

Integrated effort brings health messages to seniors

By Melanie Nerhus*

On May 16, more than 500 seniors from Des Moines and surrounding areas were encouraged to take the on-ramp to the “Highway to Health.” Somewhat of a word play on a classic rock song from the 70s, the message during the fair was one of maximizing health during one’s golden years.

Held as part of the 26th annual Polk County Senior Picnic and Health Fair, the event took place in the Varied Industries Building on the Iowa State Fairgrounds. More than 70 organizations were on hand, including 10 staff members from the Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH).

This is the first year IDPH has been involved in the annual event. It was a collaborative effort among the [Bureaus of Chronic Disease Prevention and Management](#), the [Bureau of Nutrition and Health Promotion](#), and representatives from other IDPH programs involved in chronic disease management.

Julie McMahon, director of the IDPH [Division of Health Promotion and Chronic Disease Prevention](#), is a big proponent of team integration. “It’s



Mary Kay Brinkman, a dental hygienist in the Oral Health Bureau at IDPH, hands out a sample of gum containing xylitol, an important ingredient for anyone at risk for tooth decay, including those with dry mouths.

important to work together, both internally among our many



Project evaluates kids’ eating habits

By Cathy Lillehoj*

As part of a grant from the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#), the [Iowans Fit for Life](#) program has implemented a pilot intervention in rural communities across the state to increase fruit and vegetable consumption and physical activity. Coordinated by the Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH), the project recently finished a rigorous study of what kids in Iowa are eating.

Their method for gathering data is called the “24-hour food recall.” That’s “recall,” as in to recollect; not remove something from store shelves.

“Prior to this study, we tried to find out what kids were eating based on the results of self-reported, paper-based surveys,” said Carol Voss, Iowa’s fruit and vegetable nutrition coordinator at IDPH. “The 24-hour food recall is considered the gold standard among nutrition and dietary experts.”

And for good reason, it requires an enormous amount

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Schools can now access immunization records

By Kim Tichy*

When most people think of immunization, they think of kids – kids and the schools they attend, which require immunization records for enrollment. The [Immunization Program](#) at the Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH) is making enrollment easier by providing schools with a method of accessing electronic versions of immunization certificates.

The technology is based on the department's [Immunization Registry Information System \(IRIS\)](#). Now, Iowa schools can apply to use the new Certificate Search application (IRIS-CS) to search, view and print their students' certificates of immunization.

"For quite some time, we've been receiving requests from schools to have IRIS access," said Don Callaghan, manager of the IDPH Immunization Program. "After working with our Bureau of Information Management and the Iowa Department of Education, we're now able to offer a view-only version of IRIS to schools."

The registry houses consolidated immunization information from health care providers into one reliable source. Using IRIS-CS will provide schools with required immunization information without added work on behalf of school personnel, parents, and health care providers.

Vicki Porter, a school nurse at Newton Community School District, said they are thrilled to have this



program. "We are just so excited to have the ability to find students' certificates of immunization! We love having this program at our school!"

In May, all school superintendents in Iowa received a letter from the Immunization Program with a new user request form and computer requirements. Interested schools can complete and return the form to the Immunization Program. The Immunization Program staff will enroll and assist schools regarding the IRIS-CS installation process.

To download copies of the form, visit the IRIS Web site at www.idph.state.ia.us/adper/immunization_programs.asp#iris. Computer requirements for IRIS-CS are also found on this Web site. For questions, please call the IRIS Help Desk at 800-374-3958.

* *Kim Tichy is the Immunization Registry coordinator at IDPH.*

Governor Chet Culver poses before signing a proclamation making May Stroke Awareness Month and National High Blood Pressure Education Month in Iowa. Joining him are leaders from the Iowa Department of Public Health, the American Heart Association, and Iowa stroke survivors.



Iowa Department of Public Health

Advancing Health Through the Generations

Unique education approach used at Asian festival

By Jessica Torneten*

More than 40,000 people attended last month's [Fifth Annual Asian Heritage Festival](#), organized by the [Iowa Asian Alliance](#) and held on the grounds of [Blank Park Zoo](#) in Des Moines. Of the thousands who visited a special Health and Wellness Village, approximately 350 participated in a unique educational activity.

