

February 2007

## Mary J. Jones named interim director

By Joyce Allard

**O**n Feb. 6, Governor Chet Culver appointed Mary J. Jones, BSEMS, PS, as the interim director for the Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH). Jones, who joined the department in 1995 to coordinate the development of the Statewide Trauma System, is well-known in the public health community for her efforts in emergency response and disaster preparedness.

Jones received her degree from Creighton University in Omaha and paramedic training from Mary Greeley Medical Center in Ames, Iowa. Jones is originally from Nevada, Iowa, and now resides in Altoona.

"Continuity of department operations is my primary goal during this period of transition," Jones said. "Public health professionals in our state do an outstanding job of promoting and protecting the health of Iowans. I am happy to serve in this interim leadership role as we continue in that mission and while we await Governor Culver's choice for a permanent director. I know he is taking this task very seriously as he looks for the person that best

matches his vision of public health in Iowa."



**IDPH Interim Division Director  
Mary J. Jones.**

Interim Director Jones will oversee department activities working closely with Deputy Director and [Behavioral Health and Professional Licensure](#) Division Director Janet Zwick; Division Directors Julie McMahon ([Health Promotion and Chronic Disease Prevention](#)); Tom Newton ([Environmental Health](#)); Bonnie Mapes ([Tobacco Use Prevention and Control](#)); and Chief Financial Officer Marcia Spangler. All are members of the Department's Executive Team.

In addition, Jones will continue her leadership role as the director of

the IDPH [Division of Acute Disease Prevention and Emergency Response](#). This includes the Bureau of Information Management; Bureau of Disease Prevention and Immunization, Bureau of Emergency Medical Services; Center for Acute Disease Epidemiology; Center for Disaster Operations and Response; and the Office of Communications and Public Information.

Since October 2001, Jones has headed emergency preparedness efforts for IDPH, helping to ensure the Department's response efforts are coordinated with traditional public health partners such as hospitals and local public health agencies, as well as nontraditional partners such as agriculture, law enforcement, fire service and emergency management.

*\* Joyce Allard is the community education coordinator at IDPH.*



## Cancer survivors share experiences from across Iowa

By Sandi Ryan\*

“Cancer may have saved me from a serious heart attack, or even death,” said 72-year-old Mary Jo Albee from Marshalltown. Diagnosed with a form of uterine cancer in June 2002, Albee took a treadmill stress test before undergoing a hysterectomy—and discovered she also needed triple bypass heart surgery.

To her doctor’s chagrin, Albee delayed both surgeries for a scheduled trip to England and Ireland. Albee’s approach to life echoed the theme of forums held across the state last month for cancer survivors—*lowans Living Beyond Cancer: Thriving Through Survivorship*.

During the last five years, Albee has had two surgeries, 18 radiation treatments, and 16 che-



**Approximately 80 cancer survivors gathered at 11 sites across Iowa to share their experiences.**

motherapy sessions. During the same period, she has greeted four new great-grandchildren, kept in touch with new friends she met in the U.K., lived a full life in her community, and served on the [Presi-](#)

[dent’s Cancer Panel](#), where she discussed cancer in the elderly.

Albee’s reflections on surviving cancer began the forums, which were attended by about 80 survivors in 11 Iowa Communications

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## New deputy state epidemiologist hits ground running

By Don McCormick\*

When Dr. Kenneth Soyemi came to Iowa in December 2006 as the new deputy state epidemiologist, he didn’t expect to deal with four disease outbreaks within his first week. He was, however, prepared.

“He hit the ground running,” said Mary Jones, Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH) interim director and director of the [Division of Acute Disease Epidemiology](#). “Dr. Soyemi’s experience with epidemiological investigations on the front line helped us at the state level during this very busy period. Understanding and working with our local public health partners in investigations is an important part of his job.”

Born in England and raised in Nigeria from age 6, Soyemi’s experience as an epidemiologist and pediatrician has been intensely hands-on. “Going to med school in Nigeria means a

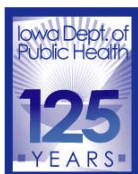
lot of clinical work and direct contact with patients in highly infectious environments,” Soyemi said.

