

## Business Leadership Network



# Community Forums Summary

Spring 2013

# Message from the Dean

*The mission of the University of Iowa College of Public Health is to promote health and prevent injury and illness through commitment to education and training, excellence in research, innovation in policy development, and devotion to public health practice. Our talented faculty, staff, students, and alumni, together with our Business Leadership Network and other partners at the local, state, national, and international levels, form an active learning community seeking to fulfill this mission.*

*The College of Public Health, understands that our work is very place based. The Community Forums in Ottumwa and Mason City that we sponsored in partnership with the Business Leadership Network provided opportunities for businesses and community leaders to engage with the training, service, and research initiatives offered by the College and to network with other business, industry, and community leaders.*

*The Community Forums Summary provides a focus on key issues and a glimpse into the hearty discussions and connections made between the College, the community, and business and industry leaders. We look forward to the many rewards that could arise from these enhanced partnerships with the communities across Iowa.*



**Sue Curry**  
Dean  
University of Iowa College of Public Health

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## Business Leadership Network

Strong and healthy business and industry are often the foundation of Iowa communities. The University of Iowa College of Public Health reaches across the state in support of healthy communities and the well-being of the people. The Business Leadership Network fosters ongoing, mutually-beneficial relationships between the UI College of Public Health and businesses and Iowa communities.

This network provides opportunities for businesses to engage with the training, service, and research initiatives offered by the UI College of Public Health, to network with other business and industry leaders throughout Iowa about public health, and to share ideas and best practices in regard to health and wellness.



### What is Public Health?

Public health is the science and art of protecting and improving the health of communities through education, promotion of healthy lifestyles, and research for disease and injury prevention. The dramatic achievements of public health in the 20th century have improved our quality of life: an increase in life expectancy, worldwide reduction in infant and child mortality, and the elimination or reduction of many communicable diseases. [www.public-health.uiowa.edu/prospective-students/what-is-ph.html](http://www.public-health.uiowa.edu/prospective-students/what-is-ph.html)

# Community Issue Summaries

The College of Public Health, in concert with the Business Leadership Network, conducted the first two Community Forums during Spring 2013 in Ottumwa and Mason City. The Community Forum agendas and the issue topics were developed by members of the Network. Both Forums drew a cross-section of business owners and managers, economic development leaders, public health officials and health care providers, local elected officials, a variety of agency and organization representatives, and the general public.

The Dean of the College of Public Health, Sue Curry, led a contingent of 12 faculty, post-doctorate staff, and students to be a part of the two forum discussions. Issue topics included Aging Population and Workforce, Community Health and Wellness, Healthcare Policy/Impacts of Healthcare Reform, and Workplace Health and Safety.

Following is a summary of the discussions at the Forums. In addition, an evaluation was sent to all participants after the Forums were completed to inform the College and Network, be reflective of the two Forums, as well as help in the development of subsequent community engagement activities by the College.



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## Aging Populations and the Workforce

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Iowa and the nation are experiencing new challenges and opportunities as a result of the growth in the aging and retirement-age population. Needs and priorities of this population can be considered in various ways. The aging population falls into segments of the very old or elders with conditions who are permanently out of the workforce. A significant portion of aging Iowans want to or need to continue to work or even take on a second job. Some of those Iowans do not have sufficient income to allow them to leave the workforce. Others are individuals who have a retirement income but are looking for rewarding work to continue utilizing their expertise or to try out a new direction in their life.

Issues linked with the aging workforce are many, as identified in forum discussions. Iowa legislative policy is leaving out the aging populations. An example is a need to develop community readiness for aging and aging in place. Transportation and family caregiving are issues that also need to be addressed. In the larger scheme, all Iowans need opportunities to earn a living wage, and policy discussions are needed to foster thinking in these terms.

Retraining for post-retirement and second career jobs is also a need. Community colleges and online learning opportunities were noted as having greatest flexibility.

One workforce sector was singled out for discussion. With increased longevity comes an higher need for workers to provide supports and services to those who are having health, disability or other conditions. A particular need exists and is growing for workers to provide home care and community-based services and supports as Iowa seeks to reduce its use of long-term facility-based care.

