



# Quick Reads

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

**November 10, 2008**

## **“What we do” page updated to include strategic framework**

An important part of the IDPH Web page has now been updated. By clicking on the [“What We Do”](#) button on the left side of each page, you can now access the department’s strategic framework. The easy-to-navigate graphic representation of our vision, mission, goals, strategies, and programs allows visitors to take a virtual tour of IDPH.

Why is this addition such an important resource for *Quick Reads* readers? Our mission is to promote and protect the health of Iowans. The [Public Health Modernization Act](#) (PHMA) will play an important role in helping us achieve that mission. As we move forward with the PHMA, it has become more important than ever that our partners, policy makers and the public know exactly what public health does. Here you’ll find more than 60 [program profiles](#) that highlight the importance of our work and show how we measure our progress. Also, each program profile provides concrete examples of how the program helps achieve the [Iowa Public Health Standards](#), our tool for promoting and protecting the health of Iowans. The new Web page is further enhanced by the [“Goals”](#) feature, which allows visitors to browse programs, strategies, and indicators of success based on six key components of the Iowa Public Health Standards.

Take the virtual tour today by visiting [www.idph.state.ia.us/what\\_we\\_do.asp](http://www.idph.state.ia.us/what_we_do.asp). Future plans to enhance this tour include links to action plans, and to the data and measures we use to evaluate our progress. Contact Jonn Durbin at 515-281-8936 or [jdurbin@idph.state.ia.us](mailto:jdurbin@idph.state.ia.us) with questions or suggestions for improving the site.

## **ATR grant activities exceed expectations**

Time flies when you're helping people. Lots of people. The IDPH Bureau of Substance Abuse and Treatment recently completed year one of their three-year, \$9 million [Access To Recovery](#) (ATR) grant. Although they were required to provide services to 802 clients in this first year, the project members exceeded that goal by 23 percent with 987 Iowans receiving ATR services from more than 70 available providers covering all 99 counties. Funded by the federal [Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration](#), ATR provides funds for client-selected, community-based services and supports that help people be successful in substance abuse recovery. Examples of services include transportation, child care, and family therapy. In its first year, 32 percent of ATR funding was directed to support services for people recovering from methamphetamine use. To learn more about the ATR grant, visit [www.idph.state.ia.us/atr](http://www.idph.state.ia.us/atr).

### **Two HCR advisory bodies meet this month**

In coordinating the activities of several key advisory bodies established to help implement the Health Care Reform (HCR) Bill, IDPH is happy to announce that two of those committees will hold their inaugural meetings soon. On Friday Nov. 14, the [Medical Home System Advisory Council](#) will meet, and on Wednesday Nov. 19 the [Prevention and Chronic Care Management Advisory Council](#) will hold its first meeting. The meetings are open to the public. For information about these advisory bodies, including meeting agendas, times, and locations, visit [www.idph.state.ia.us/hcr\\_committees](http://www.idph.state.ia.us/hcr_committees).

### **HIV in Iowa gains national attention, ER testing**

Iowa's high HIV rates were recently mentioned in a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) [blog](#). Dr. Kevin Fenton, director of CDC's [National Center for HIV/AIDS, Viral Hepatitis, STD, and TB Prevention](#), expressed concern over the fact that this year Iowa recorded the highest number of HIV diagnoses since we began HIV reporting in 1998. Dr. Fenton emphasized the need for continued attention to the HIV epidemic in traditionally low-incidence areas and talked about the responsibility public health leaders have for encouraging HIV testing. To view the blog, visit [www.cdc.gov/nchstp/blog](http://www.cdc.gov/nchstp/blog).

Last month, IDPH and the [University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics](#) began a unique project to facilitate increased and appropriate HIV testing. Armed with 9,000 test kits from the IDPH [HIV/AIDS/Hepatitis Program](#), the U of I has begun population-based HIV testing in the emergency room. The testing is designed to determine the prevalence of undiagnosed HIV in this population, while data from the project will help health care providers in Iowa determine how to respond to new testing guidelines from the CDC that call for more routine HIV testing. It is hoped that the project may serve as a model for testing in emergency rooms and health clinics in higher prevalence counties in the state.

## **Interactive health priority maps updated**

Twenty [health priority maps](#) developed from the Community Health Needs Assessments and Health Improvement Plan (CHNA & HIP) reports have recently been updated. Visitors to [www.idph.state.ia.us/chnahip/priority\\_maps.asp#2007](http://www.idph.state.ia.us/chnahip/priority_maps.asp#2007) can now use these interactive maps to view a brief synopsis of individual county's health priorities, strategies, and contact information. In many cases, you can even find a link directly to the local health department's Web site. Organized by [Healthy Iowans 2010](#) chapters, the maps are the result of a collaborative effort between IDPH and [Des Moines University's Public Health Program](#). The information on the interactive maps will help counties see patterns of priority issues beyond their borders and share their disease prevention and health promotion efforts.

## **IPHA newsletter recaps 2008 severe weather response**

If you haven't checked out the [special edition](#) of the Iowa Public Health Association's (IPHA) e-newsletter, [Public Health Matters](#), please do so. Available at [www.iowapha.org](http://www.iowapha.org), this 26-page issue is a real keeper. Readers will find inspiring stories of local public health staff and partners who responded to tornadoes and flooding across the state this summer. The articles in the IPHA newsletter showcase the commitment, resilience, and collective strength of Iowa's public health professionals and partners as we rose to meet, and continue to meet, a variety of public health challenges.

## **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*