It was here that Soyemi developed an important personal understanding of the world. “Life is not difficult at all. It is we human beings that make it difficult.” He continued by pointing out that wherever people gather and form groups or societies, problems tend to arise.

The challenge for Soyemi, and the reason he was drawn to public health, is to anticipate where and how problems, such as disease outbreaks, will occur. “I’ve always liked analyzing things,” Soyemi said. “I want to know ‘Why did this happen?’ and ‘How can we prevent it from happening again?’”

Soyemi did his pediatric residency at [Cook County Hospital](#) in Chicago from 1994 to 1997. He earned a

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**Iowa Department of Public Health**

**Advancing Health Through the Generations**

# Emergency guidelines for law enforcement officers released

By Nicole Peckumn\*

National and worldwide focus on pandemic influenza has prompted law enforcement officers to pose a number of questions to public health authorities: What is the role of law enforcement in a pandemic or other public health emergency? How do we best educate law enforcement officers on medical and legal issues associated with an infectious disease outbreak? How do we protect law enforcement officers and their families when called upon to assist in controlling a pandemic?

These questions are addressed in the newly published *Guidelines for Iowa Law Enforcement Officers: Public Health Emergencies or Disasters*, a project of the Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH) and state and local law enforcement agencies.

The guidelines provide information on many topics including pandemic influenza facts, IDPH's planning activities, legal authorities for imposing infectious disease prevention and control measures, and information for law enforcement officers on protecting themselves and their families.

"The guide demonstrates the ability and desire of Iowa's response community to come together and coordinate response efforts to address their 'joint' responsibilities during a public health emergency," said Major Len Murray of the [Des Moines Police Department](#) and a project contributor.

"The project is another example of the great work that can be accomplished when members of various response communities are willing to trust one another and put their thoughts on the table to work toward a common goal."

During an act of bioterrorism, law enforcement will play a critical role in enforcing quarantines; managing crowds; secur-

Organizations and associations involved in development of the law enforcement guidelines include:

[Des Moines Police Department](#)  
[Iowa Association of Chiefs of Police and Peace Officers](#)  
[Iowa Attorney General's Office](#)  
[Iowa Department of Public Health](#)  
[Iowa Department of Public Safety](#)  
[Iowa Homeland Security & Emergency Management](#)  
[Iowa National Guard 71<sup>st</sup> Civil Support Team](#)  
[Iowa Police Executive Forum](#)  
[Iowa State Police Association](#)  
[Iowa State Sheriff's and Deputies' Association](#)

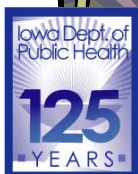
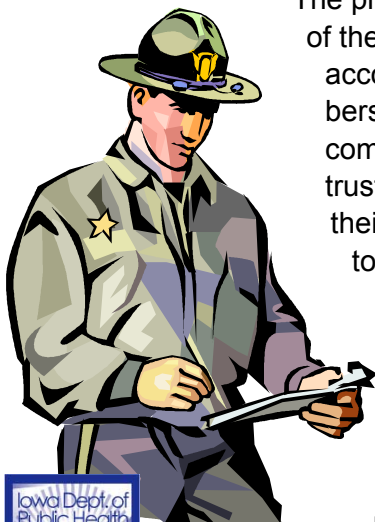
ing and assisting with transportation of critical medical assets such as vaccines or medications. They will also likely assist in providing security for medical facilities, health care providers, medical supplies and medications, such as vaccines and antivirals.

"We must protect those who are the protectors," said Mary Jones, IDPH interim director and director of the [Division of Acute Disease Epidemiology](#). "The guidelines' contributors recognized the critical need for developing and delivering this information to law enforcement officers across the state. These guidelines provide information that will assist in a successful, coordinated, informed, and effective response."