Inside the 60' X 30' tent, 19 organizations, including the Iowa Department of Public Health, staffed 22 booths and health screening stations. Each visitor to the village was given a card with five questions to ask staff members, such as "What should I know about heart disease?" After answering the question, the staffer would punch the visitor's card. Visitors who found answers to all five questions could register to win various items, including a bike and accessories provided in partnership with [Bike World](#).

The punch card activity was effective because it allowed participating organizations to develop messages and provide materials that were best suited to the people they were trying to reach.

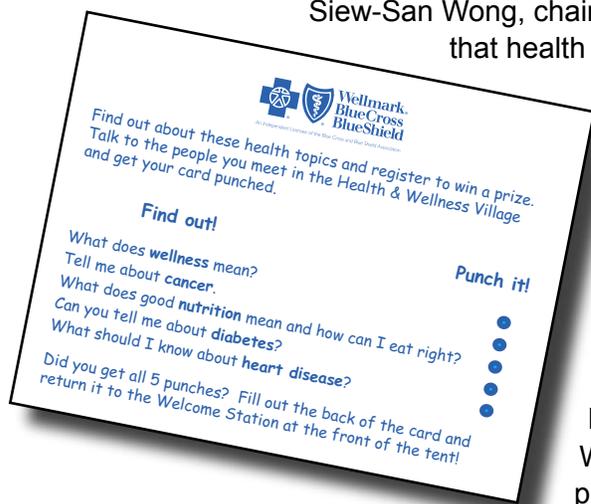
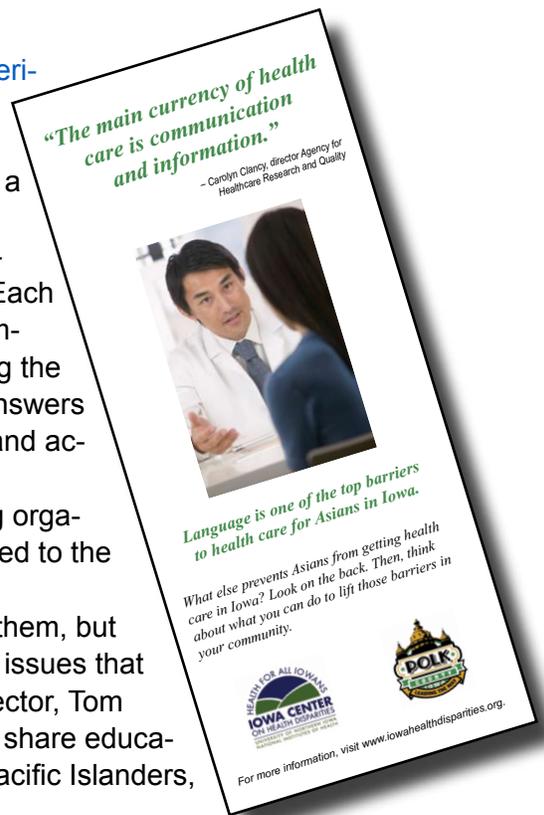
"It's important to inform all Iowans on the health issues that concern them, but when you target a specific population, you can narrow the information to issues that impact them directly," said Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH) Director, Tom Newton, MPP, REHS. "For example, through this event, we were able to share educational material about diabetes with a great many Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, who are at risk for this disease."

With help from [Wellmark](#), the primary Health and Wellness Village sponsor, IDPH created the punch card. Questions covered the five topics of cancer, diabetes, heart disease, nutrition and wellness.

Siew-San Wong, chairwoman of the Iowa Asian Alliance Board of Directors, commented that health and wellness have always been important topics to the Asian population and the festival planners. "These topics used to be part of the learning center in past festivals," Wong said. "Beginning in 2006, we created an entire village because of the interest and leadership of key community leaders and we were pleased to have Wellmark's help in doing so again this year."

Another unique feature of this year's village was a flyer IDPH developed with data from the [Iowa EXPORT Center on Health Disparities](#). The flyer, printed by the [Polk County Health Department](#), focused on the top five barriers to health care among Asians in Iowa. Those barriers include communication, degree of comfort with Western medical care, location, cultural sensitivity among health care providers, and access.

For electronic copies of the punch card activity or flyer, contact Don McCormick at dmccormi@idph.state.ia.us or 515-281-8960. To learn more about the festival and the Iowa Asian Alliance, visit www.celebrasian.org.



* Jessica Torneten is a community and public health student at Iowa State University.



