



## *IDPH News Release*

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# **Governor Branstad Proclaims Drowning Prevention Week**

*Most drowning deaths and injuries are preventable*

Governor Branstad has signed a proclamation declaring June 17 through 23 as Drowning Prevention Week in Iowa. The designation is an effort to increase awareness, education, and utilization of proven drowning prevention strategies.

According to the CDC, about ten people die each day from unintentional drowning; additionally, drowning is the leading cause of unintentional injury for children between the ages of 1 and 5. “These deaths, especially child deaths, are preventable,” said Iowa Department of Public Health Environmental Engineer John Kelly. “There are a number of simple precautions Iowans can take to reduce the number of drowning deaths and injuries.”

These prevention strategies include:

- An adult parent or caregiver should always be within arm’s reach of their child whenever they are in or around water. Always designate a responsible adult who can swim and knows CPR to watch other swimmers in or around the water, even if they are at a life-guard attended facility.
- Formal swimming lessons have been shown to reduce the risk of drowning in children between the ages of 1 and 4, and provide essential skills to swimmers of all ages.

- Properly constructed barriers, including four-sided non-climbable isolation fencing and lockable gates can prevent or delay a child's unsupervised access to swimming pools and reduce the risk of drowning.
- The use of properly-fitted Coast Guard-approved lifejackets by all boaters and by non-swimmers whenever in or around the water reduces their risk of drowning. In 2011, 70 percent of all people killed in boating incidents drowned and of those, 84 percent were not wearing a lifejacket.
- CPR performed by bystanders has been shown to save lives and improve outcomes of drowning victims.
- Don't hold your breath too long – Trying to hold your breath underwater for long periods of time may cause the swimmer to pass out (called shallow water blackout) and may be a contributing factor in a significant number of drowning incidents.
- Avoid alcohol use while swimming or supervising children. Alcohol use is a contributing factor in an estimated 30 to 70 percent of adolescent and adult drowning incidents.

For more information about drowning prevention, visit <http://bit.ly/19IWb75>.

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