The guidelines are being distributed through the state's local public health agencies during pre-scheduled monthly meetings. Each county will receive four printed manuals, a CD containing the entire guidelines and a PowerPoint presentation.

Law enforcement officials interested in obtaining copies of the guidelines should contact their local public health agency.

\* Nicole Peckumn is a communications officer at IDPH.



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# Forums allow survivors to be heard

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Network video conferencing sites across the state. The forums included men and women of all ages, survivors of one cancer or several, family members, and health professionals.

The gatherings were sponsored by the Iowa Department of Public Health's (IDPH) [Comprehensive Cancer Control Program](#) and the [Iowa Consortium for Comprehensive Cancer Control](#). The event was the first of a variety of activities funded by a \$10,000 grant IDPH received from the [Lance Armstrong Foundation \(LAF\)](#) last year.



At the forum, survivors and health professionals shared their stories and discussed what could

have made surviving cancer easier. From broad educational issues to the availability of small things (Medicare doesn't cover wigs, or "cranial prostheses," Albee noted), survivors shared their thoughts about what they needed but didn't have during and after treatment.

"Who better to tell us about survivorship than cancer survivors," said Holly Smith, coordinator of



the IDPH Comprehensive Cancer Control Program. "It was important for us—staff and members of the Consortium—to hear the experiences, thoughts and unmet needs of survivors across the state."

One participant comment in particular stands out in Smith's mind. The person said cancer does not dominate his life. While survivors can never completely relax and forget cancer, they can and do focus on other things, such as upcoming trips, children's activities and work. They can live beyond cancer and thrive.

Smith says the LAF funds are allowing IDPH to take a comprehensive look at cancer survivorship by broadening the network of cancer stakeholders, conducting a statewide assessment of survivorship activities, and developing a plan to address gaps and unidentified needs.

The next step, Smith says, is for a steering committee to design a plan for addressing the gaps identified by participating survivors. Many survivors at the forums expressed interest in joining the committee, which hopes to complete its work by August of this year.

Founded in 1997 by cancer survivor and champion cyclist Lance Armstrong, the LAF provides practical information and tools people with cancer need to live life on their own terms. The LAF serves its mission through advocacy, public health and research. For more information about the LAF, visit [www.livestrong.org](http://www.livestrong.org).

\* *Sandi Ryan is the coordinator of the WISEWOMAN Cardiovascular Study at IDPH.*

Established in 2001 to coordinate the efforts of Iowa organizations fighting cancer, the [Iowa Consortium for Comprehensive Cancer Control](#) consists of more than 100 individuals representing more than 50 organizations. Last May, the Consortium released [Reducing the Burden of Cancer in Iowa: A Strategic Plan for 2006-2011](#). The plan sets priorities to: prevent, detect and treat cancer; care for cancer survivors; and encourage advances through cancer research.

Projects spearheaded by the Consortium include: developing toolkits to help school campuses and hospital grounds become tobacco-free; teaching day care providers how to minimize children's exposure to cancer-causing UV rays; and the cancer survivorship project described here.

To join the Iowa Consortium for Comprehensive Cancer Control, or for more information, contact Holly Smith at 515-281-0925 or [hsmith@idph](mailto:hsmith@idph).

[state.ia.us](http://state.ia.us).



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# Soyemi brings unique experiences to Iowa

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master's of public health and a post graduate certificate in managed care in 2004 from [Benedictine University](#) in Lisle, IL. He completed a second residency in general preventive medicine and public health at the [Palm Beach County Health Department](#) in Florida from 2005 to 2006. He has been a physician reviewer for Health Systems of Illinois and served as the vice chairman for the department of pediatrics at [St. Bernard Hospital](#) in Chicago.

Prior to joining IDPH, Soyemi was assistant director in the Office of Epidemiology and Disease Control at the [Miami Dade County Health Department](#) in Florida. As section chief for communicable disease surveillance, his duties included: designing and conducting outbreak and cluster investigations; managing and supervising 50 staff members; consulting with special immunization and preparedness programs; and working on bioterrorism activities such as pandemic influenza preparedness.

