



Swatches

Connecting Rural Iowa

May/June 2014

In This Issue:

[President's Message](#)

[Legislative Update](#)

[Marketplace & Iowa
Health & Wellness
Plan Update](#)

[LifeLong Links](#)

[New Direct Care
Training](#)

[Community Care
Coordination](#)

[IRHA Education
Committee Update](#)

Mark your Calendars!

*Transforming
Safety and Health
in the Heartland*
November 19 - 20,

President's Message

Rural Resources

My father will be pleased to learn that a significant percentage of my time spent growing up and working on the farm was not wasted. Yes, my mind tended to roam, but what do you expect from an adolescent boy who spent countless hours on a tractor equipped only with an a.m. radio and a bag of sunflower seeds. I can remember the yelling and laughter as if it were yesterday. On occasion I was known to drift off while driving the bean buggy or the hay baler. It was just for a few seconds - and some subtle screaming from my dad or our hired-hand would perk me right up - but if there were a few rows of beans mowed down or some meandering windrows in our fields, I may have had something to do with it.

Aside from the drifting, for the most part, while growing up on the farm I was mentally present and grew to become quite observant of the ecosystem our farm relied on. In fact, many of my personal values and beliefs were developed on the farm. I learned what it means to be a responsible steward of the land. I learned why crop rotation, buffer strips, terraces and natural wetlands are critical to sustaining our farm for years to come. In short, I learned how to effectively leverage and enhance the resources around us. It's a simple concept, but one that is easily forgotten.

Now as a health care administrator, I have to remind myself to utilize the wealth of professional resources available to us as Iowans. Not only is our state equipped with some of Earth's most fertile natural resources, Iowa also features many of the top leaders in rural and agricultural safety and health. I am greatly honored to announce that IRHA will be collaborating with Iowa's Center for Agricultural Safety and Health (ICASH) and the Great Plains Center for Agricultural Health to hold a joint conference,

**Safety and Health
in the Heartland
November 19 - 20,
2014**

**FFA Enrichment
Center on the
DMACC Campus
Ankeny, Iowa**

This conference is a joint effort between the Iowa Rural Health Association and the Midwest Rural Agricultural Safety and Health Conference. Additional information will be posted on the website and shared through the member list serve as it becomes available.



**Thank you for your
IRHA Membership!**

If you have renewed your IRHA membership, thank you for your continued support. If you have not yet renewed, please take a minute and do so right now. Renewing will prevent any suspension of member benefits, such

honored to announce that IRHA will be collaborating with Iowa's Center for Agricultural Safety and Health (ICASH) and the Great Plains Center for Agricultural Health to hold a joint conference, Transforming Safety and Health in the Heartland, November 19-20, 2014 at the FFA Enrichment Center in Ankeny. This collaborative effort will combine the Iowa Rural Health Association's Fall Meeting with the Midwest Rural Agricultural Safety and Health Conference, and will provide an opportunity to connect with some of our nation's greatest leaders in agricultural safety and health research and practices. Please stay tuned for more information on how to become involved in this exciting joint conference!

To continue with these and other IRHA initiatives, we need your support. If you have not yet done so, please renew your membership by completing and returning the membership renewal form you received by email or you can download a membership form from the IRHA website - click the "Join Now" option on the main menu at www.iaruralhealth.org. Questions on membership can be directed to Melissa Primus at mprimus@iarurahealth.org or 515-282-8192. And if there is a meaningful way IRHA can collaborate on rural health initiatives in your community please do not hesitate to contact me at 515-327-5405 or jon.rosmann@iowapdc.org.

Sincerely,

Jon-Michael Rosmann

Legislative Update

The Legislature recently completed work on the state budget, which shows a continued commitment to Medicaid expansion, the marketplace and other healthcare delivery system reforms adopted by the Governor and Legislature last year.

