



Quick Reads

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April 7, 2015

National Public Health Week

For nearly 20 years, the [American Public Health Association](#) has been the driving force behind [National Public Health Week](#), traditionally held during the first full week of April. I'd like to take time during this week to thank our partners across the state that help IDPH raise awareness about public health and prevention. The past few months have been especially demonstrative of the importance of our strong public health ties in Iowa.

Efforts relating to the West African Ebola outbreak, including health monitoring of travelers returning from the region to Iowa, as well as work to prevent the spread of the national measles outbreak by reinforcing the vaccination message in Iowa are examples of the importance of our public health system. Thankfully, Iowa has seen neither a case of measles nor an Ebola case; even so, I am confident in our ability to handle any public health emergency which might arise in Iowa.

County Health Snapshots

The new [County Health Snapshots](#) and [Top Causes](#) reports are now available on the IDPH tracking portal. The County Health Snapshots include more than 80 measures which can be combined into multi-county rates, and can be customized for local county needs. The Top Causes reports present the top causes for death, hospitalizations and emergency department visits by county and by state.

I-STEP grows

The [Iowa Students for Tobacco Education and Prevention](#) (I-STEP) youth tobacco prevention program has reached a new milestone. As of this month, there are 79 I-STEP chapters representing 48 counties and 1,414 registered members in grades 8-12. This surpasses the goal of reaching 1,200 members for the year. It's also notable that there is now a registered I-STEP chapter in Tama County –the first time in the 15-year history of the program to have youth involvement in Tama County.

Iowa Governor's Conference on Public Health

I hope to see you at the annual [Iowa Governor's Conference on Public Health](#) next Tuesday and Wednesday in Cedar Rapids. This year's event, themed *Public Health is on the Move: Accreditation, Assessment and Assurance*, features U.S. Surgeon General, Vice Admiral (VADM) Vivek H. Murthy, M.D., M.B.A., as the keynote speaker.

Quality improvement

The IDPH [Bureau of Professional Licensure](#) has implemented a new phone system which allows random, automated call distribution to available staff members. This change has resulted in more calls being answered immediately and better customer service for our regulated community. In the first seven days of implementation, staff answered more than 700 phone calls.

Congrats and kudos

Congratulations to Jon McNamee, director of [Black Hawk County Health Department's](#) enforcement, surveillance and preparedness division, who has been awarded the 2015 Distinguished Service Award from the [Iowa Environmental Health Association](#).

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

— Gerd