

November 2004

## Clickette is clowning around for safety

By Debbi Cooper

**C**lowns have been around for hundreds of years and they fulfill a vital role in our society. Bob Keeshan (Captain Kangaroo) portrayed Corny the Clown for two years on a local New York TV station. He would close each broadcast with a safety message making him one of the first safety clowns.

Clickette is a new safety clown with the Iowa Department of Public Health. Her main focus is child passenger safety and the use of bike helmets but her passion is preventing unintentional injury so she's willing to take on any other type of safety messages that come her way. She's shared her messages with church groups, libraries, SAFE Kids functions and various community programs.

I watched Sparky the Fire Safety Clown perform many times and always admired the impact of her work. The use of a clown is a very effective method of gaining and holding a child's attention. Through clowning you can teach kids of all ages while having fun. I'm an educator who just happens to be a clown.



Clickette (Debbi Cooper) poses with some children as they learn about safety.

## Make physical fitness a year round effort

By Kevin Teale

**T**he best defense each year against coming down with the flu is the flu shot. But since supplies of the vaccine are limited this year, that option won't be available to many people. One of the options that is available is keeping physically fit and active all winter long.

A growing number of studies have shown a link between a person's fitness and a reduction in illnesses blamed on winter viruses. Regular physical activity keeps the body's immune system in good shape, gives more

resistance to getting illnesses in the first place and reduces the risk of complications if people do get sick. Regular exercise is the best available prevention. This is on top of the already proven life-long benefits of a healthy active lifestyle.

Being active has extra benefits as well. The cost to Iowa because of poor nutrition and inactivity becomes clearer with each study. With nearly 24 percent of Iowa's adults considered obese, the cost to Iowa health care system is enormous (an estimated \$266 per person a year). Regular physical activity will also reduce your risk

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# Make physical fitness a year round effort

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of dying prematurely from heart disease or cancer, keep you from developing conditions such as diabetes and high blood pressure, keeps older bones less fragile and promotes psychological well-being.

The Lighten Up Iowa campaign is a five-month effort to promote physical activity and good nutrition. In its third year Lighten Up Iowa has recorded millions of miles and over 30 tons of lost weight. Registration materials and

information are available at [www.lightenupia.org](http://www.lightenupia.org). The Lighten Up Iowa program is supported by the Iowa Games, the Iowa Department of Public Health, and Iowa State University Extension. In addition to encouraging thousands of Iowans to be more active and adopt better nutrition habits, Lighten Up Iowa and its' youth component Go The Distance is now being adapted in 20 other states.

## State West Nile Toll Drops Dramatically in 2004

By Kevin Teale

**A**s cooler weather means the end is nearing for the West Nile season, the Iowa Department of Public Health is reporting a sharp drop this year in the number of cases. The totals include 22 cases of the mosquito-borne illness, including two deaths. The latest death was that of an Eastern Iowa man in his 50's who died in October. The other fatality was a Western Iowa man who died in early summer.

The human cases this year have occurred in 20 counties (Black Hawk, Cerro Gordo, Chickasaw, Clinton, Crawford, Emmet, Floyd, Hardin, Jackson, Johnson, Monroe,

Muscatine, O'Brien, Plymouth (2), Polk, Pottawattamie, Shelby (2), Story, Winnebago, and Wright). This compares to 147 cases (6 deaths) in 2003 and 54 cases (2 deaths) in 2002.

West Nile is transmitted through the bite of a mosquito that has picked up the virus while feeding on an infected bird. The illness is not spread person-to-person, nor is it spread from bird to humans.

"Although the cool temperatures have meant mosquitoes are less active, they basically remain a risk for West Nile transmission until the first hard frost," said Dr. Patricia Quinlisk, Iowa state epidemiologist.

This is the time of the year when homeowners perform outside home inspections and repairs. The department urges Iowans to make repairs that will reduce the return of West Nile next spring. This includes repairing holes in household screens and permanent removal of outdoor water reservoirs, such as old tires and pails, where standing water helps mosquitoes breed.