Meanwhile, March 31st marked the end of the open enrollment period for Iowa's health insurance marketplace. The federal government reported 29,163 Iowans selected a marketplace plan and 78,860 enrolled in Medicaid/CHIP by the conclusion of the open enrollment period. As a consequence of the federal government's decision to allow the continued sale of certain pre-2014 insurance policies, allowing citizens to keep the coverage they had prior to Affordable Care Act implementation as promised, the Iowa Insurance Division (IID) concluded that a two-tier system resulted. IID notes that Iowa has one of the lowest uptake rates nationally of citizens eligible for marketplace coverage who chose to enroll in a marketplace plan. Iowa's rate stands at 5.86%, or 15,346 citizens, enrolled in a marketplace plan of the 262,000 projected eligible as of March 1st, compared to the national average of 14.83%. IID believes the two-tier system ultimately resulted in greater choice of plan options for

Renewing will prevent any suspension of member benefits, such as this newsletter, list serve notices, and more.

Benefits of being an IRHA member:

1. Health advocacy with a rural perspective
 2. Access to resources through the IRHA and NRHA websites and email distribution lists
 3. Networking opportunities with professionals from diverse disciplines
 4. Input opportunities for State and Federal Policy issues
 5. Discounted rates for Annual Conference
 6. Opportunities for leadership development
-

plan of the 262,000 projected eligible as of March 1st, compared to the national average of 14.83%. IID believes the two-tier system ultimately resulted in greater choice of plan options for citizens.

Finally, the Iowa Medicaid Enterprise (IME) announced by late spring over 90,000 Iowans enrolled in the Iowa Health & Wellness Plan, which far surpasses the 50,000 enrollees in the IowaCare program that the Plan replaced on January 1, 2014. IME credits enrollment efforts throughout the state with increasing enrollment levels and the overall improvement in the insured rate for this population.

Health Insurance Marketplace & Iowa Health and Wellness Plan Update

The first open enrollment period for the Health Insurance Marketplace closed March 31, 2014, with more than 29,000 individuals enrolling in a plan. Although the next open enrollment does not begin until November 15, 2014, some individuals may be able to apply during a special enrollment period if they experience certain qualifying life events such as losing employer-sponsored coverage, moving to a new state, or changes in family size. More information on qualifying life events can be found by clicking [here](#).

Enrollment in the Iowa Health and Wellness Plan (IHWP) continues to grow with 94,907 enrolled as of April 30, 2014. Individuals may apply for coverage through the IHWP at any time throughout the year.

Healthy Behaviors

In early May, Iowa Medicaid Enterprise released information on the Healthy Behaviors Program for IHWP members, which will be promoted under the Iowa Health Link brand.

Iowa Health and Wellness members who complete the Healthy Behavior requirements each year will not be charged a monthly contribution for their health coverage in the following year. During the first year of coverage, there are no monthly contributions for any IHWP members. After that, some members may be charged a monthly contribution (based on family income) if they do not participate in the Healthy Behaviors Program.

To complete Healthy Behaviors requirements, IHWP members must:

- 1) Get a physical exam from a health care provider; and
- 2) Complete a Health Risk Assessment (HRA) or qualified health history survey.

To complete the survey online, members request an access code

2) Complete a Health Risk Assessment (HRA) or qualified health history survey.

To complete the survey online, members request an access code from their provider and go to assessmyhealth.com. Call 1-800-338-8366 to complete the survey by phone, 8am - 5 pm, Monday- Friday.

A provider toolkit is available that explains the programs and includes member support materials. It includes details on registration, billing a wellness exam, and use and reimbursement for the health risk assessment. Access the [toolkit here](#).

Dental Wellness Plan

The Dental Wellness Plan (DWP) went into effect May 1, 2014. This provides all Iowa Health and Wellness Plan enrollees with access to dental services. As of mid-May, more than 670 dentists have signed up to be DWP providers. DWP benefits fall into three categories: core, enhanced, and enhanced plus. Additional information on the DWP, including participating dentists, can be found at www.dwpiowa.com.



A "no-wrong door/single point of entry" to services for people looking for long-term supports/services, their families and/or caregivers became a statewide service on January 1, 2014. It is called LifeLong Links and has the core mission of connecting Iowans to the long-term services and supports they need in an easy-to-access manner. At the same time, the system may provide fiscal benefits to the state of Iowa by pushing the need for Medicaid services "down the road", slowing down the process of "spending down" to Medicaid services, and even eliminating the need for Medicaid services for some individuals.

