

Business Leadership Network

WORKER HEALTH AND SAFETY

Community Forum Summary

May 16, 2018

OELWEIN



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 UI COLLEGE OF PUBLIC HEALTH

In the spring of 2018 the UI College of Public Health through its Business Leadership Network, continued to reach out to communities regarding local business and community public health issues. The Community Forum in Oelwein provided opportunities for area business, community, and public health leaders to discuss shared workplace issues, develop practical solutions, and determine potential areas to collaborate with the UI College of Public Health.

Additionally, the College is collaborating with Iowa communities through the Business Leadership Network Community Grant Project. Grants are awarded on a competitive basis to community nonprofit 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 UI College of Public Health. Six grants have been awarded for 2018 with projects in Atlantic, Fayette, Fort Madison, Davenport, Muscatine, and Waterloo.

The Community Forum, "Worker Health and Safety," in Oelwein was the 19th community gathering held by the College through the Business Leadership Network since 2013. Thanks go to Deb Howard at the Oelwein Chamber and Area Development for sponsoring and hosting the forum. We appreciate you working with the UI College of Public Health and the community to come together for this event. This summary provides a glimpse into the forum discussion on safety in the workplace.



Edith Parker

Dean

University of Iowa College of Public Health

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. Public health helps improve the health and wellbeing 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.

WWW.PUBLIC-HEALTH.UIOWA.EDU/BLN

The Mission of the UI 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 COMMUNITY FORUM: “WORKER HEALTH AND SAFETY”

For the second time in the past year, CPH staff worked with the Oelwein Chamber and Area Development in advance of the forum to identify issues most important to the community of Oelwein. After reviewing the challenges faced by employers and community health, a theme was chosen for the second community forum, “Worker Health and Safety.” The goal of the community forum was to identify ways that businesses and community organizations can improve workplace safety by identifying hazards and develop action plans in case of workplace violence.

SHARED ISSUES/SHARED SOLUTIONS

Worker Safety and Gun Violence

With reports of school shootings and workplace violence increasing across the United States, Oelwein Police Chief, Jeremy Logan, presented forum participants with the tools to establish Workplace Emergency Plans. According to the National Safety Council, two million American workers report being victims of workplace violence each year. Chief Logan reported that there were 220 active shooter events last year resulting in 250 people killed, a 34 percent increase from the previous year. Businesses that are open to pedestrian traffic accounted for 43 percent of the incidences.

Workplace violence is defined as violence or the threat of violence directed at someone on duty or at work. It ranges from the most common form of workplace violence, simple assault, to robbery to homicide. Chief Logan encouraged forum participants to be aware of their workplace environment and the possible dangers. Employees should be aware of their surroundings and if they see something unusual, report it to their supervisors. To improve the chance of survival in the event of workplace violence, create a plan and train employees on plan implementation. The plan should provide escape routes for all employees, including those with disabilities.



Chief Logan outlined steps to developing a Workplace Safety Plan. When an incident occurs, the safest thing to do is to run and escape from the shooter, help others escape and call 911. If escape is not possible, try to hide from the shooter. Try to get out of the shooter's view, silence cell phones, lock and block doors, and stay hidden until law enforcement has cleared the area of danger. As a last resort, Chief Logan indicated that employees should fight with commitment and aggression and recruit others to attempt to ambush the shooter.

After an incident has occurred, Chief Logan advised that employees use caution and follow the commands of law enforcement. Keep hands empty and visible so law enforcement knows you are unarmed. He encouraged employees to take care of themselves first, before other victims and seek counseling to assist in dealing with the trauma.

To ensure a quick and coordinated response to workplace violence, the Oelwein Police Department has partnered with twenty law agencies to work on a plan for a multi-jurisdictional response to workplace violence. In addition to developing mutual aid agreements among jurisdictions, they are building a “shared resources” data base for all to utilize and are establishing auto response locations in each of the communities. The Oelwein Police Department developed the Workplace Safety Plan and is willing to assist businesses in the development of their own plans.

Workplace Hazards

In every workplace, no matter the size or type, there are unique challenges presented in the form of workplace hazards. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, there were approximately 2.9 million nonfatal workplace injuries and illnesses reported by private industry employers in 2016, which is 48,500 fewer cases than the year before.

To assist forum participants in identifying hazards in their workplace, Diane Rohlman from the UI College of Public Health led the group in an exercise to map the hazards in their workplace. Participants were given large sheets of paper and were asked to draw a map of their workplace. They were then given a checklist of potential hazards and asked to put any hazards that



were relevant on their map, including hazards with floors and walkways; ladders and fall protection; fire safety and equipment; electrical hazards; lighting; machines; forklift operation and safety; driving company cars or work-related errands; chemical hazards; noise; housekeeping; ergonomic hazards; workplace violence; personal protection equipment and other safety issues.

