

COMMUNITY FORUM SUMMARY

November 4, 2016

MASON CITY









BUSINESS LEADERSHIP NETWORK

The Business Leadership Network comprises Iowans who are leaders in business, educators, public health professionals, health care professionals, and community leaders who are interested in improving the health and well-being of their community through a mutually beneficial relationship with the College of Public Health. The Network is guided by a Business Leadership Network Steering Committee which serves in a primary advisory role.

MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN

The College of Public Health continued to reach out to communities regarding local business and community public health issues during 2016. To date, the College of Public Health has conducted Community Forums and meetings in the three Business Leadership Network's (BLN) regions in the state of lowa (see map on page 12). The Mason City Forum provided opportunities for area business, community, and public health leaders to look at their community with different perspectives and to develop network opportunities and potential partner opportunities with the College of Public Health. Our faculty who participated in the Forum gained meaningful knowledge of the North lowa area and their public health interests.

I would also like to note that the College, through the Business Leadership Network, initiated its Community Grant Program in 2016 and funded six projects in different communities this year. Grants are awarded on a competitive basis to community non-profit organizations or local government agencies to foster collaboration to begin or strengthen partnerships among businesses and industry to address an identified public health issue and link with the University of Iowa College of Public Health. I am pleased that Cerro Gordo Public Health applied and has been implementing the "Cerro Gordo County Worksite Wellness Education, Reward & Recognition Program" through calendar year 2016. For the second grant cycle in 2017, seven grants have been awarded to organizations across the three BLN regions.

The Mason City Community Forum was the 15th Forum, and the second in Mason City, held by the College and the Business Leadership Network since 2012. The Forum could not have come together to focus upon the issues important to Mason City, Cerro Gordo County, and the surrounding areas without the active participation, guidance, and work to help frame and organize the Forum into a true community effort – and allowing the College to be an active participant. Thanks go to Kelli (Huinker) Gerdes, Robin Anderson, Michael Penca, and Debbie Abben for their close work with the College of Public Health and the community in putting together the day and hosting the Forum at the North lowa Regional Commerce Center. This summary provides a focus on key local community issues and a glimpse into the days' discussions.



Sue Curry Dean University of Iowa College of 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. Public health helps improve the health and well-being of people in local communities and often, while operating in the background, helps meet the public expectation for ensuring a quality of life – safe water, clean air, and protection from injury. The dramatic achievements of public health in the 20th and 21st centuries have improved our quality of life: an increase in life expectancy, safer workplaces, worldwide reduction in infant and child mortality, and the elimination or reduction of many communicable diseases.

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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.

SUMMARY OF FORUM DISCUSSIONS

The presentations from local community leaders and the interactive discussion groups remain the highlight of the BLN Community Forums. After the community presentations, panelists from the College of Public Health offer observations and, subsequently, lead the breakout discussion groups. CPH staff worked with interested members of the community in advance of each Forum in planning and in identifying issues most important to each community.

In the North Iowa area, the issues are not entirely dissimilar from those in other areas of Iowa, but take on unique elements based upon location within the state, past and current efforts, and the priorities for employer and community health. In determining presentation and discussion topics, the planning group considered key inputs and initiatives related to Mason City's Blue Zones project and the Cerro Gordo County Health Needs Assessment. In this Forum, small group discussion topics focused on: Employer Strategies for Best Practices in Workplace Health and Safety; Employer and Employee Access to Mental Health Services; Employer Strategies for Employee Relations; and Strategies for Employee and Family Health.





Special Remarks from President Bruce Harreld

The University of Iowa's President Bruce Harreld thanked those attending the 15th Business Leadership Network Community Forum for welcoming the University of Iowa (UI) to North Iowa. His comments addressed his general priorities for the UI to connect with Iowans and communities, as well as his perspectives on the role of the University of Iowa in research and education. Harreld sees the UI in a positive phase of rebuilding infrastructure and in the many campus initiatives underway. He is also, based on his personal experiences, committed to the vitality of the UI as a research institution. Recognizing that higher education has been underfunded by the public sector in the competition for scarcer public dollars, the UI now must address those consequences.