Information about the disease is available by calling the state toll-free West Nile hotline 866-WNV-IOWA (1-866-968-4692) or on the IDPH web site: [www.idph.state.ia.us](http://www.idph.state.ia.us).



**MARK THE DATE ON YOUR CALENDAR**



Iowa Department of Public Health

Promoting and Protecting the Health of Iowans

# Cerro Gordo health officials work on shortage

By Michele Appelgate, Cerro Gordo County Department of Public Health

**H**ealth officials from Mercy Medical Center - North Iowa and the Cerro Gordo County Department of Public Health have formed a joint task force to decide how best to handle the severe shortage of flu vaccine.

Health officials from both organizations have been working together after an announcement was made Oct. 5 that flu vaccine from Chiron Corporation would not be available for distribution in the United States for the 2004-2005 influenza season. Chiron was to produce between 46 and 48 million doses of influenza vaccine for the United States.

"There's no question that this will have an impact on us," said Cerro Gordo County Department of Public Health Director Ron Osterholm. "This is a national public health situation that all health-care providers are dealing with. That's why we are asking the public to be patient during this time while we organize our plan of action."

Health officials from the Cerro Gordo County Department of Public Health, Mason City Clinic, and Mercy Medical Center - North Iowa announced how the limited supply of influenza vaccine will be distributed to the people who need it the most.

Mercy - North Iowa and Public Health have combined their total flu vaccine supplies.

Only people at highest of the high risk for serious complications from getting the flu were considered to receive the vaccine this year.

Those identified to receive the vaccination, will be contacted by their physician's office to schedule an appointment.

Vaccine will be distributed under the direction of a physician.

"The Flu Vaccine Task Force worked with local physicians to identify persons who have medical conditions that place them at highest risk for serious complications if they should contract influenza," said Mark Johnson, MD, Chairman of the Cerro Gordo County Board of Health. "This indeed, has not been easy for my colleagues in medicine, but I want to offer them my appreciation and understanding."

"We have been working to make sure that those who need the vaccine the most have the opportunity to receive it," said Philip Alscher, MD, Internal Medicine Clinic

and member of the Mercy Clinics Governance Council. "We could have opened our doors and just given the small amount of flu vaccine to anyone who came through the doors. But we chose to do everything possible to make sure that the people who do receive the flu vaccine are those

people who are in the highest of the high risk categories. I agree with Dr. Johnson that this has not been an easy decision, but we feel it is the best decision considering our situation and the amount of

vaccine available."

Health officials in North Iowa have received a fraction of vaccine that was actually ordered. "In Cerro Gordo County alone, we estimate there are approximately 14,200 people who fit into the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) "high risk" guidelines. Yet we only have approximately 4,000 vaccines to administer," said Karen Crummings, RN, Disease Prevention Specialist with Public Health. "That's why this has been such a difficult task to address. I think the people of North Iowa can look at those numbers and realize that health officials have a very difficult task in front of them. I commend all organizations that are working to get the vaccine to those who need it the most."

"People in North Iowa and the rest of the United States understand that this is a very important health issue," said J.D. Thoreson, MD, Mason City Clinic. "We are asking the public to continue to be patient. Physician's office staff will call patients who are at the highest risk of developing serious complications if they get the flu,"

Health officials from Public Health, Mercy -North Iowa and Mason City Clinic have been working together after an announcement was made October 5 that flu vaccine from Chiron Corporation would not be available for distribution in the United States for the 2004-2005 influenza season. Chiron was to produce between 46 and 48 million doses of influenza vaccine for the United States.

"This is a very unusual year for the flu vaccine," said Craig Osland, Director of Pharmacy with Mercy Medical Center - North Iowa. "We have experienced delays in the past, but never a severe shortage."

North Iowans are encouraged to read the latest influenza updates and new announcements on the Public Health web site: [www.cghealth.com](http://www.cghealth.com).

For more information, call Public Health at 421-9300 or call Mercy Family Health Line at 641-422-7777 or 1-800-468-0050.



Cerro Gordo County  
Department of Public Health



Iowa Department of Public Health

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# Holidays: a time to remember food safety

**G**etting sick at any time is not fun, but the holidays are an especially bad time. Don't let your holidays be spoiled by improper food handling. By following some general safe food-handling tips, everyone should be able to enjoy the holiday food festivities.