With a population of 2.4 million, working in Miami Dade

County gave Soyemi valuable experience designing and conducting disease investigations. The fact that Miami Dade County is a major port with 10 million visitors annually also had its challenges. "We saw a number of 'imported' cases, including malaria, typhoid fever, and dengue fever."

Soyemi was quick to point out that the science of disease investigations basically stays the same, regardless of the disease. "You look at what, why, where, when, whom and how. That's epidemiology."

The differences Soyemi expects at IDPH relate more to the position itself. "I look forward to seeing how things work at the state level—learning about state laws and the interaction between the state and local public health agencies," Soyemi said. He added that he also looks forward to learning more about the relationship between the state and the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#).

Board certified in both public health and pediatrics, Soyemi will also consult with a number of programs and initiatives



**Dr. Soyemi consults with public health professionals and doctors across Iowa on a daily basis. He's prepared to deal with outbreaks firsthand, if necessary, keeping a "go-kit," including masks, gloves, face shields, scrubs and other items in his office.**

within IDPH. In particular, he will be working closely with the [Bureau of Disease Prevention and Immunization](#) with the HIV/AIDS, hepatitis, TB, and immunization programs. Soyemi will also work with the [Center for Disaster Operations and Response](#), serving as a medical advisor for the department's emergency planning and response activities.

In his spare time, Soyemi plays keyboards and soccer. He is a father of three and a contem-

porary jazz enthusiast. Soyemi is an avid reader of everything from fiction to foreign affairs and, he says, "a healthy dose of medical journals."

*\* Don McCormick is editor of Iowa Health Focus.*



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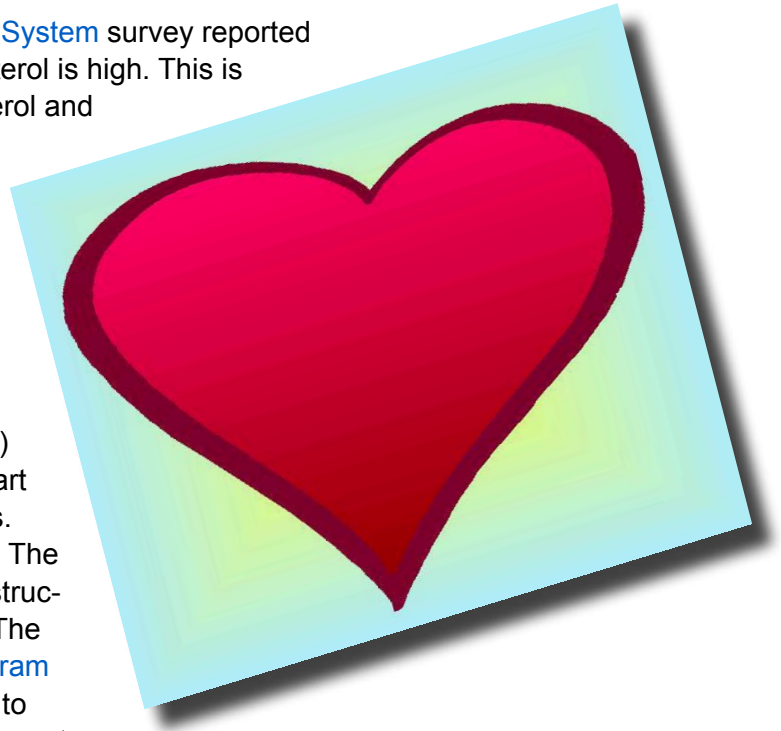
**Advancing Health Through the Generations**

# Focus on your heart this Valentine's Day

The 2005 [Iowa Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System](#) survey reported that 35.6 percent of Iowans have been told their cholesterol is high. This is a significant increase from 27 percent in 2004. Cholesterol and triglycerides are common fats in the body that speed up atherosclerosis, the buildup of fatty deposits that narrow artery walls. Heart attacks are caused by arterial narrowing or blockage that stops blood carrying oxygen to the heart.