Iowa Department of Public Health

Advancing Health Through the Generations

An invitation from Governor Culver

Barn Raising VI “Celebrating Healthy Communities,” Aug 2-3

The following is taken from the recently printed [brochure](#) for the [Governor’s Conference on Public Health: Barn Raising VI](#). The theme for the 2007 gathering, which will be held Aug 2-3 at [Drake University](#) in Des Moines, is “Celebrating Healthy Communities.”

Dear Conference Participant:

When Iowans are asked, “What is a healthy community?” they may give entirely different answers. The answers may deal with such matters as clean water, safe streets, parks and recreation, great schools, well-designed neighborhoods, or a living wage for workers. Whatever the answers, they impact the health of those who live in that community. A healthy community depends on many factors outside health services; it requires a broad-based, community-wide effort to improve the quality of life—bending trends toward a more positive future for everyone.

This civic engagement and cohesion are part of Iowa’s past. Without friends and neighbors, early settlers were helpless against illness, hazardous weather, devastating prairie fires, and isolation. To survive in a harsh environment, these new Iowans recognized the need to share their burdens and celebrate their successes.

The grand old barns that still dot Iowa’s landscape are a reminder of that time when the barn raisers pooled their efforts to raise a barn in a much shorter period than if it were done by a few. Working together helped these builders see themselves as a community with shared values.

Like the barn raisers of the past, the new barn raisers are engaged in improving the quality of life for themselves, their neighbors, and their friends. Building a playground, inventing a machine needed to surface a community-supported bike path, combating bullying, creating food banks to reduce food insecurity, raising funds for a wellness center and sharing it with students from another county are but a few examples of what’s happening across the state.

I invite you to be part of a conference that celebrates the successes in making Iowa communities more vibrant and livable, and continuing the tradition of community building. Our future will be brighter!

Sincerely,



Chester J. Culver
Governor



For more information, visit www.idph.state.ia.us/bhpl/barn_raising.asp. To register, click [here](#) or visit www.trainingresources.org. The early bird (by July 13) public registration fee of \$50 covers two continental breakfasts and lunches, a reception, continuing education credits, and all materials.



Iowa Department of Public Health

Advancing Health Through the Generations

Former IDPH Director Hansen honored

The [Iowa Medical Society](#) (IMS) presented former Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH) Director, Dr. Mary Mincer Hansen, R.N., Ph.D., with the 2007 John F. Sanford Award last month. The award recognizes outstanding contributions to health care or public health by a layperson.

Past IMS President Mariannette Miller-Meeks noted that during Dr. Hansen's tenure as IDPH director, Iowa greatly enhanced its public health emergency response capabilities, especially in regard to pandemic planning efforts.

"Mary brought extensive experience as a health care professional, educator, researcher, and policy advisor to our state," Miller-Meeks added.

Dr. Hansen was given the award at the IMS annual meeting in Des Moines. She was recognized as the first nurse to serve as the director of the state department of public health. She earned her bachelor's and master's degrees in nursing before earning a doctorate in higher education from Iowa State University.



Former IMS President Mariannette Miller-Meeks presents Dr. Hansen with the John F. Sanford Award.

Health fair draws hundreds of seniors

Continued from page 1

bureaus, and externally with our partners, to reach our common goals."

McMahon also said that communication and being efficient with funds is the key for making programs successful, "With fewer resources at the state level, we cannot afford to be inefficient. Strategic collaboration works, and worked very well at the health fair."

Participating programs ranged from diabetes and arthritis to nutrition and oral health.

"With 14 percent of Iowa's population over the age of 65, fairs of this kind are very important to our state," said Barb McClintock,

program administrator for the [Polk County](#)

[Department of Community, Family & Youth Services](#), which sponsors the annual event. "As Iowans continue to live longer, it's important for them to know about their changing health needs for themselves and for their families."

Iowa ranks sixth out of 50 states for the highest percentage of older adults over 65 and ranks fourth for the percent of the population over 85.

McClintock noted that attendance at the health fair was larger than it's been in previous years; more than 30 percent of the people who had come for the free picnic also attended the health fair. She attributes this higher participation rate to an incentive prize of a \$100

[Hy-Vee](#) gift certificate. To be eligible for the prize drawing, fairgoers received a card and visited booths and screenings to complete the card. She also noted that vendor participation was up by about 15 percent, and that the event is now drawing from areas outside Des Moines, such as Pleasantville and Indianola.