- Wash hands, before, during, and after working with raw turkey!
- Never allow ill persons or persons with skin infections to handle food.
- Wash hands with warm water and soap for at least 15 seconds before handling food and after using the bathroom or changing diapers.
- Keep cutting boards and utensils washed and rinsed, especially after contact with raw, uncooked meat. Keep hot foods hot, at an internal temperature of 140 ° F or higher.
- Keep cold foods cold, at an internal temperature of 45 ° F or less.
- Check all temperatures with a thermometer. Do not rely on built-in gauges.
- Do not let cooked food sit out for longer than two hours before being refrigerated or re-heated.

Tips for a safe turkey:

- When thawing, do not leave the turkey out on the kitchen counter or in warm water. Instead, thaw the turkey in the refrigerator, in cold water (be sure to change the water every 30 minutes), or in the microwave (if the turkey is not too large).
- Cook stuffing for turkey separately, instead of in the cavity of the bird. If you use stuffing, be sure to stuff loosely – about  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup of stuffing per pound of turkey.
- Use a meat thermometer. Turkey should be cooked until the internal temperature reaches 180° F as

measured by a meat thermometer inserted into the thickest portion of the bird. The stuffing should reach 165° F regardless of how it is cooked.

- Promptly refrigerate leftover turkey, stuffing, and gravy separately in shallow containers (no deeper than 4") within two hours of cooking. Use leftover turkey and stuffing within 3-4 days; gravy within 1-2 days; or freeze these foods.
- Reheat thoroughly to a temperature of 165° F or until hot and steaming.

Although most of the holiday feast may be centered on the turkey, don't neglect other foods. Items such as salads (especially those containing eggs or sauces), custard/ cream pies and puddings, or any item made with milk or eggs need special attention to prevent problems.

Caution on turkey fryers:

- Many of these deep fryers are potentially so dangerous that Underwriters Laboratories (UL), the testing and certification organization, have taken the unusual step of refusing to certify any of them as safe. Among the findings of UL were:
- Many units tipped over easily, a potential spill of five gallons of scalding oil.
- If the pot was overfilled, oil spilled on the burner when the turkey was immersed, resulting in a fire that engulfed the unit.
- Frying a partially frozen turkey caused the oil to splatter, also resulting in a fire.

Check out the Food Safety and Inspection Service web site at [www.fsis.usda.gov](http://www.fsis.usda.gov) for more information. The Food Safety and Inspection Service also has a Meat and Poultry Hotline that can be reached at 1-800-535-4555. More detailed information on turkey preparation can be found at [www.eatturkey.com/press/main.html](http://www.eatturkey.com/press/main.html).

## Baerenwald nominated for Heroes of the Heartland award

**D**am to Dam race director Kurt Schaeffer has nominated Kris Baerenwald, State Trauma System Coordinator, and two other runners for the American Red Cross Heroes of the Heartland Award. During the 5K race of the 25<sup>th</sup> running of the Dam to Dam race in Des Moines on June 5, 2004, 73 year-old Gene Harding fell to the ground. Kris and two other runners came upon him and began CPR. "The team work was phenomenal," states Kris. For 13-15 minutes, the team provided basic life support while waiting for the ambulance to arrive. After receiving several shocks from the automated external defibrillator (AED) carried by the ambulance crew, Gene regained consciousness and has since fully recovered.

Not only is this a success story, but also it shows how important it is for people to know the basics of CPR. And how CRP really can and does save lives.



Iowa Department of Public Health

Promoting and Protecting the Health of Iowans

# FITnet now inspiring over 300,000 to get active

In 1998 staff of the Iowa Department of Public Health's Bureau of Health Promotion wanted to help maintain the enthusiasm of state employees who had completed a wellness class and were serious about sticking to their New Years Resolutions.

