



Healthy Iowans 2017-2021 SHIP

The Successes and Challenges of Implementation

Collected by the Bureau of Public Health Performance

Division of Public Health

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The Successes and Challenges of Implementation

Now that implementation of the [Healthy Iowans 2017-2021 State Health Improvement Plan \(SHIP\)](#) is complete, it is important to evaluate the progress made in each focus area. The 2017-2021 SHIP included 11 focus areas:

- Health Equity/Social Determinants of Health
- Life Course
- Health System Improvement
- Acute Disease
- Addictive Behaviors
- Chronic Disease
- Disaster Preparedness
- Environmental Health
- Healthy Living
- Injury & Violence
- Mental Health, Illness, & Suicide

Addressing these focus areas comes with challenges; as time, resources, and capabilities are limited for many organizations. The following document highlights some successes (signified by a green check mark) and challenges (signified by an orange triangle). These strategies were gathered during phone calls or email correspondence with community organizations. Although this is not a comprehensive list of health improvement strategies or partners, it provides a small snapshot into the results of Healthy Iowans 2017-2021.

Health Equity/Social Determinants of Health

Healthy Equity



“The Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH) continues to ask staff a question about their confidence in their ability to work with people with disabilities. IDPH also collects disability data through the BRFSS, IYS and YBRS which can be used to identify disparities in health and health behaviors experienced by people with disabilities.”



“IDPH no longer has federal funding to address health disparities experienced by people with disabilities.”



“The Siouxland District Health Department hosted two webinars on Building Inclusive Health Coalitions and Using Community Health Inclusion Index to improve accessibility and promote inclusion of people with disabilities in communities.”



“The public health community has been overwhelmed with COVID-19 and many professionals still lack an understanding of disability etiquette or how to include people with disabilities in all public health efforts.”

Life Course

Alzheimer's Disease



“One success of the Alzheimer’s Association is that we were able to pivot during the pandemic to be able to continue to offer programs and services to lowans. This allowed us to reach more people in more places, especially as we went into the second year of the pandemic. Our number of people served is rebounding, and technology is still playing a vital role in bringing more people to our organization. Education and support groups remain key in supporting families, caregivers and persons living with dementia, along with our 24/7 helpline in over 200 languages.”



“One challenge that requires continuing work and additional help from others is awareness of our organization (Alzheimer’s Association) along with the need to focus on brain health and early detection.”

Health System Improvement

Transportation



“The Iowa Transportation Coordination Council partnered with the Iowa Developmental Disabilities Council in 2021 to create a one-time developmental disability transportation grant program. The program purpose was to get persons with developmental disabilities out into their communities and to address any barriers or challenges. Five projects were awarded funding through this program with projects including a technology implementation, a transit equity study, and three new public transit services. The project timelines were brief, from March 1 through September 30, 2021. In that time, the new transit services provided 10,985 rides with 6,274 of those rides being for persons with disabilities. Those transit services enabled persons with disabilities to participate in activities in their communities and beyond – very important to their mental health as the COVID-19 pandemic wore on.”



“Encouraging local public health agencies to work with regional planning agencies and the public transit agencies in identifying projects related to accessing health-related services was identified in the Healthy lowans Plan. This coordination still remains an issue across the state with public transit agencies able to be a solution but not knowing the needs of public health and other community medical providers.”

Insurance Affordability & Coverage





“Iowa has made great strides in insurance coverage (ranking #3 in the country/97% kids covered) for children through state Medicaid and Hawki insurance programs.”



“Iowa continues to be challenged in this data during the last few years, specifically during the COVID-19 pandemic. In the past year, our data shows that Davis, Wayne, Van Buren, Chickasaw, Allamakee, Floyd, Clayton and Appanoose and Decatur counties have some of the highest rates of uninsured children in the state. Our focus moving forward is to do an environmental scan of why these percentages are so high in those particular counties.”


Lack of Primary Care Services


 “The urgency created by direct care worker shortages and exacerbated by the pandemic have brought focus and momentum to addressing the needs of the direct care workforce (DCW) here in Iowa as well as nationwide. As a result, there has been even greater collaboration among stakeholders on SOLUTIONS that will address some of these issues with an expansion of the DCW registry a foundation upon which to build! An enhanced DCW Registry will eventually provide a permanent record of DCW training or certifications which would follow DCW wherever they may work whether it be in a long-term care facility, hospital, home and community settings or any other setting. During the 2021 Legislative session, HF672 was introduced. This bill related to the development of an implementation plan for a centralized direct care workforce database. Many partners and stakeholders supported the bill.”

 “Stakeholders, including Iowa CareGivers, need to continue to increase public awareness about the importance of the entire direct care workforce on the delivery of health and long-term support and services in Iowa. There needs to be continued advocacy for prioritizing policies, systemic changes and resources that will bring programs/services/best practices meeting the needs of the direct care workforce to scale.”