Harreld emphasized his belief that the UI is obligated to understand, be in, and engage with lowans and their communities across the state in order to meet the University's research, teaching, and service missions. The University is committed to connecting with lowans across the state, not just in and around lowa City.

In encouraging the work of the Forum, Harreld outlined one concept of leadership that says organizations do not make decisions quickly enough. However, Harreld sees data supporting that organizations reach a decision too quickly and do not have frank and forthright discussions that lead to good decisions. He encouraged participants to speak up during their conversations so that they can learn from each other and help others to discover and understand the issues facing the community.

Total Community Well-Being and Areas for Improvement

Dr. Teresa Mock of Mercy Medical Center - North Iowa provided an overview of the span of healthcare services Mercy provides to meet the needs of 14 counties in northern Iowa as well as serving as one of the area's largest employers. Mock noted Mercy - North Iowa as a participant in the Cerro Gordo County Needs Assessment, and highlighted concerns from the findings related to four categories: Social Determinants of Health; Access to Medical Care, Substance Use; and Community Wellness.

- » Social Determinants of Health There are high rates of poverty in the county and a high number of singleparent families. There is also concern about poor parenting skills and a lack of access to quality food or adequate housing.
- » Access to Medical Care It is a challenge to recruit doctors and nurses to serve the community. A large percentage of the population does not have a primary physician. Cerro Gordo County is a designated shortage area for mental health services.
- » Substance Use The rate of adult alcohol consumption in the county is higher than both state and national averages. The same holds true for youth alcohol consumption.
- » Community Wellness Data on community wellness indicators show significant need for improvement. Thirty-one percent of the county population is overweight, and the obesity rate is 37 percent. The diabetes rate in the county is increasing, and there is a higher prevalence of heart disease and asthma. Tobacco use is increasing since e-cigarettes became more common, with 18 percent of adults and 25 percent of youth in the county using tobacco. A brighter note is that Cerro Gordo County has higher rates of immunization in children at 77 percent compared to the state average of 69 percent, and 62 percent of adolescents are immunized compared to the state average of 45 percent.



Mock recognized that the county has a long way to go to improve in these areas, and community collaborations are being created to impact the issues. The Community Care Coordination program is a partnership between Mercy, Cerro Gordo Public Health, North Iowa Community Action Center, WellSource, and Prairie Ridge Addiction Center. The Community Care Coordination program provides the infrastructure for health care providers and partners to engage with members of the community in need of care. The program specifically targets those who are frequent emergency room visitors, those with multiple social determinants of health, and the uninsured. The program's primary aim is to eliminate barriers for people to access care.

The Blue Zones Project in Mason City addresses community wellness. Since its inception in 2012, Mason City has certified 25 percent of its restaurants, 55 percent of workplaces, 33 percent of grocery stores, and 22 percent of schools as Blue Zone sites.

More than 20 percent of Mason City residents have completed a health activity related to the Blue Zones efforts. The Gallup Healthways Well-being Index, a part of the Blue Zones initiative nationally, measures five indicators of community health: purpose, social, financial, community, and physical. lowa ranks 14th in the United States, ahead of Missouri and Nebraska, but behind Minnesota and Wisconsin. On a scale of zero to 100, Mason City received a 59.1, two points higher than in 2012. During that time Mason City has seen a decrease in obesity, high blood pressure, and cholesterol as well as an increase in exercise. Mock noted that improvement in community well-being takes time and a long-term investment in the community.

Mason City Panelists and Faculty Comments

Based on the comments of Dr. Mock and the community efforts underway, five local panelists offered brief comments related to key North Iowa issues. UI College of Public Health faculty then had an opportunity to follow up on the comments with questions or observations from their academic experiences.

Best Practices for Workplace Health and Safety

Shelley Schmit of North Iowa Area Community College (NIACC) spoke about the wellness program in place at NIACC for 30 years. The College was recently awarded the first Workplace Wellness Diamond Award through the partnership of Cerro Gordo Public Health, Blue Zones Project Worksite Committee, and the Mason City Chamber of Commerce. The success of the NIACC wellness program was a combined effort, focusing on engagement, partnership, and collaboration. Schmit emphasized the importance of bringing resources together to make wellness programs both engaging and energetic, and then making others aware and communicating about the program. To get participants more excited about participating, props were placed around campus, and people took selfies with the items as part of the program. Schmit noted that programs need to be inclusive of body, mind, spirit, and financial status. It must offer something new to participants. Consistency and regular activities are necessary. Schmit emphasized that leadership commitment, partnerships, consistent programing, and data gathering for measuring progress combine to make a successful wellness program.

