



Quick Reads

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Back to business

The shutdown of the federal government made October a month of questions and challenges. I, and probably most of you, are relieved that the federal government has re-opened and look forward to agencies getting back to their normal routines.

Because the IDPH budget is largely funded by federal grants, the shutdown had the potential to affect many of our programs. I want to commend Jill Lange, who oversees the [WIC](#) program, for her communication to our providers about any necessary steps that needed to be taken as the shutdown began and progressed. The timely communication was helpful to IDPH staff, WIC agencies, grocers, and especially to clients! The bureau was prepared and disseminated information immediately prior to and during the shutdown.

There was some initial concern from some states about the effect the shutdown might have on vaccinations, but reassurance was provided by CDC and [IDPH Immunization and TB Bureau](#) Chief Don Callaghan and we did not see or hear of any interruption in immunizations. Dr. Quinlisk continued to encourage flu vaccinations and people appear to be heeding her recommendation.

There were other staff that closely monitored the potential of any adverse events from the shutdown and I thank all of you for your diligence and dedication. Your foresight helped Iowa weather this turbulence.

Now, we can return to the work of public health as flu season begins, as we continue to promote and protect the health of Iowans!

Healthiest State Walk – a success!

I want to thank everyone who participated in last week's [Healthiest State Walk](#), which was the biggest ever. More than 298,000 Iowans walked to support the [Healthiest State Initiative](#) – but more importantly, took the first step towards improving their own individual health. I am proud of the IDPH partnership with the Dept. of Education to present the Super Power Summit for middle school youth and their adult sponsors to become advocates for physical activity and healthy eating. More than 250 of these students, adults, IDPH staff and other partners joined me in the [Director's Walk](#). Keep moving! The Healthiest State Initiative has many [ideas](#) to help keep you moving, get involved, and eat smarter.

National Lead Poisoning Prevention Week

[National Lead Poisoning Prevention Week](#) is October 20 through 26. This is a national observance, but one of special importance in Iowa. Iowa's prevalence of lead poisoning among children under the age of 6 years is 7 percent. This is more than four times the national average of 1.6 percent. Lead poisoning is entirely preventable and state and local partners play a large role in educating Iowans about the significant effects lead poisoning has on the health of children and our communities. Please learn more about National Lead Poisoning Prevention Week and the [work IDPH is doing](#) to diminish the burden of childhood lead poisoning in Iowa.

Operation Immersion

IDPH is partnering with the Iowa National Guard November 5 and 6 at Camp Dodge to present [Operation Immersion](#), a two-day training for substance use disorder, behavioral health and primary care providers seeking to expand their understanding of military culture and the challenges and impact of deployment and combat on soldiers and their families. The training will immerse attendees in aspects of military culture and the deployment experience, including spending the night in barracks, early morning Physical Training (PT), and barracks maintenance and inspection. The experience includes a tour of the [Gold Star Military Museum](#), and meeting with members and families of the Iowa Army National Guard to discuss issues unique to soldiers and their families. As a 24-year veteran of the United States Army, both active and reserve service, retiring after 24 years as a lieutenant colonel, this event is one close to my heart and I am honored to be part of it. [Registration](#) for Operation Immersion closes October 29.

Fall Regional Public Health meetings

Fall Regional Public Health Meetings begin this month and are being facilitated by the [Regional Community Health Consultants](#). The meetings are held throughout Iowa for Local Public Health Administrators and Authorized Agencies of the Local Public Health

Services Contract. The meetings provide IDPH updates to our local partners as well as providing time for administrators to share information about local successes and challenges related to health care delivery. Fall regional meetings will also provide information on [Iowa's Public Health Tracking Portal](#), [Iowa's Direct Care and Support Curriculum](#), and information from Deborah H. Thompson, IDPH Policy Advisor & Healthiest State Initiative Coordinator.

Congrats and kudos

Congratulations to the many local substance abuse organizations who participated in Recovery Month and Wellness Week events in their communities last month. [Recovery Month](#) is an annual SAMHSA initiative to honor the provider network, applaud those in recovery, and educate others about the benefits of substance abuse treatment. If you haven't visited already, I encourage you to check out the [IDPH Facebook](#) page, which includes many pictures of the variety of events held across the state.

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

— *Dr. Miller-Meeks*