



Quick Reads

Gerd W. Clabaugh, MPA
Director, Iowa Department of Public Health

March 11, 2015

Congrats on an Iowa first

Congratulations to [Linn County Public Health](#) on becoming the first Iowa health department to achieve accreditation from the [Public Health Advisory Board](#) (PHAB). Much like hospitals and clinics are accredited, governmental public health departments may voluntarily pursue accreditation through PHAB with a goal of advancing quality and performance. PHAB developed nationally recognized, practice-focused and evidenced-based standards to improve service, value and accountability to public health stakeholders.

Iowa has actively been working to address the performance of the governmental public health system since 2004. In 2014, IDPH and a coalition of partner organizations received the [Gaining Ground](#) grant from the [National Network of Public Health Institutes](#) (NNPHI). Gaining Ground is a two-year effort that seeks to catalyze national accreditation readiness and performance and quality improvement among local, tribal and state health departments in Iowa.

Go watch television

It's not often a public health professional will urge you to sit and watch television – we're usually trying to get people off the couch and moving! I highly recommend, however, the upcoming Ken Burns production of [Cancer: Emperor of All Maladies](#), a three-part, six-hour television event airing on Iowa Public Television March 30, 31 and April 1 at 8 p.m. In advance of the program, IDPH is partnering with IPTV, the Iowa Cancer Consortium and the American Cancer Society for three film previews and local expert panel discussions in [Carroll](#) (March 19), [Iowa City](#) (March 24), and [Johnston](#) (March 26).

Tobacco-free

IDPH continues to see progress in its collaborative efforts with our Tobacco Prevention [Community Partnerships](#). Some encouraging data to report:

- Of the 492 public school districts in Iowa, 300 are designated tobacco-free; of these schools, 85 are tobacco and nicotine-free.
- The number of properties listed on the Smoke-free Housing Registry has risen to 414.
- Nearly 800 Iowans accessed Quitline this month.

As always, while we celebrate the progress we have made in tobacco use prevention and cessation, we recognize room for continued improvement. Thanks to our community partners, I'm confident these numbers will continue to climb.

Governor's Conference on Substance Abuse

The 38th Annual Governor's Conference on Substance Abuse is scheduled for March 31 and April 1. The event, which focuses on prevention, treatment and recovery while offering recommendations for best practices, features a line-up of [speakers](#) of local, state and national importance. The [agenda](#) offers insights on a variety of topics from prescription drug misuse to suicide prevention to gambling treatment.

Iowa successes featured

In an effort to collect and share stories that highlight promising/useful practices developed by state and territorial health agencies, the Association of State and Territorial Health Officers (ASTHO) has selected the story of [Healthy Iowans](#), Iowa's state health improvement plan for publication.

ASTHO is also recognizing four states, including [Iowa](#), for sodium reduction projects. ASTHO has been working with CDC's Division of Heart Disease and Stroke for several years to engage state health officials in the development of a national strategy to reduce the sodium content in the food supply.

Quality improvement

The IDPH [Bureau of Health Statistics](#) issued 1,624 certified copies from February 2 to 13, compared to 1,417 certified copies issued from January 5 to 16 - an increase of 207 applications over a two-week time frame comparison. This quality improvement effort was the result of staff suggestions for improving workflow and processes, including the use of digital files, not microfilm. Digital files create a clear, clean image on the certified paper and it is also a quicker process; soon to be processing three applications now for every one processed under the old system.

The bureau has other QI processing plans to be implemented over the next six months.

Congrats and kudos

Congratulations to Debbi Cooper and Mindy Uhle of the IDPH [Bureau of Environmental Health Services](#) , recently recognized by Safe Kids Greater Des Moines and Blank Children's Hospital for their commitment to keeping kids safe in 2014.

Maggie Ferguson, Brain Injury and Disability and Health Program Manager, has been invited to participate in a meeting next month in Atlanta to help develop recommendations for the Disability and Health Branch of [CDC's National Center on Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities](#).

Mary Greene and Addie Rasmusson of the IDPH [Bureau of Family Health](#) have been nominated to serve as co-Presidents elect for the [National Network for State Adolescent Health Coordinators](#) (NNSAHC) by its Leadership Team.

Stay informed, share your story

To get *Quick Reads* directly in your inbox, please send a blank e-mail to join-quick_reads@lists.ia.gov. To contribute a news item or smart practice, please write to Polly Carver-Kimm at Polly.Carver-Kimm@idph.iowa.gov.

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

— Gerd