** Melanie Nerhus is an Iowa State University intern working in the Bureau of Nutrition and Health Promotion at IDPH.*



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Study points to success of fruit/veg program

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of work – work that Voss and her team members are happy to have finished.

Conducted in 12 pilot intervention schools in April and May, trained data collectors spoke to more than 1,100 fourth- and fifth-graders on two non-consecutive days about what they remember eating in the last 24 hours. Data obtained includes: all food eaten for breakfast, lunch, supper, and snacks; number of servings; and the location of where food was prepared and eaten.

While the data has yet to be aggregated and analyzed, Voss says the evidence so far suggests the potential importance of the 24-hour food recall in assessing children's nutritional behaviors. It also points to the success of some current nutrition interventions.

"At schools which are not participating in our free fruit and vegetable program, I observed a lot of kids who had not eaten any fresh fruit during the previous day," Voss said. "At schools which were participating, however, it appeared that a majority of the children

had eaten fresh fruit or vegetables during the previous day."

Iowa is one of eight states and three Native American Territories funded by the [United States Department of Agriculture](#) (USDA) to provide free fruits and



vegetables to schools across the state. IDPH is currently the only state using the 24-hour food recall as an additional assessment to evaluate the effects of the USDA program on rural elementary school students' dietary behaviors.

The results of the study are expected to also have a direct influence on state-wide policies. IDPH is currently considering software options to help with the

analysis of the recall information.

To learn more about the Iowans Fit for Life program, including the results of the pilot intervention study when they become available, visit www.idph.state.ia.us/iowansfitforlife.

* Cathy Lillehoj is a program evaluator at IDPH.

Rebalancing Health Care in the Heartland forum, Des Moines, June 19

In Iowa, and throughout the nation, health care is a source of ongoing discussion and debate as states and the nation seek to achieve a balance between appropriate health care services and the rising costs to provide those services. In the months leading up to Iowa's first-in-the-nation presidential caucuses, the [Rebalancing Health Care in the Heartland](#) series will serve as a timely venue for discussing state-based health care initiatives and national health care policy.



To learn more about the forum series and to register, visit www.public-health.uiowa.edu/health-forums/index.html.



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Iowa reaching or nearing many 2010 goals

By Kylie Davidson*

Now three-quarters into the current decade, Iowa can say that it has achieved or has nearly achieved a number of the goals outlined in [Healthy Iowans 2010](#), the state plan to improve the health of Iowans. Reports submitted during the past year by partners working toward these goals indicate much improvement and many milestones for the year 2006.



Louise Lex, coordinator for Healthy Iowans 2010 is happy about achieving some of these goals ahead of schedule. "It is great to see such progress being made prior to the end of the time-frame," Lex said. "This allows for new goals to be set as we move into planning for Healthy Iowans 2020."

In addition to the top five recent achievements (see side bar), other successes include a decrease in the rate of prostate cancer, and a legislative mandate underlining the importance of Iowa youth receiving medically accurate sex education.

Also, great strides have been made to serve Iowans with disability. These include the establishment of statewide emergency preparedness training programs for people with disability, and initiating [Americans with Disabilities Act](#) accessibility surveys and provider site visits.

On the environmental health side, the Iowa [Drinking Water State Revolving Loan Fund](#) has allowed for 162 projects to be funded, totaling amounts of more than \$223 million dollars.

Another accomplishment has been that the rate of Iowans without health insurance is holding steady. "Although a

decrease in this regard would be ideal, to see that it hasn't increased shows that we're doing something right," Lex said.

Each year, the action steps of Healthy Iowans 2010 goals are tracked, including progress made, barriers met, revisions to the goals or action steps, and significant results. The state health plan is made possible by a collaborative effort from many different state agencies, voluntary associations, private nonprofit organizations, and other groups within the state.

To learn about other achievements for 2006 or for more information about Healthy Iowans 2010 chapter highlights, visit www.idph.state.ia.us/bhpl/healthy_iowans_2010.asp.

* *Kylie Davidson is a community and public health student at Iowa State University.*

Top Five Recent 2010 Achievements

Emergency contraception was made available over the counter to women 18 years of age and older.

Children must have proof of a lead-blood test by age 6, increasing the number to at least 90 percent of all Iowa children receiving tests.

The Iowa Legislature passed a tax increase on all cigarettes sold within the state, raising the tax to \$1.36 per pack.

The Early Childhood Education Bill established a program for school districts to offer a minimum 10 hours a week of tuition-free preschool, the first program of its kind in the country.