Heart attack is not the same as cardiac arrest. Cardiac arrest is immediate - caused when the heart's electrical system malfunctions. Sudden cardiac death may be reversed if CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation) is performed, and a defibrillator is used to shock the heart and restore a normal heart rhythm, within a few minutes.

This Valentine's Day, consider a valentine gift of life. The American Heart Association has produced a kit, with instructional DVD, to provide a quick way to learn CPR skills. The [Family & Friends CPR Anytime Personal Learning Program](#) allows those who may never attend a traditional course to learn core skills in 22 minutes. The CPR Anytime kit is a cost-effective way for the entire family to learn CPR at home. It does not provide CPR certification. For information call the American Heart Association at 1-877-242-4277, or visit [www.cpranytime.org](http://www.cpranytime.org).



## "New Directions in Public Health" theme for Iowa Public Health Conference

### April 3-4 event to be held at Iowa State University in Ames

The 2007 Iowa Public Health Conference will be held April 3-4 at Iowa State University's Scheman Conference Center in Ames. This year's theme is "New Directions for Public Health." Sessions will highlight Iowa's progress in emergency preparedness and workforce development.

This year's conference will feature presentations by three leaders in public health. Michael Fraser, deputy executive director of the [National Association of County and City Health Officials](#), will discuss new directions in public health at the national level. Terie Dreussi Smith, a drug and alcohol prevention services



specialist, will discuss the relationship between health, wellness and poverty. Steve Siemens of [Siemens People Builders](#) will finish the conference with "Staying Right Side Up in an Upside-Down World."

Several workshops will feature presentations on emergency preparedness, risk communication, health literacy, public health standards, and public health from the local perspective.

Register for the conference through March 23 at [www.uhl.uiowa.edu/news/ipha/iphabrochure.pdf](http://www.uhl.uiowa.edu/news/ipha/iphabrochure.pdf), or contact the Iowa Public Health Association at [iowa-pha@gmail.com](mailto:iowa-pha@gmail.com).



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# New position to help underserved dental areas

By Don McCormick\*

Delta Dental of Iowa has awarded a \$150,000, three-year grant to the College of Dentistry at the University of Iowa to help retain dentists in rural Iowa, where 79 of Iowa's 99 counties are considered dental shortage areas.

The grant will fund a new Iowa Practice Opportunities Office to coordinate and facilitate the recruitment of dentists to rural, underserved communities throughout the state and help match Iowa's dental graduates with open practice sites. Debra Hoyle of Iowa City was recently hired as the first coordinator of the office.

Dr. Bob Russell, director the Oral Health Bureau at the Iowa Department of Public Health, says the department will partner with the new coordinator as a resource to identify practice opportunities and health shortage locations in the state.

"The establishment of this position demonstrates a growing awareness of the need to improve Iowa's retention of new graduating dentists within our state," Russell said. "As Iowa struggles with developing effective public health methods for addressing low



(L-R) U of I College of Dentistry Executive Associate Dean, Dr. Jed Hand; Delta Dental of Iowa Community Relations Manager, Suzanne Heckenlaible; Delta Dental of Iowa Vice President and Dental Director, Dr. Ed Schooley; Iowa Practice Opportunities Coordinator, Deb Hoyle; U of I College of Dentistry Dean, Dr. David Johnsen; and Iowa Department of Public Health State Dental Director, Dr. Bob Russell.

access to oral health care and prevention, the lack of available dental providers in our rural communities presents a serious barrier to progress."

Russell said the department looks forward to working with Hoyle and will utilize its linkages with Iowa's network of community health centers, rural health clinics, local boards of health, Title V agencies, and health departments to identify eligible rural communities seeking dentists.

Dr. David Johnsen, dean of the College of Dentistry at the University of Iowa, said that his organization is in a unique position to coordinate the linkage between dental students, practicing alumni and Iowa communities. "Recruiting dentists to Iowa communities currently relies on individual dentists, dental practice brokers or economic development and community leaders," Johnsen said. "We anticipate this new position will assist in retaining Iowa dental graduates and placing them in high-need areas of the state."