A product of that effort was a daily e-mail with tips to help them stay on track. In the beginning, the e-mail went to 18 staff members. Several weeks later it became apparent that those on the original list were forwarding it to others. This led to an invitation for others to sign up for what was joking called Bugnet, because of the constant nipping at the heels of readers. The numbers immediately doubled then doubled again, then again, and again.

At this point, the daily e-mails were given the descriptive name of FITnet. In March of 1999, an entire year's worth of "scripts" were developed and offered to others promoting healthy lifestyles at the National Association of Governors Councils on Physical Fitness and Sports. By 2001 100,000 individuals were receiving FITnet directly or versions forwarded by others such as California, Arizona, Illinois, Ohio, and New York.

A conservative estimate of readership is now over 300,000. FITnet has been featured in over twenty publications including the Des Moines Register, Walking Magazine, and the leading wellness publication in Canada, Well. FITnet is delivered to readers in every county in Iowa, every province in Canada, and 20 other countries. One reader in Albania translates occasional notes and forwards them on to his colleagues. In October there were 47 new subscribers...a fairly typical month. Although Tim Lane, the creator of the service, reported slower growth in 2002 and 2003 that he attributed to a general dread of Spam.

FITnet is designed to provide nuggets of information on activity and nutrition and motivate readers to follow through. Other messages touch on stress, safety, tobacco, alcohol, and other chronic disease topics. The messages are designed to take up no more than one screen and always end with some related quotes to reinforce the main message. Over the years Tim has gathered over 5,000 quotes. His collection of quotes led to assisting in the compilation of two books, *The Quotable Walker* and *New England in a Nutshell*.

Some of Tim's favorites...

FITnet for 12/31/1999: Do you wish you were in Tonga? According to Islanders it is the place where "time begins." The island nation strides the International Dateline and thus every morning on Tonga there are two days that dawn. Depending on what side of the island you are on, you may either go to tomorrow or yesterday by traveling even a few feet. You thus could celebrate special days twice. (Technically it would seem that Tonga would also be the place where time ends, but I won't get into that.)

Another distinction for Tonga is the low death rate. Historically Tonga has had the lowest death rate of any nation on earth. Of course just going to Tonga would not bestow that benefit upon you, but there are things you can do today, tomorrow, (if you live in Tonga yesterday) and throughout the New Year that can influence that condition. May I suggest regular activity and fruit and vegetable consumption? Happy New Year!

To join FITnet send Tim Lane an e-mail, [tlane@idph.state.ia.us](mailto:tlane@idph.state.ia.us).

## Iowa's number of uninsured is on the rise

By Anne Kinzel

Full out from increasing health care costs is seen in the growing number of uninsured Iowans.

While the latest U.S. Census data shows that Iowa continues to enjoy a very low uninsured rate at 9.5 percent, placing the state behind only Minnesota (8.2 %) and Rhode Island (9.3%), there are concerns about the state's ability to maintain this low rate.<sup>1</sup>

Looking more deeply into the data, we see that Iowa is among the 20 states with a growing proportion of uninsured persons. In fact, Iowa's rate climbed from 8.5 percent in 2001-2002 to 10.4 percent in 2002-2003. This 1.9 percentage point increase was the third highest rate nationally, behind Montana (2.9%) and Oregon (2.2%).

More uninsured persons, coupled with the effect of increasing Medicare premiums, and Iowa's historically low rate of Medicare reimbursement will place added pressure on Iowa's Medicaid system, on Iowa's medical care providers, and Iowans access to affordable, quality health care.

Children's numbers show the largest jump, as the number of uninsured children climbed from about 34,000 in 2001 to about 60,000 in 2003.<sup>1</sup> Without the efforts of state *hawk-i* outreach coordinators, in support of the *hawk-i* program, the picture would be even worse for Iowa's children.

