

Quick Reads

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Dr. Quinlisk retires

After 24 years as State Epidemiologist/IDPH Medical Director, Dr. Patricia Quinlisk formally retired late last month. Dr. Quinlisk came to IDPH from Oklahoma, where she was the first woman to hold the position of state epidemiologist. She brought a unique skill set to the role that was acquired through experience as a clinical microbiologist, Peace Corps Volunteer in Nepal, preventive medicine physician and field epidemiologist with CDC.

Though retiring, Dr. Quinlisk is still teaching and working on important health issues, and will continue to serve as an invaluable resource for all of us in public health.

Dr. Quinlisk's hard work and dedication have inspired so many and we look forward to continuing to work with her to protect and improve the health of Iowans.

Note: Coming in the November edition of Quick Reads, get to know Dr. Quinlisk's successor, Dr. Caitlin Pedati.



Recognizing Dr. Quinlisk's love of hiking (she's hiked in locations around the globe!), she was presented with a personalized walking stick at her retirement reception.

Keeping score

IDPH strives for transparency. Our [departmental priority](#) score cards provide regular data updates at the department and division levels, enabling executive and program-level staff, local public health, as well as the public, to identify trends, evaluate progress and prompt discussion about what's going well and what's not.

The scorecards are especially useful to local public health agencies because they provide a summary of what IDPH has identified as priority areas, and how that matches their communities' priorities. Additionally, the scorecards provide useful demographic data at a state level. Finally, Performance Management is a [PHAB](#) requirement. The IDPH model is one that can be duplicated at the local level.

IDPH goes to Washington

IDPH was represented at the [White House Best Practices in Combatting the Opioid Epidemic Conference](#). Participants discussed federal initiatives and strengthening partnerships.



Can you find IDPH Director Clabaugh and Opioids Initiative Director Kevin Gabbert? Count up to the sixth row and you'll spot them on the right hand side.



IDPH spotlight: Disease Intervention Specialists (DIS)



IDPH DIS team (L-R): Gina Mallett, Maggi Foreman, Mary Costello, Shannon Wood, Casey Young, Jodie Liebe, and Linda McQuinn.

The seven IDPH DIS and additional DIS in Polk, Linn, Scott and Black Hawk counties are responsible for following up with persons diagnosed with HIV, syphilis, gonorrhea or chlamydia. They ensure these individuals are connected with recommended medical services and referred to other services as needed. They also conduct confidential partner notification, so that anyone exposed to the infection is notified and connected with treatment and testing, while maintaining the confidentiality of the client.

The [Partner Services Program](#) and the DIS who execute its duties primarily contribute to the Assessment and Assurance core functions of public health. Within the Assessment domain, DIS conduct disease investigations, locate and identify individuals who may have been exposed to infection, and are responsible for monitoring trends and reporting unusual activity. Within the Assurance domain, they connect persons diagnosed and exposed to infection with proper treatment and play a role in enforcing laws related to disease reporting and investigation.

As STD diagnoses continue to increase, the challenges DIS face continue to grow. Even so, they are dedicated to improving health outcomes for individuals and communities. No matter how demanding caseloads become, they prioritize their work and reach clients in greatest need.

Walking the talk...

IDPH joins the CDC in urging all Iowans over 6 months of age to get their annual [influenza vaccination](#). IDPH Director Gerd Clabaugh, Dr. Quinlisk and Dr. Pedati were honored to be joined again this year by Iowa Lt. Governor Adam Gregg in receiving their flu shots. Thanks also to Polk County Public Health nurse Susan Brooks, who administered the vaccinations.



L-R: Dr. Pedati, Dr. Quinlisk, Lt. Gov. Gregg, IDPH Dir. Clabaugh

...and walking the walk

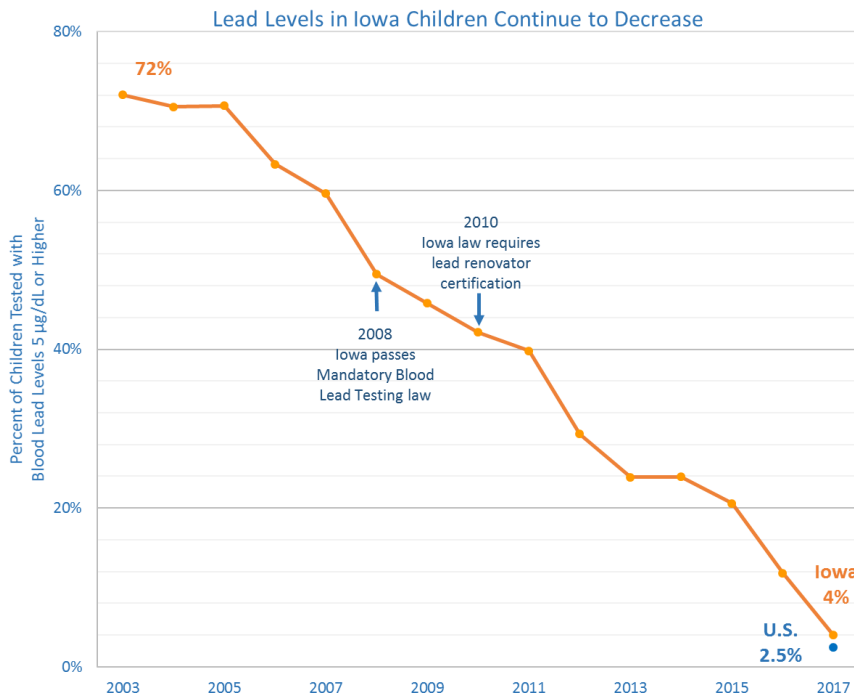
Thanks to all the state employees who turned out for our Capitol Complex Healthiest State Walk on October 3. What a great turnout! Our group was joined by several other state department directors, as well as Lt. Governor Adam Gregg.

This year, the [Healthiest State Walk](#) served as the kick-off to [Healthiest State Month](#). Throughout the month of October, Iowans are encouraged to "Live 5-2-1-0" and to remember that "Healthy Choices Count!"



Monthly data snapshot

Data are essential to the practice of public health. Each month, Quick Reads highlights selected tidbits to help create awareness of IDPH data and epidemiology.



¹CDC defines children under the age of six years with 5 micrograms per deciliter or higher of lead in their blood as lead poisoned.

In 2003, 72 percent of Iowa children tested for lead met the CDC's current criteria for lead poisoning¹. Since 2005, Iowa has seen a steady decrease in the percentage of [lead poisoned children](#). In 2017, Iowa's percentage of lead poisoned children (4 percent) was comparable to the U.S. rate of 2.5 percent. Most of this decline can be attributed to Iowa laws that increased awareness of lead poisoning by requiring children to be tested and contractors be certified when working in homes built before 1978.

Lead exposure can affect nearly every system in the body. Because lead exposure often occurs with no obvious symptoms, it frequently goes unrecognized without a blood lead test. IDPH recommends children be tested as early as 12 months and retested again at 24 and 36 months of age. For more blood lead testing data, visit the [Iowa Public Health Tracking Portal](#).

Congrats and kudos

Congratulations to Fred Phelps, who has retired after serving more than 30 years on the [Delaware County](#) Board of Health.

Kudos to IDPH's Maggie Ferguson, honored with the President's Award at the annual meeting of the National Association of State Head Injury Administrators ([NASHIA](#)).

Congratulations to Jeanne Schwab, who has retired after 32 years with [Audubon County Public Health](#), including 15 as director.

Congrats to IDPH's Terry Meek and Denise Wheeler, recipients of the [Iowa Primary Care Association's](#) 2018 Iowa PCA Impact Award.

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