The rate of HIV incidence in 2006 in Iowa was reduced to 3.1 cases per 100,000 people, reaching a 2010 goal early.



Iowa Department of Public Health

Advancing Health Through the Generations

Iowa promotes refugee health

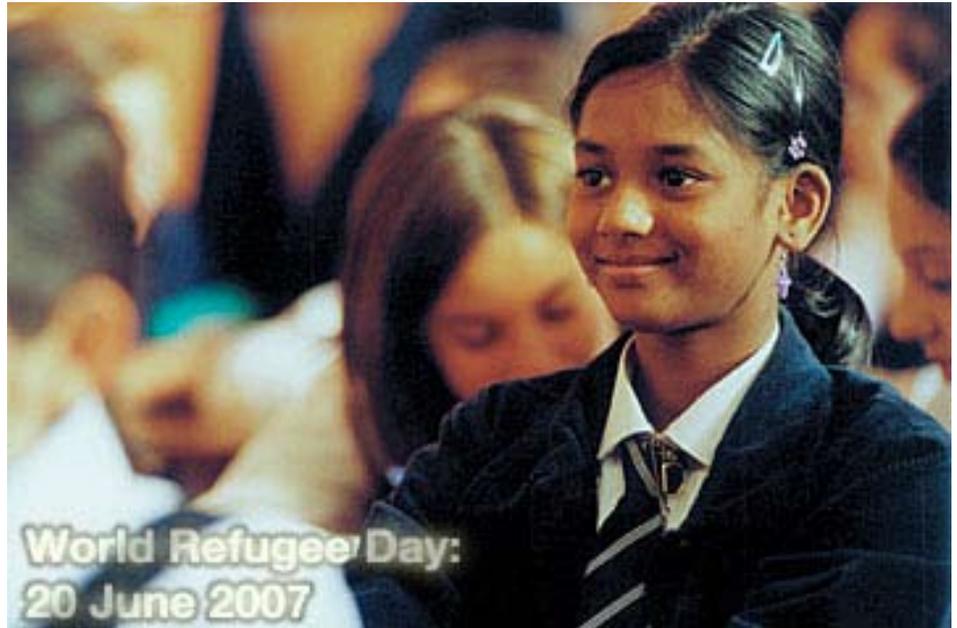
By Jessica Torneten*

More than 2.5 million refugees have resettled in the United States since 1975. Since preventive health care is not practiced in many countries, refugees often come from places where diseases impact a large percentage of the population. The goal of the Iowa Department of Public Health's (IDPH) [Iowa Refugee Health Program](#) (IRHP) is to establish, promote, and enforce protocol for the medical examination of newly arriving refugees.

"Being a refugee myself, I understand the challenges many refugees face," said Vannavong Phabmixay, IDPH refugee health consultant. "I get great satisfaction out of making sure the proper steps are taken to assure the health of refugees and the public."

Once a refugee enters Iowa, the IRHP assures their health assessments have been completed. This allows program staff to identify any health problems that may affect the public's health, or personal well-being of the refugee. The IRHP ensures refugees understand their health status, and the importance of following medical advice. Program staff regularly attend health training sessions, and have immediate access to new policies and medical alerts.

Established in 1980, the IRHP works with the Bureau of Refugee Services at the [Iowa Department of Human Services](#) (DHS) to provide bilingual health education materials to refugees and health care providers to help



refugees understand the cause and cure of diseases.

In celebration of the strength and contributions of millions of refugees across the world, June 20 has been declared World Refugee Day. On this day, IDPH and DHS join the [United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees](#) (UNHCR), and other organizations around the world, to recognize the impact refugees have made on their communities.

"Over the history of the program, we have tried to find ways to thank Iowa for being so supportive of refugees," said John Wilken, bureau chief of Refugee Services at DHS. "This event gives refugees the chance to let Iowa know how thankful they are for the opportunity to start a new life. It is important to let Iowans know that refugees do live in our state, what contributions they have made, and what

needs they have."

Iowa will observe the Fifth Annual [World Refugee Day](#) on June 16 in the Farmers' Market space in Des Moines. Former Governor Robert Ray is scheduled to speak, and refugees from various African, Southeast Asian and Northern European populations around the Des Moines area will share their culture through music, dance and other activities.