<sup>1</sup> Based on a three year average for 2001-2003.

| DEMOGRAPHIC GROUPS |       | 2001 | 2002 | 2003  |
|--------------------|-------|------|------|-------|
| All Iowans         | %     | 7.5% | 9.5% | 11.3% |
|                    | (000) | 216  | 277  | 329   |
| Total Persons < 65 | %     | 8.7% | 10.9 | 13.1% |
|                    | (000) | 215  | 274  | 329   |
| Children Under 18  | %     | 4.7% | 5.9% | 8.6%  |
|                    | (000) | 34   | 42   | 60    |

US Census Bureau Current Population Survey, Aug. 24, 2004 release (2001-2002 and 2002-2003 moving averages)



Iowa Department of Public Health

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# Tobacco quitline offers Iowans a helping hand

By Kevin Teale

Iowans who take advantage of the state toll free tobacco cessation hotline have a better chance of beating their addiction. That's according to the latest statistics from Quitline Iowa. The number show that 75 percent of the callers to the hotline do end up smoke free for some period of time, while 42 percent are smoke free for more than 30 days after calling.

The success rate is better when callers to the hotline also use nicotine replacement therapy (gum, patches, etc.). With that extra assistance, 89 percent of the callers were smoke free for some period, while 64 percent were smoke free for more

than 30 days.

The hotline is also beginning a pilot program with Iowa Health Systems that is expected to increase the number of calls to the hotline. Instead of simply promoting the hotline to patients with

tobacco addictions, the project will have patients sign permission forms at

the doctors office to have the hotline call them. This proactive approach of reaching out to patients with addictions rather than waiting for them to call is expected to help further reduce the cost of tobacco addiction in Iowa. "This will be a great step forward in the Iowa battle against tobacco addiction," said Dr. John Lowe, director of the Iowa Tobacco

Research Center (ITRC).

Trained counselors at Quitline Iowa have helped Iowans quit smoking since May 2001. Callers choose between a small number of sessions or a longer-term program providing one-on-one counseling for smoking cessation. Counselors discuss how to quit smoking, send tailored information on how to overcome the barriers to quitting, and refer callers to local smoking cessation services if available. It is staffed from 8 a.m. to midnight, seven days a week at the toll-free number, 1-866-U-CAN-TRY (1-866-822-6879).

Quitline Iowa is a toll-free, statewide hotline for smoking cessation counseling. It's operated through a partnership between the Division of Tobacco Use Prevention and Control at the Iowa Department of Public Health and the Iowa Tobacco Research Center at the University of Iowa College of Public Health.



## Adult immunizations go beyond the flu vaccine

By Tina Patterson

Approximately 45,000 adults in the United States die annually of complications from influenza, pneumococcal infections, and hepatitis B – the primary vaccine-preventable diseases affecting adults. The total economic cost of treating these vaccine-preventable diseases among adults, excluding the value of years of life lost, exceeds \$10 billion each year. Although effective vaccines to prevent these diseases are available, they are widely underutilized.

One of the goals set by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services *Healthy People 2010* and Iowa's initiative *Healthy Iowans 2010*

is to vastly increase vaccination coverage for all adults. Adults 65 years and older should be vaccinated against both influenza and pneumococcal disease. Iowa now is at approximately 70% for influenza vaccinations and 50% for pneumococcal vaccinations in obtaining our goals of 90%.

Because adults need different vaccines depending on their health, age, lifestyle, and occupational factors, it's a little more complicated to figure out which vaccine(s) a given individual needs. The Infectious Disease Society of America recommends:

All adults should be immune to measles, mumps, rubella, tetanus,

and diphtheria.

People 50 years of age and older or in groups at highest risk for infection should receive annual influenza immunizations.

People 65 years of age and older or in high-risk groups should receive pneumococcal vaccine.

Adults who are susceptible to hepatitis A, hepatitis B, varicella (chickenpox) and/or meningococcal disease should be given appropriate immunizations if they are at special risk for exposure to these agents.

If you have questions regarding these recommendations call the Immunization Program at 1-800-831-6293.



Iowa Department of Public Health

Promoting and Protecting the Health of Iowans

# Humboldt County collaborates to hold a flu clinic

**A** mass public flu vaccine clinic was held October 23 in Humboldt. Home Care Connection (HCC), a department of Humboldt County Memorial Hospital, partnered with Trimark of Humboldt, the American Red Cross, Humboldt County law enforcement, and Emergency Medical Services (EMS) to conduct the clinic.