Acute Disease


Adolescent Immunizations


 “In 2015, only 21% of 13 to 15-year-olds in Iowa had completed the HPV vaccine series, but this increased to 46.2% in 2021 (IRIS 2022). There are many contributing factors, but one possible contributing factor is the strong collaboration between the Medicaid Managed Care Organizations (MCOs), Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH), American Cancer Society (ACS), and University of Iowa (UI). Over the past five years, this group has sent out HPV vaccination reminders to Medicaid members and educational information for healthcare providers about the importance of HPV vaccination and that a strong provider recommendation helps to increase HPV vaccination rates.”

 The pandemic likely led to lower cancer screening rates and fewer cancers detected at an early stage. This is the focus of the most recent [Cancer in Iowa 2022 report](#) from the Iowa Cancer Registry. The pandemic may have also impacted HPV vaccination rates.


Addictive Behaviors

Substance Abuse

 “The Bureau of Substance Abuse, in collaboration with the Iowa Board of Pharmacy, launched a new initiative that permanently makes naloxone free at any participating pharmacy in the state. Since introducing this initiative, over 2,500 naloxone kits have been dispensed.”

 “Iowa, like many other states, continues to see an increase in the number of deaths involving opioids. While COVID has likely played a role in the increases being seen, many states (including Iowa) started to experience an increase prior to COVID. The reason for this is due to illicitly manufactured synthetic opioids (such as fentanyl). Estimated to be 25-50 times more powerful than heroin, these illicitly manufactured opioids are a cheap alternative that are used in place of, or mixed with, other opioids.”

Tobacco/Nicotine Use


 “In 2019 the IDPH’s Tobacco Use Prevention and Control Division offered the first ever youth- focused tobacco cessation program, My Life My Quit. My Life My Quit has allowed youth across the state to receive personalized counseling for help to quit vaping and other tobacco products amidst the youth vaping epidemic.”



“Tobacco prevention and control is constantly challenged with new and emerging tobacco and nicotine products. We continuously see a rise in vaping use rates, especially among youth.”

Chronic Disease


Cancer

 “The Iowa Primary Care Association had a number of successes in colorectal cancer screening. First, five of ten grantees partnered with a GI in their area to provide under-resourced patients with free diagnostic colonoscopies after a positive screening test. Additionally, one clinic had a 75% screening rate for an entire year! Throughout the last five years, the Iowa Primary Care Association has also brought awareness to health centers on the new colorectal screening age of 45.”



“One challenge is finding consistent ways to track colonoscopy completion and follow-up with external partners. Getting Cologuard – an at-home colon cancer screening – approved by Medicaid is also a challenging task.”


Diabetes

 “IDPH’s Bureau of Chronic Disease Prevention and Management reports that Iowa now has a Diabetes Prevention Program for State of Iowa employees and their adult dependents. In collaboration, Wellmark and the Department of Administrative Services worked to identify the recognized program. On January 1, 2022, the new coverage began and as of March 18, there have been 789 participants enrolled.”



“Continued work should focus on provider screening, testing and referral to improve the identification of people with prediabetes or at a high risk of developing type 2 diabetes. More screening and testing will ultimately increase the percentage of people who are aware of their condition or level of risk.”

Heart Disease

 “In February of 2021, the Iowa Department of Public Health WISEWOMAN (WW) and I-Smile Silver Programs teamed up to provide two educational sessions on the relationship between oral health and cardiovascular disease. Participants of these sessions included: staff of WW local programs, health care providers, and pharmacists. The aim of this collaboration was to increase the referral of WW Program participants to oral health care resources as another step in the prevention of CVD. Following the encouraging feedback received from participants, staff from both the I-Smile Silver and WW Programs designed a two-page educational flyer on dental care and heart health. The flyer, available in both English and Spanish, provides a list of community-based dental resources with contact information.”



“In Fiscal Year 21, the Iowa Department of Public Health developed a Request for Proposal (RFP) opportunity which would award two health care entities that provide WWT services with \$10,000 each to develop protocols for the identification of patients with undiagnosed hypertension. The RFP was sent to eligible entities in April 2021. When no clinics applied, the RFP was re-issued in July 2021, providing an opportunity for four health care entities to receive an award of \$5,000. Again, there were no respondents. The Department will continue to identify clinics and solicit interest in implementing existing undiagnosed hypertension protocols.”

Disaster Preparedness



“IDPH’s Bureau of Emergency and Trauma Services successfully equipped hospitals and ambulances with state-of-the-art technology. Lucas device systems (used for CPR) were distributed to 65 critical access hospitals, and 420 Lucas device systems were distributed to EMS services throughout the state.”



“The Lucas device systems were made available through private grant funding. Additionally, there is no way to track the specific usage of these systems in comparison to other devices.”

Environmental Health

Water Quality



“With the installation of more than 375 water filling stations in Iowa schools over the past five years, the Delta Dental of Iowa Foundation and Rethink Your Drink partners improved access to drinking water during the school day and impacted more than 184,400 students and staff.”



