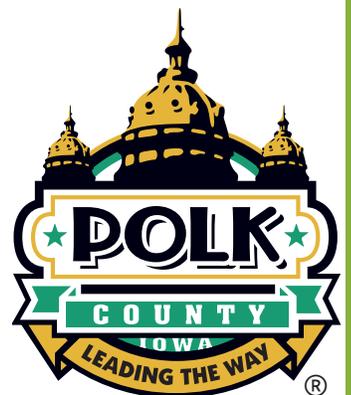




**Polk County Health Department**  
Affordable. Convenient. Confidential.  
*Nurturing a culture of wellness.*

**2012/2013 Annual Report**



# ***Creating the conditions for all people to live healthy lives by engaging residents, reducing health disparities, and attending to the health needs of our most vulnerable families.***

A primary responsibility of a local health department is to minimize the spread of disease through the community. We conduct surveillance on disease trends. We provide immunizations against vaccine-preventable diseases. We investigate disease outbreaks.

But, we also know that not being sick is not the same as being healthy. According to the World Health Organization "health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease."

Yet we know, *"it is unreasonable to expect that people will change their behavior easily when so many forces in the social, cultural and physical environment conspire against such change."*

*- Institute of Medicine, 2000*

For example, in 1985 there were no states in which the obesity rates exceeded 15%. Today the obesity rate in **each** of the 50 states exceeds 15%. This change cannot be credibly explained as a coincidence -- of a bad choice being made simultaneously by millions of people regardless of most demographic or geographic distinctions. Something bigger and broader is shaping those choices. This may be why you hear the remark that one's zip code is a better predictor of your health than your genetic code.

Accordingly, it is our responsibility to create, not by ourselves, the conditions that allow people to be healthy. And we have identified the following conditions to impact:

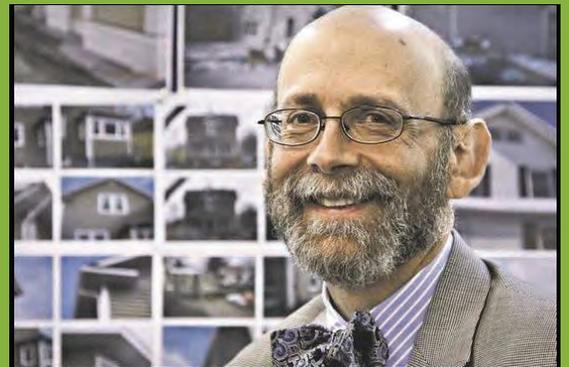
- Educated, empowered and engaged residents
- Supportive social, political, economic and built environments
- Access to necessary prevention, treatment and care services

As we, at Polk County Health Department, give greater attention to these broader forces and conditions (determinants of health) I decided our mission statement should reflect this focus. It is our mission ***To create the conditions for all people to live healthy lives by engaging residents, reducing health disparities and attending to the needs of our most vulnerable families.***

The following pages of this year's annual report describe how we are trying to make this happen.

**Rick Kozin**  
**Polk County Health Department Director**

## **From the Director**



# Board of Supervisors



*Tom Hockensmith*



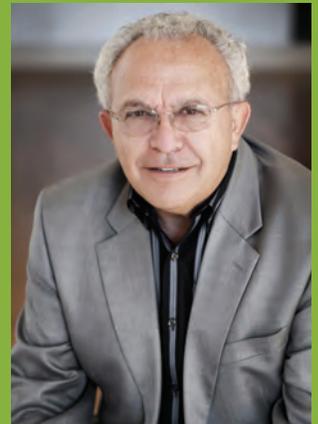
*Angela Connolly*



*Steve Van Oort*



*Robert Brownell*



*John Mauro*

## Board of Health Advisory Committee

**Tom Newton**, Director of Network Engagement at Wellmark Blue Cross & Blue Shield

**Dr. John Olds**, Medical Advisor to the Iowa Board of Medicine and Des Moines Metropolitan Area Team Physician for Hospice of Central Iowa

**Reylon Meeks**, Clinical Nurse Specialist for Blank Children's Hospital and Pleasant Hill Fire Chief

**Dr. Donald Anderson**, General Surgeon, private practice

**Bobretta Brewton**, Consultant

# Disease Prevention

- In order to reduce the spread of communicable diseases, such as pertussis, cryptosporosis, and shigella our Communicable Disease team conducts investigations that determine the source of illness and how it is spread. This enables them to stop the disease from spreading to others. Last year this team did follow-up investigations on 338 cases of communicable diseases that included pertussis, E. Coli, Lyme Disease, mumps, cryptosporosis, shigella and more.
- The Vaccines For Children (VFC) program provides free immunizations to children whose family qualifies based on income levels or ethnicity. Of the 2,370 childhood patients that visited our clinic last year and received 5,261 immunizations, 89% were VFC eligible. Additionally, we gave 8,114 immunizations to adults, many of whom are under-insured and 703 who were completing their green card requirements.
- When our residents participate in our vaccination campaigns they not only reduce the chances of getting sick themselves, but reduce the chances of passing a disease on to someone else. We provide immunizations in community based settings and on a regular basis in our clinic. Last year we vaccinated 10,357 people for the flu and 35% of those people did not have health insurance.
- Our clinic gave 4,199 vaccinations to 1,967 patients who were traveling abroad in order to protect them from infectious diseases endemic to their travel destinations.
- There are four reportable sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) that we conduct investigations on: HIV, chlamydia, Gonorrhea and syphilis. During our investigations we identify the sexual partners of people who test positive for one of these four STDs to ensure they are tested and treated before spreading it to others or re-infecting their partner. Last year we investigated 3,267 cases. Sixty percent of partners received prophylaxis treatment. The re-infection rate for chlamydia is 10.45% and 8.4% for Gonorrhea, which indicates that most people infected with an STD take steps to protect themselves in the future.
- During extended heat events in the summer months we provide an overnight cooling shelter for people who do not have air conditioning. In 2012/2013 we were open for four nights and served 66 people.



