



# *Quick Reads*

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## **Surgeon General to visit Iowa**

I am excited to report that [U.S. Surgeon General Steven Galson](#) will visit Des Moines Friday, Sept. 5. The purpose of the visit is to promote and acknowledge local efforts to fight childhood obesity and increase healthy eating choices and physical activity among children. During his time here, the SG will visit a local Des Moines elementary school to see first-hand their efforts to improve nutrition and increase physical activity. He will also meet with state and local officials, hospital executives, and key legislators. Please stay tuned for more details as they become available.

## **Iowa takes on Nebraska in marathon**

During the Lighten Up Iowa 100 Day Challenge this year, IDPH had a tremendous turnout. In an effort to encourage IDPH employees to rededicate themselves to better health through physical activity, I recently issued a challenge to the [Nebraska Division of Public Health](#) to see who can have the most employees and/or employee family members complete an event associated with the Oct. 19 [Des Moines Marathon](#). I'm happy to report that the response to this new challenge has been very encouraging. So far, more than 80 employees have expressed an interest or have already signed up for the full marathon, half marathon, marathon relay, 5K run or kids run. My personal goal is to complete the half marathon.

If you're coming to Des Moines for the marathon, look for the green IDPH team shirts and say hi. Many of our participating employees will be walking their selected course, so what better way for public health partners to meet or get reacquainted? Or perhaps you'd like to issue the same sort of challenge to an agency in a nearby county? There's

still plenty of time to train, and friendly competition is a great motivator! For more information, visit [www.desmoinesmarathon.com](http://www.desmoinesmarathon.com).

## **Henry County succeeds in reducing weight problems**

Statistics on recent wellness programs in [Henry County](#) clearly demonstrate that schools, businesses, and policy makers are working together to make things happen. In particular, the county has been remarkably successful with students at risk for obesity/overweight. The percent of students in grades K-12 with weight problems has dropped from 41 percent in 2005 to 33.4 percent in 2007. Ninety percent of students in K-5 grades are now asking parents for healthy snacks. Furthermore, 100 percent of concession stands at community events now offer three or more healthy snacks—pretty good, considering the original goal was to ensure that only 30 percent offered healthy options! Public health advocates have also worked hard on policy changes in the school lunch program and vending machine selections.

Last year, in recognition of collaborative programs for children and youth, Healthy Henry County Communities was designated as a Community of Promise by the [Iowa Collaboration for Youth Development](#). In addition to focusing on children, Henry County has also targeted families, employees, seniors and parents of young children. For more information about the county's comprehensive wellness programs, visit [www.healthyhenrycounty.org](http://www.healthyhenrycounty.org).

## **Suicide prevention walks, Sept. 21 and Oct. 4**

Hundreds of Iowans are expected to participate in this year's [Out of the Darkness](#) suicide prevention walks. Scheduled for Sept. 21 at DMACC Lake in Ankeny and the Southbridge Mall in Mason City on Oct. 4, the annual events provide an opportunity to raise awareness and funds for suicide prevention efforts. Participants will walk three to five miles to honor and remember loved ones lost to suicide, and to reduce the stigma attached to depression and suicide. Last year, nearly 500 community members raised more than \$28,000. For more information, including start times and contact information for each walk, visit [www.outofthedarkness.org](http://www.outofthedarkness.org) and click on "Find An Event Near You" at the top of the page.

## **Save the date: health literacy event**

As part of a visiting professorship award in health literacy from Pfizer Inc., [Iowa Health System](#) will be hosting Dr. Nicole Lurie, director of the [RAND Center for Population Health and Health Disparities](#) on Friday Oct. 3. The goal for this day is to develop a framework for a proposed health literacy center here in Iowa that would offer education and training, resources and tools, and research on interventions and implementation. Dr. Lurie, who is also the co-director of the [RAND Center for Domestic and International Health Security](#), is known for her health literacy expertise and research, clinical care for

patients with low literacy, and development of practical tools for policymakers. She is an inspiring speaker and has a great deal of knowledge and experience in population-based and public health, addressing health disparities and *Healthy People 2010*. Please save the full day for what will be an exciting opportunity to advance toward a center of excellence in health literacy in Iowa. To receive more information as details become available, please write to Barb Savage at [savageba@ihs.org](mailto:savageba@ihs.org).

### **Teen dating violence focus of first video in series from NCIPC**

The National Center for Injury Prevention and Control (NCIPC) is excited to announce that CDC now broadcasts public health videos through the CDC.gov Web page. The first segment, "[Break the Silence: Stop the Violence](#)," addresses the topic of teen dating violence. It may shock you to know that one out of every eleven teens reports being hit or physically hurt by a boyfriend or girlfriend in the past twelve months. But why is that, and how can we change it? This question and others are answered in the video, which features parents and teens discussing the problem of dating violence and how to stop it before it starts.

The video is the first in the "Health Matters" series of on-line videos found on the new [CDC-TV Web page](#) and premieres work being done by the Center's Division of Violence Prevention (DVP) through the "[Choose Respect](#)" initiative. For more information about CDC-TV see [www.cdc.gov/features/cdctv](http://www.cdc.gov/features/cdctv) or to view the resources available through CDC-TV visit [www.cdc.gov/CDCTV](http://www.cdc.gov/CDCTV).

### **Wellmark grant due date changed to Sept. 23**

The timeline for the [Wellmark Foundation's](#) second 2008 community responsive grant cycle has been modified. Due to the Foundation's recent support toward Iowa disaster relief efforts, letters of interest are now due on September 23, 2008. The Wellmark Foundation's health improvement agenda seeks to fund projects in two priority areas: 1) childhood obesity prevention, and 2) community-based wellness and prevention. For complete application information, including potential proposal ideas within the priority topics, visit [www.wellmark.com/foundation](http://www.wellmark.com/foundation).

### **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](mailto:dmccormi@idph.state.ia.us).

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