LifeLong Links is the formally trademarked name of Iowa's Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC). The Aging and Disability Resource Center Program (ADRC) is a collaborative effort of the Iowa Department on Aging, Department of Human Services, the state's Area Agencies on Aging, and partner agencies, designed to streamline access to long-term supports and services. The ADRC initiative is part of a statewide effort to restructure services and supports for older adults, persons with disabilities, family members and care providers. It also complements long term care system change activities designed to enhance access by older adults and persons with disabilities of all ages to community living, personal choice and independence.

The key to LifeLong Links is community collaboration. While the Area Agencies have been identified as the Coordination Centers, it will take partner agencies, some working as Access Points, and all service providers, to fully realize the goal of LifeLong Links. Public Health, Mental Health, Centers for Independent Living, Home & Community Based Providers, as well as others, will come together to form the regional LifeLong Links teams.

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The overall goal of LifeLong Links is to empower individuals to effectively navigate their health and other long-term support options. LifeLong Links will accomplish this goal by: 1) serving as visible and trusted sources of information on the full range of long-term care options; 2) providing personalized and objective advice and assistance to empower people to make decisions about their support options; 3) providing coordinated and streamlined access to all publicly-funded long-term care programs through a single intake, assessment and eligibility determination process; 4) helping people transition from hospitals and other institutional settings into the community; and 5) maintaining rigorous quality assurance processes. LifeLong Links, through its Coordination Centers and Access Points, will serve as integrated points of entry into the long-term care service system and is being designed to address the frustrations many consumers and their families experience when they need to obtain information and access to supports and services.

The Access Points mentioned above are community partners that, when developed, will provide local access to Options Counseling, support, and guidance for individuals and families planning for long-term services and support. An Access Point may specialize in a specific population, i.e. traumatic brain injury. When a call is received through the LifeLong Links Call Center, referrals will be made to local Access Points based upon the need of the caller. The area agencies on aging are actively pursuing partnerships for Access Points.

So how does LifeLong Links work exactly? The first point of contact is the LifeLong Links toll free statewide number: 1-866-468-7887. A live Information and Assistance Specialist answers the call and determines the specific needs. If the needs include assistance in exploring the options available to them, they are referred to an Options Counselor. Options Counseling facilitates person-centered, streamlined access to supports and includes: gathering information about an individual's current situation, providing information on and educating about long term support options, weighing pros/cons and potential implications of various options, collaborating to develop a long term support plan, facilitating enrollment in participant directed services, assisting with enrollment in publicly funded services, assisting in connecting to privately purchased and/or informal supports, and following-up with the individual. Unlike case management, Options Counseling is designed to be a short-term, intermittent support system for individuals and families. The Options Counselors will be located throughout the State.

Consumer and families can also access LifeLong Links via website at www.lifelonglinks.org. This site allows users to search for services by location as well as to complete a form requesting more information on services and supports.

This wonderful system is just beginning and will be expanding and getting better as time goes on. For more information, contact your local area agency on aging. If you aren't aware of whom

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New Direct Care Training and Certificates Strengthen the Profession

Many Iowans may be surprised to learn who makes up our state's largest workforce: direct care professionals. Direct care professionals (DCPs) work in facilities, individuals' homes, and community settings to provide supportive services and care to people who are aging or experiencing illnesses or disabilities. They include home health aides, nurse aides, supported community living workers, direct support professionals, and many other titles. Together, Iowa's direct care professionals number around 75,000.

DCPs make key contributions to the health and well-being in Iowa's communities; many Iowans rely on DCPs to support their independence, daily living, or health. Yet as critical as their work is, there are challenges to recruiting and retaining this high demand profession. There is no existing standardized education to prepare people to work across the various settings of direct care. Turnover in the field is high, costing Iowa employers and taxpayers \$198 million in 2013. Demand for direct care services is high and growing - Iowa will need an estimated 20,000 additional DCPs between now and 2020 - but employers struggle to recruit and retain good workers. Rural communities in particular experience the strain of shortages of enough workers to meet the needs of Iowans who want to stay at home as long as possible and recover or maintain their health.

The Direct Care Workforce Initiative at the Iowa Department of Public Health is addressing these issues with the release of the new comprehensive, cross-discipline training package known as *Prepare to Care: Iowa's Direct Care and Support Curriculum*. The curriculum includes a Core training course and five advanced training courses. Advanced certificates as a Community Living Professional, Personal Support Professional and Health Support Professional are achieved by taking a written exam at any Iowa community college after completion of required courses. The six-hour Core course is also available online to anyone who wants to access at <http://directcare.training-source.org/>.