Participants shared their maps and highlighted the top three hazards in their workplaces. Several identified the hazard of having no escape route out of an office if workplace violence occurs. Having an office open to the public also increases the potential for workplace violence. Other hazards discussed included lack of exterior lighting around all building entrances. Suggestions for a business concerned about pedestrian safety around nearby high speed traffic included adding a stop sign to reduce speeds. Another business discussed slippery floors and cluttered hallways as hazards to employees.

Mercy Hospital identified the need for universal precautions against spreading diseases; accidental trips and falls; and confrontations with difficult patients. Their 250 employees are trained on nonviolent crisis intervention and the elimination of hazards.

Participants were interested in the steps necessary to make their companies smoke-free. Companies who have banned tobacco have seen a significant reduction in insurance costs. Depending on the industry, specific restrictions are implemented to keep employees and customers safe.

The UI Healthier Workforce Center is a national resource center for policies and practices that help businesses to identify workplace hazards and establish procedures to mitigate and eliminate hazards in the workplace. Hazard mapping is one of the many ways that the Healthier Workforce Center can assist businesses, prevent employee injuries, and advance work well-being. More information is available here: www.public-health.uiowa.edu/hwcmw.

COMMUNITY LEADER



Jeremy Logan – Chief of Police, Oelwein Police Department

COLLEGE OF PUBLIC HEALTH FACULTY AND STAFF



Diane Rohlman



Ashamsa Aryal



Kevin M. Kelly



Tara McKee

Diane Rohlman – Associate Professor, Department of Occupational and Environmental Health

Ashamsa Aryal – PhD Student, Department of Occupational and Environmental Health

Kevin M. Kelly – Deputy Director, Healthier Workforce Center of the Midwest

Tara McKee – Business Leadership Network Coordinator

BUSINESS LEADERSHIP NETWORK STEERING COMMITTEE



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A. Eric Neu – Carroll;
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Tom Douglass – Mason City;
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Greg Fenton – Centerville;
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Diane Rohlman – Iowa
City; Associate Professor
of Occupational &
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Gerald Edgar – Garner;
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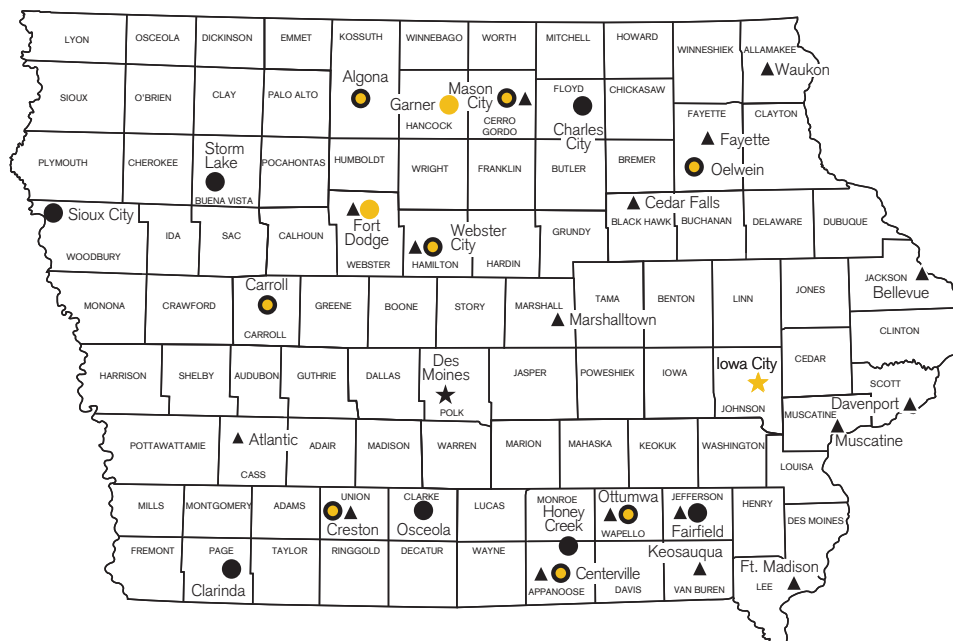


Claudia Gates – Ottumwa;
Manager of the Pickwick
Branch at US Bank



Don Woodruff – Fort Dodge;
President of Woodruff
Construction

BUSINESS LEADERSHIP NETWORK AREAS OF FOCUS



● Steering Committee Member ● Forum Location/Conversation Café ● Steering Committee Member and Forum Location ▲ Community Grant Locations



Business Leadership Network



**College of
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