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## Community Health and Wellness

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A sense of urgency and great interest was shown in the discussions of community health and wellness. Not surprisingly, resource and financial shortages were identified early. Many working in communities become frustrated because they don't know where to turn for information.

A key theme in community health and wellness is to consider lifestyle and worker wellness as fully integrated - the concept of total worker health. With this approach, partnerships are able to be formed that cross between the public and private sectors.

While it is natural and common for businesses and public health to focus on their respective missions, the opportunities for collaboration to achieve mutual goals is significant. Breaking the old habits allow business to learn the real value public health can add, and public health can learn what business can bring to a partnership.

Community gardens are excellent examples of projects reliant on partnerships. The Centerville Seeds of Hope project is an example of such partnerships. The well-known initiative to teach people to invest in healthy behaviors - the Blue Zones project - is another example. Challenges to all community health and wellness projects center around how to sustain enthusiasm, support, and resources over time. Partnerships are critical for such efforts.



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## Healthcare Policy/Impacts of Healthcare Reform

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Anticipated developments in healthcare policy, particularly related to provisions of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA) were popular subjects at each forum. The sessions were held prior to Iowa's General Assembly and Governor reaching the compromise agreement known as the Iowa Health and Wellness Plan. Many opinions and questions were discussed.

Some questions were raised about dental care under the ACA and as healthcare reform continues. Will dental care be part of coordinated care and medical home? Dental care is frequently overlooked, and because many dentists do not treat Medicaid patients, there may continue to be a gap in care.

The roles of environmental health and public health in healthcare reform were not clear to participants. Much information about the impacts of the ACA focus on public healthcare programs, coverage and changes in healthcare services and plans that cover individuals, and impacts on employers. Neither environmental health nor public health are visibly part of the ACA. Yet participants recognize the critical role public health and environmental health play in the health of individuals and populations.

The Prevention Fund created within the ACA offers some opportunities. It integrates wellness and prevention into the patient centered medical home model and supports community initiatives and community health.

Some participants were concerned that excluding public organizations such as local public health agencies or community health centers from being part of the new Accountable Care Organization (ACO) structure will reduce options for coordinated care.

An additional concern in Iowa is the state's mental health redesign and how its implementation will, in fact, increase or decrease available funds for county mental health and disability services. Counties are skeptical that the state will follow through in the longer term to fulfill promises to the counties. Many participants were further concerned that the redesigned system for mental health services does not integrate with the provisions of the ACA. Behavioral health needs are increasing.

It was suggested that the College of Public Health might play a key role in emphasizing that all Iowans and employers have a stake in healthcare reform, offering plain language information and how to find additional information on applicable topics.



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## Workplace Health and Safety

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Workplace health and safety issues tended to fall into three areas: safety, injury prevention, and wellness. Forum participants included businesses, public health staff, and other organizations and agencies interested in the topic. The diversity of participants enriched the conversation and illustrated the value of networking.

It was generally agreed that workplace safety has primarily been directed toward compliance with Occupational Safety and Health (OSHA) regulations, which often are specific equipment and protection requirements. More recently the safety element has been linked with injury prevention and wellness. There is a growing recognition in business and industry of the connections, and that many injuries occur during non-work hours.

Injury prevention is an area of concentrated effort for employers. Injured workers mean lost productivity. When employees work longer shifts or regular overtime, employers recognize a higher risk of injury due to carelessness and fatigue. Businesses seek to mitigate risk and reduce injury through training, protective clothing, specific protocols, and other measures. Data show, however, that a significant portion of injury occurs at home and other off-hours activities.

Wellness is one approach that can also serve to reduce injury. Employers know the value of improved health and wellness on their bottom line. Again, the total worker health concept applies. Employers are sometimes disappointed in the low level of voluntary participation in wellness activities, but understand that when workers are working 12-hour shifts or 60- plus hours a week there is little energy left for wellness activities.

The final theme to emerge in workplace health and safety is the need for additional focus and support for behavioral health among employees. Whether the stresses are from providing support and services to patients at end of life or the constant vigilance needed to avoid injury while operating dangerous equipment, stress and fatigue contribute to behavioral health issues. Some manifest in behaviors such as substance use or domestic violence. Behavioral health has not yet been given the priority it requires.

