



Quick Reads

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

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Marshall County continues on overdrive in H1N1 response

Public health partners across the state continue to respond to [novel influenza A \(H1N1\)](#). Of the 66 Iowa cases that have been confirmed, the vast majority have occurred in Marshall County. Since the end of April, public health partners located in the [Marshalltown Medical and Surgical Center](#) have seen more than 370 patients. Marshall County has also manned an influenza hotline which has maintained an intense pace. Many of the employees have been working more than 12 hours a day non-stop since April 27. Marshall County's response efforts, as well as those of other affected counties, have been and continue to be exemplary. The outstanding dedication to protecting the health of their community has greatly reduced the transmission of H1N1 to other areas of the state. We recognize and are very grateful for all of your tireless and difficult efforts.

While transmission of H1N1 may decrease this summer, there is a possibility that it will come back next fall during the peak influenza season. As we have seen in Marshall County, responding to influenza can be intense. I urge local public health agencies, businesses, and other partners to review their plans for seasonal and pandemic influenza response. For more information, visit www.idph.state.ia.us/h1n1.

Iowa nurses rise to the occasion

It's somehow fitting that Iowa celebrated [National Nurses Week](#) in the middle of the state's response to H1N1. Whether dealing with a sudden surge of patients, responding to severe weather events, holding local vaccination clinics, or just going about their important work every day, these front line professionals are one of our most important links in promoting and protecting the health of Iowans. Here at the department, we rely on nearly 35 full time employees with nursing degrees to help ensure that we achieve

this important mission. This number pales in comparison, though, to the more than 2,850 registered nurses across the state who list public health as a specialty. As we wind down our H1N1 response, I encourage you to reach out to a nurse near you, pat them on the back and say thank you.

QCI course now available

A course focusing on continuous quality improvement (CQI) is now available on the [Prepare Iowa](#) Learning Management System (LMS). Developed by the U of I College of Public Health, the Iowa Counties Public Health Association, and IDPH, this course includes an overview of CQI, a “how to section” on incorporating CQI into organizational culture, and information on how CQI works in governmental public health. State and local public health professionals who might be interested in this course include public health leaders/directors, environmental health administrators, and board of health members. Completion of the introductory course provides public health partners with the information they need to take the first steps toward identifying areas for improvement that will ultimately help them meet the [Iowa Public Health Standards](#).

IDPH, through the Local Public Health Services Grant, is encouraging public health partners to enhance or reinforce their understanding of quality improvement by completing the CQI course. When key personnel in each of the 101 public health jurisdictions complete the course, their agency can receive up to \$600 to advance public health and environmental services. To access the CQI course, search “Implementing and Sustaining Continuous Quality Improvement in an Organization” on the Prepare Iowa LMS at www.prepareiowa.com.

Requests for Nat’l. Health Service Corps site designation increase 250 percent

In addressing the health care workforce shortage in Iowa, the IDPH [Primary Care Office](#) has recently been aggressively promoting the use of federal stimulus funds passed through the [National Health Service Corps](#) (NHSC). Each year, staff review and submit about 20 requests to designate sites in Iowa as eligible to receive NHSC clinician scholars and loan repayors. Thanks to increased promotion efforts, the Primary Care Office has already submitted 53 such requests in calendar year 2009.

With a site designation, facilities can recruit primary care providers who are NHSC scholarship recipients or loan repayors. Scholarship amounts vary according to the provider and the years of service, while loan repayors can receive \$50,000 for a two-year commitment and as much as \$35,000 for up to seven more years of service in the underserved area. Eligible providers include primary care physicians, physician assistants, nurse practitioners, nurse midwives, dentists, dental hygienists, psychiatrists, and mental health providers. Congratulations and thank you to this office and to our local partners who have pursued this important funding stream!

Sign up for Elder Law Seminar, June 16

Iowa Legal Aid and the Iowa Department of Elder Affairs are holding a free [Elder Law Seminar](#) on June 16. The event will be broadcast to 30 locations in Iowa over the Iowa Communications Network and will feature a number of health-related topics, including Medicaid eligibility for nursing home care, substitute decision-making options, public benefits for health care, and more. Although designed for older Iowans, the seminar will also be helpful for public health partners who provide services to or work with older adults. For more information, visit www.probono.net/link.cfm?12519 or call 1-800-992-8161.

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*