Cerro Gordo County Community Needs Assessment

Kara Vogelson of Cerro Gordo County Public Health summarized how the community health needs assessment data was gathered using the MAPP approach that emphasizes community engagement. The needs assessment uses its community-wide network to gather both quantitative and qualitative data including focus groups and community meetings. The process used four methods of assessment: forces of change, community strengths, local public health systems, and health status indicators. In the outreach, people were asked what they thought was important in order for Cerro Gordo County Public Health to make a tool anyone could use to look up health indicators. The process took six months and is conducted every five years, bringing the health data together into a single, user-friendly document.

Mental Health in the Workplace and Community

Andy Eastwood of WellSource of North lowa spoke about making workplaces trauma informed, safe, and a place where people with vulnerabilities and who have triggers are taken care of. As an employer in his organization, Eastwood shares concerns with other business leaders about the mental health of employees. Self coping does not work for all employees or all of the time. Employees bring their history of trauma to work every day, and some days that trauma can present itself in the workplace. Employees come to work to be purposeful. When an employee is struggling, an approach is to properly acknowledge, engage, and find resources for those employees needing help.





The Nurtured Heart Approach

Stacie Lancaster of Mercy Medical Center - North Iowa introduced the Nurtured Heart Approach to participants. Through grant funding, the program has been used to train those who work and interact with children. The program aims at helping people interact with children with confidence, but it also is applicable in settings beyond child care. With the tools gained from the program, people are able to communicate more effectively, particularly in difficult situations or when there is conflict. Components of the program address stress, anxiety, and depression in the workplace. The approach teaches appropriate boundaries and building social emotional skills to turn negative behavior into positive behavior. The program helps in many different environments including employee relations, parenting, and customer service. The program has expanded outside of the county and is even being taught to parents and teachers in order for them to be on the same page when discussing the needs of individual children.

Workplace Smoking Cessation and Weight Loss Programs

Kelli (Huinker) Gerdes of Cerro Gordo County Public Health (CGPH) works with many businesses to keep employees healthy and happy which, in turn, helps business. Gerdes goes on site to provide worksite strategies; her experience has taught her that going on site is more effective than having businesses come to the Public Health Department. She also agreed that tobacco use was on the decline until e-cigarettes came along. Smoking cessation classes conducted at the worksite by CGPH are available to employers at no cost. Because of the results of the County Health Needs Assessment, Cerro Gordo County Public Health has also begun a diabetes prevention course using a weight loss strategy. The 12-month course is delivered on site and aims to have participants lose five to seven percent of their body weight. Gerdes acknowledged the College of Public Health's BLN Community Grant which helped launch an employer awards and recognition program through the Blue Zones Project. Best practices from all workplace wellness award applicants are shared with the community.

Faculty Comments

Sue Curry, Dean, lauded the presenters and community for their passion, enthusiasm, and focus on well-being in the community and workplace. Faculty of the College of Public Health responded to issues and ideas brought up by the panel. The Occupational and Environmental Health Department at the UI College of Public Health focuses on keeping Iowa workers safe and healthy. The Department's purpose is to conduct research to identify hazards and get information and research findings to the public at no cost. Iowa is a rural state with many small businesses and needs differing from other parts of the United States. Agriculture, construction, and manufacturing are crucial sectors of the Iowa economy, and the identified risks in working in these sectors need to be made available to every business, from large corporations to small businesses.





The CPH Live Well Project provides monthly wellness updates and is a popular resource for businesses. Programs presented focus on a range of issues including emotional, physical, and financial health. The Mason City Chamber of Commerce was praised for its involvement with the Blue Zones Project. The faculty also addressed the difficulty of recruiting the necessary health professionals in rural areas and acknowledged the value of the Nurtured Heart Approach to communication.

