthconference.com by March 3.

Wellmark Foundation RFP to focus on community-based wellness and prevention

In 2008, [The Wellmark Foundation's](#) funding efforts will focus on improving the health of communities in Iowa and South Dakota through prevention. Specifically, the funding will seek to facilitate programs targeting childhood obesity prevention, and community-based wellness and prevention initiatives. This is an important change from previous grant funding priorities established by the Foundation primarily targeting select disease states or conditions.

Communities across the nation are increasingly aware of the childhood obesity epidemic. This awareness is being transformed into active efforts to improve community access to foods and beverages that contribute to a healthy diet and increase opportunities for regular physical activity. In response to this Request for Proposals (RFP), communities may propose to collaboratively develop and promote programs that encourage healthy eating behaviors and physical fitness, particularly for populations at high risk of childhood obesity. The Wellmark Foundation will also support community-based projects that advance health promotion and preventive services. Of particular interest are vulnerable/health disparate populations of our two states that potentially experience a deficiency in the use of preventive care.

For more information, visit www.wellmark.com/foundation.

Radon awareness raised through Iowa Air Coalition

I'd like to take a moment to recognize the hard work of the Iowa Air Coalition. Made up of 68 counties, 4 cities, and 5 organizations, the Coalition worked so hard last month to raise awareness about the dangers of exposure to radon.

Radon is a serious public health concern in Iowa. The US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has identified all counties in our state as having predictably high indoor radon screening levels (on average more than 4 picocuries per liter). Together with the Iowa Air Coalition and the EPA, IDPH recommends testing all homes for radon during real estate transactions, and building all new homes with radon-resistant construction techniques.

For more information or to join the Iowa Air Coalition, contact Jim Doolittle at 1-319-892-6055. For general radon information, visit www.idph.state.ia.us/eh/radon.asp.

We want your best practices

IDPH is committed to telling the citizens of Iowa about the good things public health is doing to make a difference. To do this, we want to highlight your best practices/success stories. Please send your ideas to Don McCormick at dmccormi@idph.state.ia.us.

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