The community coalition and planning for this clinic was led by Home Care Connection (the local public health department), Trimark staff and input from the other partners. HCC staff met with the EMS council, discussed the plan, and invited interested parties to participate. The authorization form was modified to include the guidelines for eligibility and everyone had to indicate why they met the risk criteria and sign their name.

People were in line at 6:30 a.m. for the 8:00 a.m. clinic. Both Trimark & HCC had vaccine, so lot numbers were kept separate. All forms had the lot number, expiration date, and manufacturer identified on them. Volunteers handed plain colored slips of paper to all the persons in line to avoid anyone waiting in line and later being told we were out of vaccine. It took about 15 minutes

between the time they got their form until they received the vaccine.

The first 250 doses were given in less than 1 hour. There were 13 RN's giving shots early in the morning, later the number of nurses was reduced. 650 people went through the line in the first three hours. The clinic planned to give immunizations until 2:00 p.m. and gave the last dose at 1:40 p.m. Only three people were turned away after the vaccine supply was gone. Over 1000 doses were distributed.

HCC provided Vaccines for Children (VFC) vaccine for the clinic. The children came through the line, however there was a separate area for them and their parents (if they qualified). The traffic pattern developed by bio-emergency planning and preparedness for a dispensing clinic was utilized.

For more information on the public flu vaccine clinic held in Humboldt call 515-332-4200.

# Loan repayment grants attract health professionals

*By Patricia Kehoe*

**H**ealth-care professionals employed in Iowa's underserved areas can apply for PRIMECARRE Loan Repayment Program grants awarded annually by the Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH). The grant program expands access to primary care, mental health services and oral health care by attracting providers to counties and regions identified as health professional shortage areas, also known as HPSAs.

Successful grant applicants include primary care physicians, physician assistants, dentists, social workers, and other health care professionals who agree to provide full-time clinical services in a public or non-profit hospital or clinic located in a shortage area for a minimum of two years. In return for their dedication to the underserved, practitioners receive grants totaling \$20,000 to \$60,000 over a two-year period to repay educational loans.

Practitioners offered awards for fiscal year 2005 include:

- Robert Baker, P.A., University of Iowa Family Care, Sigourney
- Fotene Gennatos, D.D.S., Siouxland Community Health Center, Sioux City
- Martha Hibma, L.I.S.W., Plains Area Mental Health

Center, LeMars

- Matthew Kettman, M.D., Evansdale Family Practice, Evansdale
- Eric Opheim, D.O., Grundy Center Family Practice, Grundy Center
- Robert Pranger, M.D., Cedar Falls Primary Care, Cedar Falls
- Carol Roach, Ph.D., Mahaska Health Partnership, Oskaloosa
- Laurie Warren, P.A., Siouxland Mental Health Center, Sioux City

Program applications are available in July by mail or on the IDPH web site. Applications are due in late August and awards are announced at the end of September. New contracts begin the following January 1 and continue for two years. The program is supported through a combination of federal and state funds and is administered by IDPH, Bureau of Health Care Access. For additional information, contact Patricia Kehoe at 515-281-5069 or pkehoe@idph.state.ia.us.



Iowa Department of Public Health

Promoting and Protecting the Health of Iowans

# Groups join forces to battle methamphetamine

In an impressive show of collaborative strength and determination, government, retail, law enforcement, and religious leaders have unveiled "Meth Watch," a program designed to limit the accessibility of products used to make Methamphetamine, as well as provide an efficient and effective way to provide information to local law enforcement.

"Our communities are plagued by the manufacture and use of this highly addictive, illegal substance," said Travis Acheson, Iowa Meth Watch Director. "This initiative provides a mechanism for every part of the community to come together and take the problem head on." The Meth Watch Program made its debut Tuesday, November 9 at a news conference at Scott's Foods in Norwalk, Iowa, the first store and Iowa community to institute the voluntary program.

Meth Watch is a free program that provides training and preventive tools to any retail establishment that sells products that can be used to make methamphetamine. Funded by a grant from the Center for Sub-

stance Abuse Prevention (CSAP), stores receive a kit with a training video, shelf display markers, and other educational tools, as well as suspicious transaction report materials to provide information to local law enforcement.