The Institute for Public Health Practice conducts workforce training for the public health workforce. The Institute's November 19th Summit on treating and managing diabetes was noted. Diabetes is the seventh-leading cause of death in the United States. The goal of the partnerships between local health departments and the Institute is to pool resources to continue working on strategies to manage, prevent, and treat diabetes.

The faculty's final comments focused on substance abuse. As a chronic disease, substance abuse is about disease management. Coming together in "recovering communities" is how people manage their chronic diseases. Examples of recovering communities are Face It TOGETHER in Sioux Falls and the Safe Haven Foundation in Chicago, Illinois. Face It TOGETHER utilizes telehealth in the management of chronic diseases, and Safe Haven's community for individuals who are homeless is responsible for the gardens planted and maintained on Chicago's famous Michigan Avenue.

Small Group Discussions

Participants dispersed into small groups to discuss issues revolving around workplace health and safety; access to mental health services; employee relations; and employee and family health.

Employer Strategies for Best Practices for Workplace Health and Safety

Engaging with all employees, especially in larger organizations, can be difficult. Differences in attitudes and age can add to the difficulty of getting involved in workplace wellness programs despite the data showing that improvement is needed. Add in budget cuts and too many other committees, and it seems nearly impossible to get a workplace wellness committee and program that works. There are ways to incorporate wellness into businesses with little to no cost. Ideas for employer-supported workplace wellness programs include the following:

- » Incorporate wellness into the mission of the organization to show top-down leadership.
- » Replace food in vending machines with healthier alternatives to show employees that their health is important to their employer.
- » Give people options on how to fulfill requirements of the wellness program, such as standing desks or YMCA memberships, so the participant has some choices and control. They are more likely to participate if they have some say in what gets done.
- » Another strategy is to bring a massage therapist on site and give 5 to 10 minute massages to employees during their break. It costs more, but has increased morale at some organizations in Mason City.





Low morale among employees can be a result of deteriorating health, making it harder to work. Overtime has impact on morale, whether there are too many hours demanded, or fewer hours that reduce pay. A wellness program that is inclusive of all employees and fosters relationships and a sense that the company cares can also help with morale. For some employers, the cost of an employee wellness program has to be weighed against the improved health and wellbeing of employees.

Employer and Employee Access to Mental Health Services

The shortage of mental health providers is a serious issue for Cerro Gordo County. There is one child psychiatrist for every 1,800 children, and participants spoke on the potential need to integrate telehealth systems into the service options to reach those in rural areas. The shortage extends to other clinicians as well as mental health specialists. Hiring interns has been difficult due to restrictions on Medicaid reimbursement and the need for credentials to obtain insurance to practice in certain areas.

Some expressed concern that newly trained, incoming mental health and social work professionals were not receiving enough support. This manifests when these individuals leave the field or, in the case of social workers, have a higher rate of suicide. In addition to professional guidance and support, loan forgiveness and reimbursement reform are important elements of attracting and retaining mental health providers.

Individuals going to the emergency room for mental health issues and the shortage of mental health hospital beds was also identified as a concern, as most people are best served in a community-based setting. Prevention and wellness programs are partially aimed at reducing the number of people using emergency rooms for every health need, but insurance limitations on what level of provider will be covered sometimes means an individual does not seek early treatment.

Child care is stressful for all parents, especially when children are sick and parents cannot leave work to care for their child. Single parents have even more difficulty getting their children to the healthcare providers they need. Family specialists and adolescent specialists are in short supply, leaving few options for those children age 12-18. Stigma of mental health keeps parents and children from seeking and receiving care they need, and juvenile court systems have heavy loads that may delay addressing certain emergency mental health situations.

Some Mental Health First Aid training will be offered locally as a result of grant funding received.



Employer Strategies for Employee Relations

The Nurtured Heart Approach has helped members of the community better communicate with their children and also their children's teachers. This was especially helpful for high-risk children with anger issues. Instead of constantly punishing children with anger issues, the Nurtured Heart Approach taught providers a different way to approach these situations that didn't promote an angry response from the child.

It is important that people at any age know they are cared about. How we treat each other is very important, and it effects how people respond to the comments they receive. The Nurtured Heart Approach teaches self-esteem and addresses what does and does not work in communications in a specific relationship.



In the workplace, this means it is important to look beyond what an employee has done wrong, but to invest in employees so they can give more at their job. Steps involve taking a moment to talk to the employee and receive communication back from them, even if the discussion is a simple greeting.