## Facts about dental shortage in Iowa

- Iowa's dental workforce is aging. Approximately 50 percent of Iowa's practicing dentists are over age 50.
- The Iowa population is aging and people are retaining their teeth longer, creating a high level of demand for dental services.
- The predicted dental workforce shortage will adversely affect the access to oral health care for economically disadvantaged populations, residents of rural communities and people who already face barriers to care.
- All shortage designations for Iowa are submitted to the federal Health Resources and Services Administration by the IDPH Bureau of Health Care Access.



# National experts scheduled for Barn Raising VI

## Aug. 2-3 event includes concurrent sessions on a variety of topics

The Governor's Conference on Public Health, Barn Raising VI will feature plenary presentations by Dr. Julie Gerberding, director of the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#); Dr. Leonard Marcus, director of the National Preparedness Leadership Initiative at the [Harvard School of Public Health](#); and acclaimed national wellness speaker [Dr. Martin Collis](#). The theme of the Aug. 2-3 event, which will be held at Drake University in Des Moines, is "Celebrating Healthy Communities." Concurrent presentations will feature 41 presentations by 64 speakers. They include:

- Cheri Blauwet, one of the world's most accomplished [Paralympic](#) athletes, will make a presentation on "The Power of Sports and Disability."
- Alfonso Carlon, of the Title X Regional Training Office, will present on "Cultural Proficiency: Building Capacity and Needs Assessment Awareness."
- Jonathan Claffey, deputy assistant administrator for the [USDA- Rural Development Utilities Programs](#), will discuss "Funds for Rural Health Infrastructure."
- Douglas Gentile, of the [National Institute on Media and the Family](#), will explain the psychology of influence and how it works its power without our knowledge.
- Neal Holtan, from the [Minnesota Institute on Public Health](#), will speak on partnerships to reduce underage drinking.
- Peter D. Jacobson, from the [University of Michigan School of Public Health](#) will make two presentations: "Communicating the Value of Public Health and Getting Results"; and "Doing What's Right: Ethical Issues in Public Health."
- [Vermont Senator M. Jane Kitchel](#) and John McDonough, of [Health Care for All](#) in Massachusetts, played leading roles in shaping their states' health insurance initiatives. They are scheduled to make presentations on securing legislative approval of statewide insurance coverage for everyone and its implementation.
- Marie Legg, of the [National Center for Injury Prevention and Control](#), will use the Center's new initiative to show how the media can make public health programs more effective.
- Health Consultant and Dietitian, Pam McCarthy will present on "How to Leverage Emotions in Changing Behavior."
- Duane Olberding, from the [Recovery Center at St. Francis](#) in Topeka, Kansas will introduce new research on gambling compulsion and brain functions.
- [The Balm In Gilead](#) Director, Rev. Alberta Ware's presentation is "Involving Faith Communities in Program Implementation."



For more information, including a downloadable flyer and save-the-date postcard, visit [www.idph.state.ia.us/bhpl/barn\\_raising.asp](http://www.idph.state.ia.us/bhpl/barn_raising.asp). Check back regularly as the agenda and information on presenters is updated.



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## Social determinants of child health detailed in new report

By Mike Crawford\*

The confirmed rate of child abuse, the percentage of people receiving food assistance and the percentage of people unemployed all showed marked increases in Iowa during the first half of the decade, according to the new Iowa Kids Count report.

The report, *Iowa Kids Count: Trends in the Well-Being of Iowa Children, 2004-2005*, produced and updated annually by the [Child and Family Policy Center](#), shows that these three indicators of child and family well-being each increased more than 65 percent from 2000 to 2005.

The percentage of people who were unemployed reported the greatest rise, increasing 76 percent since the beginning of the decade. Food assistance, formerly known as food stamps, increased 68 percent while the confirmed rate of child abuse and neglect rose 66 percent during the same time period.