World Refugee Day was established in 2000 by the United Nations General Assembly. Each year the UNHCR selects a theme and coordinates events across the world. This year's theme is A New Home, A New Life. For more information about World Refugee Day, visit www.unhcr.org.

* Jessica Torneten is a community and public health student at Iowa State University.



Iowa Department of Public Health

Advancing Health Through the Generations

New gambling treatment licensure rules facilitated by providers

By Mark Vander Linden*

An important job of state public health agencies like the Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH) is to set quality standards for a wide variety of service providers through licensing. Most recently, IDPH facilitated the licensure of at least 11 problem gambling treatment program providers in Iowa.

IDPH Health Facility Surveyor, Bob Kerksieck says the [new licensure process](#), which became effective May 16, will effectively improve the professionalism of the gambling treatment field in Iowa.

"The state has been funding treatment programs for more than 20 years and we've benefited from a commitment to excellence on the part of the providers," Kerksieck said. "Licensing providers will ensure that quality remains high while providing help to programs to improve their clinical practice."

Kerksieck, who joined the IDPH [Bureau of Administration, Regulation and Licensure](#) in early 2006, wrote the gambling licensure rules with input from gambling treatment providers across the state.

"It was vital to get as much feedback and as much consensus as possible from the treatment field to ensure that these rules would be in everyone's best interest," Kerksieck said. "I think we did a good job of doing that; rarely are administrative rules of this scope and magnitude reviewed and approved so smoothly."

Five public hearings on the new rules were held from January to May of this year before their approval at an early May meeting of the legislative Administrative Rules Review Committee. Kerksieck noted that there was very little opposition to the details of the new rules as they took shape, due



primarily to the cooperation with current providers.

The new problem gambling treatment program licensure is intended to be a user-friendly process. It starts out with technical assistance for programs, followed by a probationary 270-day license. This is then followed by more technical assistance as needed before doing another inspection to determine whether the program will receive a one-, two- or three-year license. The length-of-license

option is designed to reward programs which do the best job of complying with standards by giving them reduced oversight.

IDPH funds gambling treatment programs in 11 regions across Iowa. These programs have been a mix of free-standing gambling treatment programs, substance abuse treatment programs, family service agencies and hospitals. IDPH-funded gambling treatment providers served 1,205 Iowa gambling clients in fiscal year 2006.

In addition to funding and licensing gambling treatment programs across Iowa, IDPH funds the [1-800-BETS-OFF](#) helpline, problem gambling prevention programs, a University of Northern Iowa outcome project to evaluate gambling treatment outcomes, and media campaigns to help Iowa residents identify problem gambling and seek professional help if needed.

To access the licensing standards and a directory of Iowa gambling treatment providers, visit www.idph.state.ia.us/bhpl/admin_regulation.asp.

* Mark Vander Linden is the coordinator of the Iowa Gambling Treatment Program.



Iowa Department of Public Health

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Memorial commemorates EMS providers

By Anita J. Bailey*

Held in conjunction with [National EMS Week](#), the new Emergency Medical Services Memorial was unveiled at a dedication ceremony on May 19 in West Des Moines. The granite monument honors EMS providers who have suffered line-of-duty deaths, and commemorates those who have made significant contributions to EMS during their lifetime.

Iowa Department of Public Health [Bureau of EMS](#) Chief, Kirk Schmitt highlighted the importance of the lasting and visible recognition. "Although sometimes overlooked, EMS is a critical part of Iowa's public safety net and lies at the intersection of health care, public health and public safety," Schmitt said. "This EMS Memorial calls attention to our career and volunteer providers and their ongoing contributions to their communities."

Nearly 13,000 Iowa certified EMS providers respond to an estimated 240,000 calls for assistance annually.

The [Iowa Emergency Medical Services Association](#) past President, Jeffrey J. Messerole, clinical services supervisor at Lakes Regional Health-care in Spirit Lake said, "The ceremony was concluded with a flyover of five, Iowa-based medical helicopters while the providers' names were read. It was quite an emotional moment and a fitting tribute to our fallen friends."



IDPH Bureau of EMS Chief Kirk Schmitt speaks at the unveiling of the new memorial, visible in the background.

* Anita J. Bailey is the northwest regional EMS coordinator at IDPH.

Summer means increases in foodborne illness, need for food safety awareness

Did you know that last year, IDPH reported 80 percent more cases of E. coli O157:H7 between May and September than other months of the year? Also, during the same time period, there were 68 percent more cases of shigellosis, 63 percent more cases of campylobacteriosis, and 35 percent more cases of salmonellosis.