Supervisors could be coached to be good people managers and use some of these approaches. Managers often focus on customer care, but, perhaps that should change to putting employees first. Then the employees will be better prepared to take care of customers. In a school setting, the emphasis on test scores takes away from good relations between school staff and administration, and from talking with teachers about how well they are doing. Communication can focus on an emotional connection, not just a logical one.

It takes until age 28 for a brain to fully develop. Data shows that bad behavior (abuse) toward children translates to the abused children behaving badly as adults. Likewise, children raised in a stressed environment leads them to become adult employees who seek a stressed environment at work.

Strategies for Employee and Family Health

Ergonomics play a key role in employee health. Standing desks are now popular, and some employees are urging their employers to provide them. Ergonomic studies have shown that standing all day has some repercussions on the knees and hips, so standing desks for employees should be considered carefully.

Nate Fethke from the College of Public Health spent time with four employers in Cerro Gordo County earlier in the year offering assistance with ergonomic studies at no cost to the employer. Fethke advised employers that the issue was not so much about standing or sitting, but more about getting up and moving around regularly. Fethke is willing to visit employers who need that assistance.

Some of the ergonomic changes he suggested to the employers in Cerro Gordo County included moving the computer farther back on the desk and to reposition the desk to help alleviate repetitive motion activities. He also suggested incorporating stretching routines into the workday.

There was discussion about how to engage groups of people of all ages to participate in wellness programs in the workplace. One company tied their wellness participation to insurance rates, providing the employee with a reduction in their share of the premium for participation in the wellness program. This approach does not penalize employees for not participating or for poor health, but it simply rewards those who do participate. Companies would need to balance the cost and determine their return on investment in that type of incentive.

Weight loss and diabetes prevention were also addressed as employee and family health strategies. One workplace wellness program was low cost and simply moved foods around in the cafeteria to bring healthier choices to the front, combining comfort foods with healthy foods so employees could see the different options instead of gravitating to their normal choices. While not removing foods, this approach did display more options to choose from. There was an evaluation process that measured that this approach was successful with positive results.

Some employers have made vending machine changes by rearranging items so that healthier foods and drinks are more visible. They place the water at eye level, for example, making it easier to choose water than search for a soda. Other ideas to encourage healthy choices are to place stickers on the vending machine items that reflect their nutritional value and encourage healthier choices.

A dietician is working with the Clear Lake Middle School on an afterschool program for athletes called "Snack Shack." Students vote on snacks they would like to have, affording them a level of choice. The program is being run by a Clear Lake High School business class. It is important to get young people involved in food choices to give them the tools necessary to be conscious in making healthy choices throughout their lives.

A UI physician was concerned with the items sold at concession stands so she worked with booster clubs to get healthier items included in concessions. The physician has developed a tool kit for school concession stands and is willing to meet with communities in an advisory capacity.

The UI participants were asked whether research has been conducted on engaging people with disabilities in public health. No specific research has been completed, though people with disabilities have been included in research efforts.



Discussion continued related to healthy food opportunities for people with disabilities. It seems that people have an attitude that people with disabilities should simply eat what they want and what makes them happy. Some felt that was a bias that would negatively impact people with disabilities, many of who are poor and choose cheaper and less nutritious foods.

The UI participants mentioned a program in the Muscatine schools where disadvantaged families who did not attend parent-teacher conferences or get involved in school activities were invited to a focus group, at which they were provided a healthy meal for the entire family so they could eat together. One parent was grateful that their opinions mattered, and he commented that just because people are poor does not mean they do not care about health and nutrition options.

Food is considered a common reward in our society. Curries, a Mason City manufacturer, recently participated in the Blue Zones Challenge Healthy Potluck. The company's wellness committee works diligently to help employees be healthy, such as choosing plant-based foods and information on how to include them in meals. As a reward for participating they received a 30-minute paid lunch where they had free time with their coworkers.

Some schools have replaced birthday snacks with non-food options such as field trips or activities. The children with a birthday during each month work together to choose the activity.