The training demonstrated reductions in staff turnover among agencies in a pilot study. Compared to a control group, students who took *Prepare to Care* courses were more likely to feel like they had opportunities for advancement and less likely to report heavy workloads. To learn more about *Prepare to Care*, including outcomes from the pilot of the training, opportunities to access the Core and advanced training modules, and how to become an

they had opportunities for advancement and less likely to report heavy workloads. To learn more about *Prepare to Care*, including outcomes from the pilot of the training, opportunities to access the Core and advanced training modules, and how to become an instructor, visit our website [here](#) or email directcare@idph.iowa.gov.

Community Care Coordination Empowers Patients

In 2013, the Iowa Legislature allocated funding to the Iowa Collaborative Safety Net Provider Network (Safety Net Network) for the development and implementation of a statewide, regionally-based community care coordination (CCC) network. Following a competitive RFP process, two regions were awarded \$300,000 each to implement their care coordination efforts: Mercy Medical Center-North Iowa and Webster County Public Health.

This funding has been used for the development and implementation of an integrated approach to health care delivery that supports primary care providers and links patients with community resources necessary to empower patients in addressing biomedical and social determinants of health to improve health outcomes. Pharmacy, behavioral health and evaluation on-site technical assistance sessions have been provided on a regular basis for these two regions.

One of the common challenges identified by both regions was access to medication. Iowa Prescription Drug Corporation (IPDC) was secured to provide pharmacy technical assistance for the regions. Through IPDC's assistance, each region has been able to improve overall medication access and compliance by utilizing these programs effectively for their patients.

The Safety Net Network has been working with Cherokee Health Systems of Knoxville, Tennessee, to provide technical assistance in primary behavioral health integration, not only for the CCC regions, but also for any interested parties throughout the state. Two symposiums have been held to share the Cherokee model from the many aspects of care, including administrative, financial and clinical. Lessons learned over the past year will assist in shaping the strategy over the next fiscal year as the overarching goal to expand the CCC work on a statewide level is pursued.

The Safety Net Network has also been working closely with the Iowa Department of Human Services to align the integrated network with the health care delivery system model being developed under the State Innovation Models initiative grant.

IRHA hosted a webinar on the CCC project on May 15. A recording of that webinar can be found [here](#).

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The Safety Net Network is administered by the Iowa Primary Care Association. For more information on the Community Care Coordination project or the Safety Net Network, contact Michelle Stephan, Community Care Coordination Program Director, mstephan@iowapca.org.

IRHA Education Committee - Working for Members

The Education Committee continues to meet and plan for encounters that give members and rural stakeholders an opportunity to learn from one another and content experts. Since 2009 the Lunch and Learn Webinar Series has offered 20 presentations. Several are archived for viewing and available at the [IRHA website](#). A recent survey affirmed that the no-cost webinars are appreciated, and what participants are most interested in.

On May 15th, Michelle Stephan with the Iowa Primary Care Association and Chi Martin with Mercy Medical Center - North Iowa, Mason City, presented on their work in implementing health integration through coordinated community care in Iowa.

In July, speaker [Mike Rosmann](#) will share his expertise on Behavioral Health. The September webinar will bring updates and future steps for Iowa Wellness Plan, Medicaid, and MarketPlace, and the December webinar will take a look at Iowa environmental factors and updates.

Webinars are usually the 2nd Thursday of the month; 12 noon to 1 pm. Online registration is available 2 weeks before and up to the day of the webinar.

The Education Committee members are also coordinating a partnership with [Iowa's Center for Agricultural Safety and Health](#) at the University of Iowa for a November Conference. The conference will be held on November 19 and 20 at the FFA Enrichment Center on the DMACC Campus in Ankeny. More information will be posted to the website and shared through the member list serve as it becomes available.

The IRHA Board has a rich history of partner collaborations to benefit members and promote rural health in Iowa. Education Committee members are volunteers and include: Jon Rosmann - Iowa Prescription Drug Corporation, Tracy Rodgers - IDPH, Oral Health Center, Tori Squires - Iowa Primary Care Association, Fred Eastman - Midwest Rural Telemedicine Consortium, and Gloria Vermie - IDPH, Office of Rural Health.

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