“Communities without optimally fluoridated drinking water often encounter policy and logistical challenges despite access to funds to support these efforts.”



“The Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is working to protect the health of Iowa residents and the environment from a class of chemicals of emerging concern known as per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (commonly referred to as PFAS). In 2020, the DNR developed a PFAS action plan to identify and prioritize testing of public water supplies to determine if PFAS chemicals are present in Iowa’s public water supplies. Sampling of water supplies started in July 2021. Results from the first round of sampling can be found [here](#).”



“The existing body of scientific literature suggests that exposure to PFAS may result in health effects such as developmental defects in fetuses and infants as well as certain types of cancer.”

Healthy Living

Obesity, Nutrition, & Physical Activity



“Due to the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA), Continuing Resolutions, and the Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriation Act, 2022, Iowa WIC has been able to temporarily increase the amount participants receive for their Cash Value Benefit (CVB) for fresh and frozen fruits and vegetables from \$35 a month to additional support, based on pregnancy, postpartum, and breast-feeding women and on children.”



“The WIC Program will continue to need support to enhance partnerships between WIC programs/Breastfeeding Peer Counseling Programs and local hospitals. The pandemic made this more difficult over the past 2 years with restrictions in hospitals and high demand for other priorities.”



ISU Extension reports that “54% of program graduates participating in EFNEP and SNAP-ED in FY 2021 reported increased physical activity.”



Financial challenges and pandemic concerns have compromised access to some physical activity venues for Iowans.

Lack of Oral Health/Dental Services



“During the 2020 session, the Iowa State Legislature passed HF2267, a law related to settings in which dental hygienists may work. The Dental Board revised administrative rules in response to this legislation. Registered Dental Hygienists (RDH) no longer need supervision to perform educational and oral screening services. RDHs have been able to teach direct care workers, direct service professionals, family caregivers and other health providers. Expanded access to oral health education and oral screening services have had a positive impact on the oral health of Iowans including the underserved, at-risk older Iowans, and Iowans with disabilities.”



“To address continuing issues regarding access to oral health services especially for vulnerable Iowans and those living in rural areas, Iowa needs to explore and implement workforce models that have been successful in improving oral health access in other states.”

Sexually Transmitted Diseases



“HIV testing at IDPH-funded test sites increased from 8,860 in 2017 to 17,407 in 2021. Rapid and conventional HIV tests were administered in partnership with 72 agencies across six major settings.”



“The COVID-19 pandemic contributed to a reduction in total testing conducted by IDPH-funded HIV testing sites. However, subrecipients responded by rapidly adjusting program implementation activities and initiating novel service delivery models. These models included drive-through testing activities to reduce contact and maintain social distancing requirements, and the pilot implementation of rapid at-home HIV testing, which were successful in continuing testing services.”

Injury & Violence

Falls



“The Iowa Hospital Association, in collaboration with the Iowa Healthcare Collaborative, successfully decreased falls in the hospital setting.” This work was complemented by the Iowa Falls Prevention Coalition which continues to bring together partners to work on statewide strategies for falls prevention.”



One challenge that requires ongoing work is the need for increased, dedicated funding to address falls in Iowa.

Motor Vehicle Crashes



“In 2020, the state of Iowa recorded a record high seat belt usage rate of 95.2%. The usage rate is derived from an Annual Observational Seat Belt Usage Survey conducted by Iowa State University, Center for Survey Statistics and Methodology.”



“Impaired driving continues to be a challenge. The state is seeing an increase in both alcohol-impaired and drug-impaired driving fatalities.”

Mental Health, Illness, & Suicide



“Over the course of the last several years, the Iowa Department of Corrections (DOC) has worked to improve their forensic hospital. The forensic hospital is a 14-bed unit staffed with an amazing multidisciplinary team of mental health and medical professionals. The forensic hospital takes a targeted and strategic approach to mental and medical care by working continuously with patients, seeing successes restoring many of them to mental and physical competency...The role the hospital plays in patients’ lives and its ability to restore individuals to competency has far-reaching implications for not only the patient but also, attorneys, judges, jail staff, and community health providers.”



“While the DOC, and specifically the forensic hospital staff, work tirelessly to successfully restore individuals to competency, there are individuals who are not mentally able to be restored to competency and are unable to be stabilized. In these situations, DOC notes various challenges and barriers in the care of these individuals. Integration and coordination with community healthcare providers in treating these clients is needed.”



“The Iowa Army National Guard has increased the number of Master Resilience Trainers (MRT’s) at our units. MRT’s are soldiers from the units that attend a special 10-day training course. This course provides expertise in helping soldiers of the unit build mental toughness, strengthen character and strengthen relationships in their unit and at home. During our initial reporting period 2016, only 73% of our units had MRTs. During the 2021 reporting period we were at 95%, a 22% increase. The increase in trained soldiers provides our units with an enhanced capability when dealing with mental health and suicide challenges in our units.”



The Iowa Army National Guard continues to face challenges with substance abuse and its relationship to mental health concerns.