Smoking cessation programs are often supported by employees, but after the employer provides the program, employees do not participate. Possible non-financial incentives that could be offered include paid time off, a special event, or recognition for those who have completed the program. Suggestions for alternative activities to replace smoking include joining a walking group, joining a support group, and common substitutions like chewing gum.

Tobacco-free campuses force people to drive off the grounds in order to smoke. This can cause low morale among those who do not smoke because smokers tend to take more breaks.

COMMUNITY PANELISTS

















Robin Anderson

Angela

Andv Eastwood

Kelli (Huinker)

Stacie Lancaster

Jackie

Mock

Shelly Schmit

Vogelson

Robin Anderson – President & CEO, Mason City Chamber of Commerce

Angela Determan – Community Program Manager, Blue Zones Project and Mason City Volunteer Center

Andy Eastwood – Executive Director, WellSource of North Iowa

Kelli (Huinker) Gerdes – Health Promotion Manager, Cerro Gordo County Public Health

Stacie Lancaster – Social Worker and Therapist, Mercy Medical Center - North Iowa

Jackie Luecht – Director/CHRO, Mercy Medical Center - North Iowa

Teresa Mock – Senior Vice President, Mercy Medical Center - North Iowa

Shelly Schmit – Vice President of Organizational Development and Human Resources, North Iowa Area Community College

Kara Vogelson - Organizational Development and Research Manager, Cerro Gordo County Public Health

COLLEGE OF PUBLIC HEALTH FACULTY - COMMUNITY FACILITATORS





























Bruce Harreld

Curry

Chorazy

Deshpande Merchant

Vickie Miene

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Diane Nonnenmann Rohlman

Anne Helene Skinstad

Linda Snetslaar

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Laurie Walkner McKee

Bruce Harreld - President, The University of Iowa

Sue Curry – Dean, UI College of Public Health

Margaret Chorazy – Clinical Assistant Professor, Epidemiology

Anjali Deshpande – Clinical Assistant Professor, Epidemiology

Kim Merchant – Research Associate, Health Management & Policy

Vickie Miene – Deputy Director, Institute of Public Health Research and Policy

Keith Mueller – Professor, Health Management & Policy

Matthew Nonnenmann – Assistant Professor, Occupational and Environmental Health

Diane Rohlman - Healthier Workforce Center of the Midwest

Anne Helene Skinstad - Clinical Professor, Community and Behavioral Health

Linda Snetslaar - Professor, Epidemiology; Associate Provost for Outreach and Engagement

Thomas Vaughn – Associate Professor, Health Management & Policy

Laurie Walkner - Director of Education and Training, Institute for Public Health Practice

Tara McKee – Business Leadership Network Coordinator

BUSINESS LEADERSHIP NETWORK STEERING COMMITTEE



Dan Anderson – Storm Lake; Iowa Central Community College Storm Lake Center Director



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



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



Jill Baze – Centerville; Human Resources Manager for Van Gorp in Pella



Greg Fenton – Centerville; Former Mayor of Centerville; Realtor



A. Eric Neu – Carroll; Attorney at Law for Neu, Minnich, Comito & Neu, P.C.



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



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



Rich Paulsen – Creston; Publisher for Creston News Advertiser & Southwest Iowa Advertiser



Maureen Elbert – Algona; Executive Director of Kossuth/Palo Alto County Economic Development Corporation

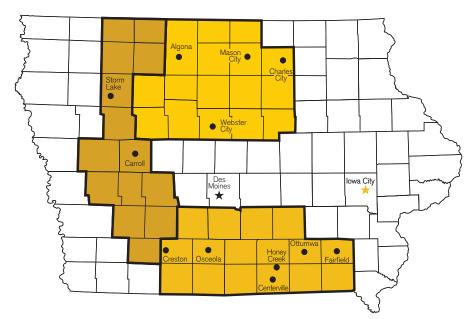


Michael Halley – Fairfield; City Council Member and Founder of Natural Selections



Don Woodruff – Fort Dodge; President of Woodruff Construction

BUSINESS LEADERSHIP NETWORK REGIONS



Cities shown on the map in shaded regions have hosted Community Forums. The Business Leadership Network is led by a Steering Committee composed of business and community leaders from across the 46 counties.



Business Leadership Network

THE UNIVERSITY
OF IOWA
College of Public Health

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