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## Forum Evaluation and Additional Ideas

Forum participants were asked to complete a short evaluation. The survey was sent to all attendees including the College of Public Health faculty who facilitated sessions. Responses were constructed to be free response to not limit the ideas offered. Following is information gathered from participants. Individual responses were reviewed with similar responses grouped into topical themes.

### Topics or ideas of particular interest that emerged during the forum:

- » Health and wellness
- » Outreach statewide
- » Community involvement
- » Direct care workers
- » Aging

### Types of beneficial contacts developed during the forum:

- » Knowledge base expansion
- » Idea/resource sharing
- » Future collaboration
- » Constituency outreach

### Interest in attending a future forum in a local community was very high, with locations suggested:

- » Northern Region
  - Waterloo/Cedar Falls
  - Charles City
  - Fort Dodge
  - Mason City
  - Clear Lake
  - Iowa Falls
- » Southern Region
  - Osceola
  - Creston
  - Ottumwa
  - Fairfield

### Topics suggested for future forums:

- » Resources
- » Community wellness
- » Individual initiatives
- » Policy
- » Affordable Care Act
- » Aging
- » University involvement

### Suggested strategies for outreach for future forums:

- » Individual outreach
- » Focus on a single industry or topic
- » Increase publicity and media
- » School system or faith community

Nearly half of those completing the evaluation were from the public sector. Private sector and Business Leadership Network members made up the next largest segment of respondents.

## North Central Region Business Leadership Network Members



Gerald  
Edgar



Mona  
Everson



Dr. Joe  
Libby

**Gerald Edgar** – Charles City; Environmental, Health & Safety Manager for Mitas Tires North America

**Mona Everson** – Webster City; Founder and CEO of Life and Health

**Joe Libby** – Fort Dodge; Principal at Fair Oaks and Phillips Middle Schools

## South Central Region Business Leadership Network Members



Jill  
Baze



Greg  
Fenton



Claudia  
Gates



Michael  
Halley



Kevin  
Klemesrud

**Jill Baze** – Centerville; Human Resources Manager for Hillphoenix (formerly Barker Specialty Products)

**Greg Fenton** – Centerville; Plant Manager at Lee Container

**Claudia Gates** – Ottumwa; Manager of the Pickwick Branch at US Bank

**Michael Halley** – Fairfield; City Council Member and Founder of Natural Selections

**Kevin Klemesrud** – Osceola; President and CEO of American State Bank

## College of Public Health Faculty - Community Facilitators



Sue  
Curry



Christopher  
G. Atchison



Barbara  
Baquero



Shelly  
Campo



Jason  
Daniel-  
Ulloa



Brian  
Kaskie



Diane  
Rohlman



Dan  
Shane



Robert  
Wallace



Marcia  
Ward



Mitch  
Overton

**Sue Curry** – Dean of the UI College of Public Health

**Christopher G. Atchison** – Associate Dean for Public Health Practice and Clinical Professor in Health Management and Policy UI College of Public Health; Director of the State Hygienic Laboratory

**Barbara Baquero** – Assistant Professor in the Department of Community Behavior and Health

**Shelly Campo** – Associate Professor of Community and Behavioral Health and Communication Studies

**Jason Daniel-Ulloa** – Postdoctoral Research Scholar for the Prevention Research Center for Rural Health

**Brian Kaskie** – Associate Professor, Department of Health Management and Policy and Associate Director of Public Policy for the University of Iowa Center on Aging

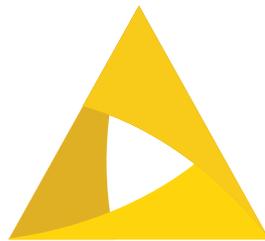
**Diane Rohlman** – Associate Professor in Occupational and Environmental Health

**Dan Shane** – Assistant Professor, Department of Health Management and Policy

**Robert Wallace** – Professor, Department of Health Management and Policy and Director of the Center on Aging

**Marcia M. Ward** – Professor in the Department of Health Management and Policy and Director of the Center for Health Policy and Research

**Mitch Overton** – Business Leadership Network Coordinator and Alumni Relations Coordinator



# Business Leadership Network



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