All of these illnesses can be caused by food that has been improperly handled or prepared. To ensure that this summer is a healthy one remember these helpful tips:

Wash hands before preparing food or eating, and after using the bathroom. Rub them together using soap and warm running water for about 20 seconds.

When grilling, it is best to use a meat thermometer to ensure meat is thoroughly cooked. If one is not available, make sure all meat is cooked until there is no pink left and the juices run clear.

Rinse all fresh fruits and vegetables under running water, including those with skins and rinds that are not eaten.

Don't use the same platter or utensils that previously held raw meat or seafood.

If food that should have been refrigerated is left out for more than two hours, throw it away.



For more information, including recommended temperatures for other meats and seafood, visit www.foodsafety.gov.

Iowa Department of Public Health

Advancing Health Through the Generations

IDPH bureau chief experiences public health in Tanzania

By Jewell Chapman*

Last month, Judy Solberg left the comforts of home and her cozy plant-filled office at IDPH to embark upon a journey to Kilimanjaro, Tanzania. The chief of the [Bureau of Nutrition and Health Promotion](#) spent nearly two days on planes and in airports before reaching her destination.

Traveling with her husband and members of their church, Solberg stayed in Chani Village, which is located in the foothills of Kilimanjaro and has a beautiful view of the plain. While there, Solberg took some time to learn about the local public health system.

"Knowing that Tanzania is one of the poorest and least developed countries in the world, I was surprised to find that public health had done an excellent job teaching both children and adults about hygiene," Solberg said. "The women always boil water over an open fire before using it for drinking, and before dinner our host brought us a bar of soap and pitcher of water to wash our hands before eating."

According to the [United Nations'](#) human development index, Tanzania ranks 156 out of 174 nations. Their largest public health problems are AIDS, malaria, and access to medical care.

Solberg reported that in Chani Village, there is no running water or electricity. Women of the village walk a half mile to get water and children must walk five miles to a neighboring village to attend school.

The nearest medical care facility, Gonja hospital, is 25 miles from the vil-

lage in the Pari Mountains of Northeastern Tanzania. Maintained by the Lutheran church, it has only one physician, and depends completely on volunteers like Tim and Laurie Byerly.

The Solbergs were surprised to meet this independent volunteer couple, who are originally from Davenport, Iowa. Tim and Laurie now live in Same, and connect with medical volunteers in the U.S. Tim, who has a talent for technology, rewired the entire hospital and also renovated an apartment for use by volunteer physicians who are sent from the University of Iowa Medical School.

The Gonja hospital, which serves thousands of people, is primarily an outpatient hospital - although it does have 47 inpatient beds. Many cases they treat are respiratory diseases related to AIDS.

"They provide miraculous medical services with minimum resources," Solberg said. "The toughest

problem facing the health sector is the lack of human resources to provide quality health services. Health care volunteers are always most welcome in Tanzania!"

* Jewell Chapman works in the Bureau of Nutrition and Health Promotion.



The women of Chani Village, which lies at the foot of the tallest mountain in Africa, walk a half mile to get water.

Team VERB to compete in Hy-Vee Triathlon, June 16 and 17

Dennis Haney, Tim Lane, and Sarah Taylor, all from [Bureau of Nutrition and Health Promotion](#) at the Iowa Department of Public Health, will compete as Team VERB during the Hy-Vee International Triathlon Union (ITU) World Cup Triathlon. The event will be held in Des Moines on June 16 and 17, making Iowa's Capitol only the fourth city in the United States to host a World Cup event.

The team, which is also sponsored by KIOA radio, is using their participation as an opportunity to make people aware of the department, and to promote physical activity. "This is an important event for our state," said Team Captain Lane. "It builds a lot of awareness about physical activity, especially swimming, biking and running. Those are physical activities that almost everyone can do, almost anytime, with very little equipment."



The Des Moines event has the largest purse ever in elite triathlon competition, more than

\$700,000, which has attracted national and international organizations. First place winners in the elite division of the men's and women's event will each take home paychecks of

\$200,000 and an H3 Hummer. Amateurs will also have an opportunity to participate in the citizens' race. Enthusiasts will compete in age group and team events for more than \$40,000 in gifts and prizes. The event is free to the viewing public.

For more information about the triathlon, visit www.hy-veetriathlon.com/index.php.

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