This is the first formal training and lead report program of its kind and program developers have high hopes for its potential for success. "Meth touches every part of Iowa and it will take a

multi-faceted approach. Meth Watch will be an important tool in this fight," said Janet Zwick, Division Director for the Iowa Department of Public Health, who administers the grant.

Public safety officials also hold high hopes about the potential of the program. "Law enforcement needs every part of the community to be vigilant if we were going to slow the production and ultimately use of methamphetamine in Iowa," said Ken Carter, director of the Iowa Division of Narcotics Enforcement. "Part of the greatest danger in the growth of this drug is the very accessible, yet highly toxic nature of the ingredients that are used to make it. The volatility of the ingredients and the propen-

sity for makeshift labs to explode without warning poses a community danger well beyond addiction to the drug itself."

Methamphetamine can be made using a variety of easily accessible items including, but not limited to, over the counter cold medications, rubbing alcohol, and lithium batteries. Meth Watch provides the training for clerks to recognize when suspiciously large quantities or combinations of meth ingredients are purchased. Clerks are armed with a checklist that enables them to quickly write down the critical data law enforcement officials need to follow up on the lead.

Partners in the Meth Watch Program include the Iowa Grocery Industry Association, Iowa Retail Federation, Iowa Retail Foundation, Iowa Pharmacy Association, Petroleum Marketers and Convenience Stores of Iowa, Iowa Department of Public Health, the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), Iowa Department of Public Safety, Iowa Division of Narcotics Enforcement, Iowa Governor's Office of Drug Control Policy, Iowa National Guard Counter Drug Task Force, Midwest Counter Drug Training Center, Midwest High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA) and the Ecumenical Ministries of Iowa. For more information on Meth Watch, call 800- 795-1729 or check out the web site at [www.iowamethwatch.com](http://www.iowamethwatch.com).



## Mark Your Calendar

*The Governor's Conference on Public Health*

*Barn Raising V:*

*Building Iowa as a Healthy Community*

Our Past: What can we learn from it?  
Our Present: What are we doing now?  
Our Future: Where do we need to go?

July 28 and 29, 2005

Drake University, Des Moines

Registration Fee: \$50.00

Look for the brochure with registration in MAY!

For more information: [www.idph.state.ia.us](http://www.idph.state.ia.us) (click on conferences)  
or call 515-360-8046



Iowa Department of Public Health

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# Epidemiology Notes

From the Center for Acute Disease Epidemiology, 1 800 362-2736 (24-hour number)

## Update on influenza vaccine situation

### How to use the nasal vaccine, FluMist®

FluMist® is one of the two types of flu vaccine available during this vaccine shortage. Thus, should only be used for those healthy people in the CDC priority groups. It should not be used for non-priority healthy people.

Thus FluMist®, the nasal-spray flu vaccine, should be used for healthy individuals, ages 5 to 49 years of age, who are caregivers of infants under 6 months of age or who are health-care workers who provide direct patient care. FluMist® is not recommended for health-care workers taking care of severely immunocompromised people when they are in a protective environment (such as bone marrow transplant patients) and also it should not be given to pregnant women.

### Clarifications for FluMist use in Health-care

**Workers:** The 2004-05 recommendations for the use of FluMist for health-care workers have **changed** from last year. Those health-care workers who are on the CDC's priority list for flu vaccination this year can and should receive FluMist if they are in good health, between the ages of 5-49, and not caring for those who are highly immunosuppressed, such as bone marrow transplant patients. Thus, almost all health-care workers in Iowa needing flu vaccine can safely receive the FluMist vaccine. Since almost all of the others on CDC's priority list cannot receive the FluMist vaccine, the more health care workers that get the FluMist, the more injectable vaccine that can be saved for others.

If a health-care worker that provides care to highly immunosuppressed persons does receive FluMist vaccine, they should not work for seven days after being immunized with FluMist. All other health-care workers who receive FluMist should be able to return to work immediately. Studies have shown that shedding is typically limited to 3 - 7 days, with concentrations of virus much lower than that from natural disease. It is important to remember that viral shedding **does not** equal transmission. Transmission of the vaccine virus has not been observed among adults.

