



Quick Reads

Dr. Mariannette Miller-Meeks, B.S.N., M.Ed., M.D.
Director, Iowa Department of Public Health

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State of Weight in Iowa

A [report](#) released last month by the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) (CDC) concluded that Iowa's obesity prevalence is 28.4 percent, up from 27.9 percent in 2009. No state reported an obesity prevalence lower than 20 percent in 2010. The number of states with an obesity prevalence of 30 percent or more has increased to 12 in 2010, compared to no states with that level in 2000. Clearly, obesity is a public health challenge that must be addressed.

The [Iowa Public Health Association](#) and the [Wellmark Foundation](#) are collaborating to offer a one-day conference on September 28, 2011, aimed at addressing and preventing obesity. [The State of Weight in Iowa – Tools for Communities to Address Obesity](#) will emphasize how civic leaders and communities, early care and education, medical care, government, public health entities, and schools can all gain knowledge and insight into improving healthy eating and increasing active living for Iowans. The day will be focused on what communities can do to better address obesity in school, clinical and overall community settings. The scheduled speakers will encourage everyone to think more readily about policy and environmental changes impacting health. Making positive changes in food availability and the physical environments in which we live can make the healthy choice the easy choice.

I encourage all health professionals to learn more and [register](#) for this conference, which addresses such an important health issue in our state.

Access to Recovery partners with Iowa National Guard

IDPH [Access to Recovery](#) (ATR) staff has finalized a cooperative agreement with the [National Guard](#) making them an ATR Care Coordination site. This means that Active Military/National Guard members will be able to access vouchers for ATR-funded substance abuse treatment, mental health therapy, and recovery support services right on base. Of the 30 ATR grantees across the U.S., only Iowa has established such an agreement with the National Guard.

According to the [National Institutes of Health](#) (National Institute on Drug Abuse), prescription drug abuse doubled among U.S. military personnel from 2002 to 2005 and almost tripled between 2005 and 2008. Alcohol abuse is the most prevalent problem and one which poses a significant health risk. A study of Army soldiers screened three to four months after returning from deployment to Iraq showed that 27 percent met criteria for alcohol abuse and were at increased risk for related harmful behaviors (e.g., drinking and driving, using illicit drugs). And although soldiers frequently report alcohol concerns, few are referred to alcohol treatment. Research findings highlight the need to improve screening and access to care for alcohol-related problems among service members returning from combat deployments.

The Iowa ATR program is a statewide initiative that extends new treatment and recovery options to all of Iowa's 99 rural counties through a regionally coordinated and case management approach. Iowa gives priority to individuals with a co-occurring disorder, those involved in family drug court or child welfare system, and Active Military/National Guard members.

Iowa Food Assistance Program honored

The [Iowa Food Assistance Program](#) (nationally known as [SNAP](#)) received the Mountain Plains Summit Award at the St. Louis Tri-Regional Conference earlier this month. This award is based on points in several areas, including program administration and nutrition education. The [Iowa Nutrition Network](#), housed in the [Bureau of Nutrition and Health Promotion](#), is one of two agencies implementing nutrition education in the state.

The following statement was included as one of the reasons for the award: "*Iowa has a strong focus on collaborating with other Iowa state agencies, universities and organizations to improve SNAP participation and nutrition. Through their outreach and nutrition education plans in conjunction with the [WAVE demonstration project](#), Iowa is implementing a joint social marketing campaign to further enhance their existing statewide projects to increase SNAP participation and outreach.*"

IDPH partners with DIA, SHL

According to the CDC, foodborne illness affects 48 million Americans, causes 128,000 hospitalizations and 3,000 deaths each year. The IDPH [Center for Acute Disease Epidemiology](#) investigates hundreds of cases of foodborne illness each year. To help the

public and health care providers identify and test for foodborne illnesses, IDPH, in cooperation with the [Iowa Department of Inspections and Appeals](#) (DIA) and the [State Hygienic Laboratory](#) (SHL), has created three videos: [What Should I Do If I Think I Have a Foodborne Illness?](#), [How Healthcare Providers Can Help Detect Foodborne Illness](#), and [How To Collect a Stool Sample](#). Health care providers can request free DVD copies of the videos for patients and staff by calling 800-362-2736.

Iowa Immunization Conference presentations online

More than 800 people from Iowa and around the nation attended the Iowa Immunization Conference in June. Speaker presentations from the conference are now available on the IDPH [Immunization Program](#) web page. The presentations will only be available for viewing until October 28, 2011.

Congratulations and kudos

Congratulations to Randy Mayer, chief of the [Bureau of HIV, STD, and Hepatitis](#), who was selected as chair-elect of the [National Alliance of State and Territorial AIDS Directors](#) (NASTAD). The position is a three-year term (chair-elect, chair, and past-chair). The organization represents directors of state HIV, STD, and hepatitis programs nationally.

Bob Kerksieck of the IDPH [Office of Problem Gambling Treatment and Prevention](#) has been elected President of the [Midwest Conference on Problem Gambling and Substance Abuse](#) for the next two years.

In these budget times, it's no small feat to receive a grant for the full amount requested. Congratulations to [Iowa's Early Hearing Detection and Intervention](#) (EHDI) program, which received a \$175,000 grant award from CDC - the full amount requested. This is the first year IDPH has received the full amount.

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

— Dr. Miller-Meeks