***“We know that being healthy is more than not being sick. But, we also know that not being sick is a prerequisite to being healthy. By quickly identifying and investigating potential contagious diseases we can minimize the number of people who get sick.”***

## **Educated, empowered, engaged residents**



***“Educated residents better understand their health risks and knowledge empowers them to make healthier choices. By engaging our residents in health education and movements such as Healthy Polk, we can create a healthy community.”***

- In order to engage residents in healthy behaviors we must provide them with accurate and timely information to help them make these health decisions. Last year our education team attended 27 community health fair events and delivered 83 health presentations, reaching an estimated 2,000 people in our community. Additionally, this team provides health messages to the media. Last year they sent out 25 media releases, wrote 73 articles, did 192 interviews on Spanish radio and an additional 72 interviews for English print, radio and TV media.
- Our Diabetes Education Program is a series of four classes that teaches participants about healthy eating, portion control, how to read food nutrition labels, and how medications can help manage diabetes. Last year all 22 participants showed increased knowledge and improved health behaviors.
- Better Choices Better Health is a program that teaches individuals living with a chronic disease how to better manage the pain, anxiety and fatigue that can accompany a chronic disease. Of the 22 participants 81.9% showed improvement.
- Many older adults have experienced a fall or have a great fear of falling. Our Matter of Balance program teaches older adults how to make their environment safer and how simple exercises can reduce their chances of falling. Of the 69 participants 81% showed improvement.
- We provide case management for breast and cervical cancer by reviewing patient's screening results and providing education and support on abnormal results to make sure the patient is getting needed follow-up care, treatment and financial assistance. Last year 389 patients received breast and cervical cancer case management with 100% of those cases completing treatment.
- Last year we also managed 93 new cases of lead poisoned children in Polk County. Our nurse case manager visits the child's home to determine the source of the lead hazard and educate parents about lead poisoning prevention; refers families to dietitians for nutrition counseling to help prevent lead poisoning; and coordinates care for doctor visits, follow-up lead tests and developmental assessments.

## Supportive social, political, economic & built environments

*“Probably the most powerful lesson learned is that the places we live, work and play influence our behaviors. By optimizing those environments we can make the healthy choice the easy choice so that we naturally adopt healthy behaviors.”*



- Some families may have health risks in their own home. Homes built before 1978 probably have lead based paint that can chip off and cause lead poisoning in kids under the age of six. Families that qualify can have those lead hazards fixed at little or no cost and for many families this can mean new windows or siding. Last year we fixed 32 homes and all were completed within 15 days.
- Because of the Affordable Care Act we received a Community Transformation Grant from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Iowa Department of Public Health. This grant allowed us to create more affordable smoke-free housing options for low-income residents and provide assessments and support to local businesses implementing healthy worksite policies.
- Our Healthy Homes program inspects homes for 29 hazards identified by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Last year we inspected 12 homes for all hazards and addressed 55% of the identified hazards.
- Finally, we not only improve health by engaging residents to make individual healthy choices but we engage residents and businesses in helping to create a healthier environment for people to make those decisions in. Healthy Polk is a ten year plan in which community members identified the top ten priorities that we will work on through 2020. The priorities include issues such as access to affordable fresh fruits and vegetables; convenient and affordable public transportation; safe and affordable housing; and more emphasis on prevention and wellness. Last year 144 stakeholders participated in moving the plan forward and there were 25 organizational work plans with elements of Healthy Polk priorities identified.

## Access to necessary prevention, treatment & care service

- We have a health clinic that provides basic preventive care services, STD testing, immunizations, and chronic disease management. Last year we had 16,254 separate encounters with our patients.
- Our clinic saw 100 children for well child physicals, 29 for school physicals and 149 for sports physicals. Of those kids 100% were cleared for school and sports and 95% were completed at the recommended timeline.
- Most of the patients that we see in our clinic are under-insured or experiencing hardship in their lives. Last year we had 149 chronic care management visits and 322 acute care visits. Many of these visits include health screenings, which is a service often provided in a community setting as well. Last year we did 10,368 health screenings. Of these 40% were for diabetes, 20% were urine drug screenings, 14% were for other chronic conditions, 13% were for sexually transmitted diseases, 10% were for lead poisoning, 4% were for acute care, and 1% was for HIV.
- For many vulnerable families it can be difficult to get to a doctor's office for health care. Because of this we bring our services to places in the community that are easier to access and provide free care. Our staff participated in eight back to school health screening events in the metro area that served 197 children. The Polk County Health Department partnered with Des Moines University, Freedom For Youth Ministries and various other community organizations to hold the third annual Jumpstart Back to School Health Fair at East High School. This event provided 918 school and sports physicals; 171 general health screenings; 698 dental screenings; 314 vaccinations to 113 kids; 101 Hawk-i referrals; and gave away over 2,000 backpacks filled with school supplies. Of the kids seen almost half were from Spanish speaking families and 70% lived in the most vulnerable zip codes in the city.

***“We know that it can be difficult to make healthy choices and that decision becomes even more difficult if you live in poverty, if you suffer from abuse, or if you don’t speak English. Being able to provide affordable and convenient health care services to the most vulnerable people in our community is another way that the Polk County Health Department serves our community.”***



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★ HEALTH DEPARTMENT ★

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