Priority for the injectable vaccine should be given to those who are on the priority list and who cannot receive FluMist, i.e. those with chronic medical conditions.

Further clarifications on use of FluMist can be found on IDPH's web site at: <http://www.idph.state.ia.us/adper/common/pdf/flumist.pdf>.

### Price Gouging on influenza vaccine:

There have been reports of price gouging on influenza vaccine from other parts of the nation, but has not been seen in Iowa. If you do see price gouging in Iowa, contact Stephen Switzer, Investigator Attorney General's Office/Department of Justice, 515-281-8771.

## Pertussis

Iowa Department of Public Health Pertussis Control Guidelines are posted at <http://www.idph.state.ia.us/>

- If patients with pertussis are seen by private practitioners, it is still important for the practitioner to work with local public health to ensure case investigation of close contacts and reporting are done. This will help stop transmission.
- Asymptomatic family members and close contacts to a person with pertussis need antibiotic prophylaxis to stop disease transmission. These asymptomatic individuals can continue normal social contacts while receiving their course of antibiotics.
- Pertussis vaccine is 70-90 percent effective, immunity wanes 5-10 years after the last dose of pertussis vaccine was given. Most vaccinated children will again be susceptible by the time they hit their teen years. Currently there is no licensed pertussis containing vaccine for those over 7 years old in the United States. (But two will likely be available beginning next year.)
- If a person is receiving antibiotics for pertussis exposure, the protective effect of the antibiotics is only for the duration of antibiotics. There is no residual protection from the antibiotics so if there is re-exposure, the person will need another full course of antibiotics.

**Pneumococcal Vaccine:** Since flu vaccine is in short supply, it is important to ensure that all those eligible for the pneumococcal vaccine receive it. This includes both the elderly and young children. If possible offer at the same time as the flu vaccine.

The CDC's National Immunization Program's web site has information on the pneumococcal vaccine, including eligibility, at:

<http://www.cdc.gov/nip/vaccine/pneumo/default.htm>.

**Meeting Announcements and Training Opportunities:** Advanced Epidemiology and Basic Epidemiology classes are being offered in the six regions in the next several months. Registration at <http://www.prepareiowa.com/>

### INMSP - Working Together for Iowa's Newborns

1. To provide a training tool for collectors to improve the quality of blood spots collected from Iowa infants.
2. To educate collectors on the importance of filling out the form with the proper information.

Target Audience

Anyone who is responsible for filling out collection forms and/or collecting blood spot samples, i.e., nurses, phlebotomists, laboratory technicians and send-out clerks.



Iowa Department of Public Health

Promoting and Protecting the Health of Iowans

# Worth Noting

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## Gambling Court: An Innovative Idea

Gambling Court: An Innovative Idea, by Judge Mark G. Farrell, Reflections on the implementation of and outcomes from the first gambling treatment court in the United States, will be held Wednesday, November 17 from 8 a.m.-12 p.m. in Des Moines. Visit <http://www.trainingresources.org/GamblingCourt1117.pdf> for more information.

## Federal grant clearinghouse

Grants.gov allows organizations to electronically find and apply for competitive grant opportunities from all Federal grant-making agencies. Grants.gov is the single access point for over 900 grant programs offered by the 26 Federal grant-making agencies. Visit [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) to learn more.

## IDPH web site a public health essential

The IDPH web site is constantly being updated. For the latest information on various programs, statistics, services, funding availability and upcoming conferences and trainings visit [www.idph.state.ia.us](http://www.idph.state.ia.us).

## Thank you to Sandy Briggs

A thank you to Sandy Briggs, Information Specialist in the IDPH Office of Communication and Public Information, for her design of the new Iowa Health FOCUS logo.

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What would you like to see in the Iowa Health FOCUS? Send your suggestions for future articles, letters to the editor, upcoming events, or to add names to the mailing list by e-mailing the FOCUS Editor, Sarah Taylor at [staylor@idph.state.ia.us](mailto:staylor@idph.state.ia.us).



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