What is public health?

1. Who responded to tornadoes and flooding in 2008?
   a. Emergency medical services personnel
   b. Environmental health specialists
   c. Disaster response teams
   d. All these public health partners

2. How many calls for help do Iowa ambulance services receive each year?
   a. 189,000
   b. Nearly 53,000
   c. 240,000
   d. About 150,000

3. It can save lives, but also endanger lives. What is it?
   a. Nitrogen
   b. Radiation
   c. Ozone
   d. None of the above

4. How many Iowans are injured by hazardous substances each year?
   a. About 65
   b. Less than 10
   c. 37 on average
   d. About 50

5. In one year, over 23,000 calls to the Iowa Poison Control Center were safely managed at home. How much was the health care savings?
   a. $350,000
   b. $5.5 million
   c. About $3.2 million
   d. $980,000
1. D, all of the public health partners listed.

Public health is a broad field and the severe weather of 2008 required a broad response. Preparation, however, is key. All public health emergency responders regularly participate in local and regional training exercises. Public health also helps individuals and families prepare for public health emergencies. To learn more, visit www.protectiowahealth.org.

2. C, 240,000.

This many calls results in about 200,000 patients being transported to a health care facility. Public health regulates EMS (emergency medical services) training programs, individual providers and patient care services. Regulation ensures that baseline standards for training, certification, and service authorization are met.


The use of radiation must be carefully monitored. Public health protects Iowans from potentially harmful exposure to radiation. The machines that produce radiation (like x-ray or mammography machines) and the people who use them are tested and certified by public health. This ensures Iowans are being treated by qualified professionals with safe equipment.


Each year, there are approximately 350 events involving the release of hazardous substances. There are currently 19 hazardous waste sites in Iowa. Public health provides trusted health information to prevent harmful exposures to toxic substances.

5. B, $5.5 million

Every $1 invested in the Poison Control Center saves nearly $9 in medical spending. Poison centers mean no unnecessary trips to the emergency department or doctor. 52% of Iowans exposed to poisons are children. For fast and correct information about treatment of possible poisoning, call 1-800-222-1222.