"The rise in economic indicators such as food assistance and unemployment, along with the rise in child poverty, may precipitate the increase we have seen in child abuse and neglect," said Charles Bruner, executive director of the Child and Family Policy Center. "When there is more stress in families, economic or otherwise, it holds that there will be an increase in child abuse and neglect."

The [Iowa Kids Count](#) initiative provides health, education, welfare and economic data on

19 indicators of child and family well-being from child immunization to prenatal care, food assistance to student test scores, and earned income tax credit to child poverty. In this year's report, 11 of the indicators have shown improvement and seven have deteriorated.



The indicators showing improvement are related to birth and mortality. The child death and infant mortality rates decreased 18 percent and 16 percent, respectively. The birthrate for teens, ages 15-19, and for unmarried teens both decreased 11 percent.

Iowa kids are better learners as well, the report suggests.

Measured by the percentage of students who are proficient in math and reading on the [Iowa Tests of Basic Skills](#) and the [Iowa Tests of Educational Development](#), student test scores showed a slight improvement from 2003 to 2005.

"In one concise document, the 2005 Iowa Kids Count report draws on county, state and national data about our children from a wide range of sources, including Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH) data," said Louise Lex, [Healthy Iowans 2010](#) coordinator at IDPH. "Public health professionals know that children's health status relates directly to such social determinants as poverty, food assistance, and education." Lex emphasized that the information in the report can help explain the source of health gaps and the progress Iowa has made since 2000.

The report is being disseminated to over 6,000 public officials, legislators, state agencies, libraries, media, and interested individuals and organizations throughout the state. Iowa Kids Count is supported by a grant from the [Annie E. Casey Foundation](#), which supports Kids Count activities in all 50 states.

To obtain a copy of the new report, call (515) 280-9027 or write to [mcrawford@cfpciowa.org](mailto:mcrawford@cfpciowa.org).

\* Mike Crawford is the director of Iowa Kids Count.



# Survey says... “Examples wanted!”

Nearly 400 people responded to a recent survey to help develop the Web site for [Plain & Simple: A health literacy project for Iowa](#). Most respondents (64 percent) said they want to see examples of how to make documents easier to read.

With the Web site, [www.idph.state.ia.us/health\\_literacy/default.asp](http://www.idph.state.ia.us/health_literacy/default.asp), scheduled for full release this month, the project is looking to public health workers and partners for examples of documents before and after revision, for side-by-side comparisons on the Web site.

Web site Content Coordinator Jay Cooper is especially excited about posting submissions from local public agencies and other partners. “Partici-

pation by Web site users will be an important part of the project,” Cooper said. “By sharing ‘before and after’ examples of what agencies and others have done to improve their documents, ideas can be replicated across the state.”

The project hopes to collect a variety of documents, including: forms; instructions that follow services, such as immunizations; brochures; checklists; health topic talking points, and more.

In addition to these example documents, the Web site will include sections on news, research, resources, tools, and stories. Cooper says he hopes that public health workers and



partners will also contribute to the stories section. “I hope these personal experiences of using – or failing to use – plain language will be great resources for others who may encounter similar challenges,” Cooper said.

To submit content to the Web site, write to [dmccormi@idph.state.ia.us](mailto:dmccormi@idph.state.ia.us) or call (515) 281-8960.

## Delta Dental funding to help shortage areas

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Other partners to identify communities seeking a dentist and facilitate placement include chambers of commerce, the Iowa Department of Economic Development, the Iowa Dental Association and the University of Iowa Dental Alumni Association.

Delta Dental’s three-year commitment to the university position is funded by its [Public Benefit Program](#), which provided more than \$475,000 in grants in 2006 to Iowa oral health care projects. The mission of

the Public Benefit Program is to meet the oral health care needs of Iowa’s underserved population through prevention, education, access to care and research-oriented programs.

Iowa communities interested in recruiting a dentist should contact Iowa Practice Opportunities Coordinator Deb Hoyle at 319-335-9865.

*\* Don McCormick is editor of Iowa Health Focus.*

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