

Business Leadership Network

BUILDING AND RETAINING A HEALTHY AND PRODUCTIVE WORKFORCE

Community Forum Summary

October 3, 2018

SPIRIT LAKE



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 University of Iowa 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 fall 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 Spirit Lake 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 call for proposals for the 2019 grant cycle was released this fall and awards will be announced in December.

The forum in Spirit Lake was the 21st community gathering, and the first in Spirit Lake, held by the College through the Business Leadership Network since 2013. The forum could not have come together to focus upon the issues important to the Iowa Lakes region without the active participation, guidance, and work to help frame and organize the event into a true community effort. A special thanks to Brandon Rohrig at the Dickinson County Department of Public Health for working with the University of Iowa College of Public Health to organize the day and co-sponsors, Lakes Regional Healthcare, and Mary Faber at Iowa Lakes Community College. Thank you also to Iowa Lakes Community College, Spirit Lake campus for hosting the event at their campus. This summary provides a focus on key regional issues and a glimpse into the day's discussions.



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.

OBJECTIVES OF “BUILDING AND RETAINING A HEALTHY AND PRODUCTIVE WORKFORCE”

The purpose of the community forum was to bring together public health, local businesses, and community organizations to engage, identify and access tools and community resource options to effectively address workforce needs, particularly as they relate to community public health issues. Jointly sponsored by the UI College of Public Health Business Leadership Network, Lakes Regional Healthcare, Dickinson County Department of Public Health, and Iowa Lakes Community College, community stakeholders worked with UI staff to identify significant public health issues in the Iowa Lakes region and how these issues may impact worker health and productivity. Three panels were convened to address topics relevant to employers and public health professionals in the region. Panel topics included: *Behavioral Health, Community Wellness and Employment Opportunities*.

SHARED ISSUES/SHARED SOLUTIONS

Behavioral Health

Panelist Ryan Jensen, Co-Occurring Clinician at Compass Pointe, highlighted the many services provided by their organization, including substance abuse and gambling addiction services; intensive outpatient services; extended outpatient services; 30-day residential treatment; drug testing; monitoring and support services; and court-ordered treatment services. Servicing eight counties in Northwest Iowa, they specialize in assisting clients with complex trauma, family addiction, and sexual and physical abuse that have caused them to become addicted as a way to self-medicate. Many clients are required by the courts or the Department of Human Services to get treatment and must be encouraged to admit they have a problem before a treatment plan is implemented. Jensen also noted that employers can refer their employees to the organization for assessments or counseling if they expect addiction. The prevention team at Compass Pointe also works in elementary schools with at-risk youth to prevent substance abuse in the future. Jensen shared that he became a counselor after he recovered from addiction. He indicated that once a patient enters care, the case remains open so that they can receive continuing care. www.compass-pointe.org



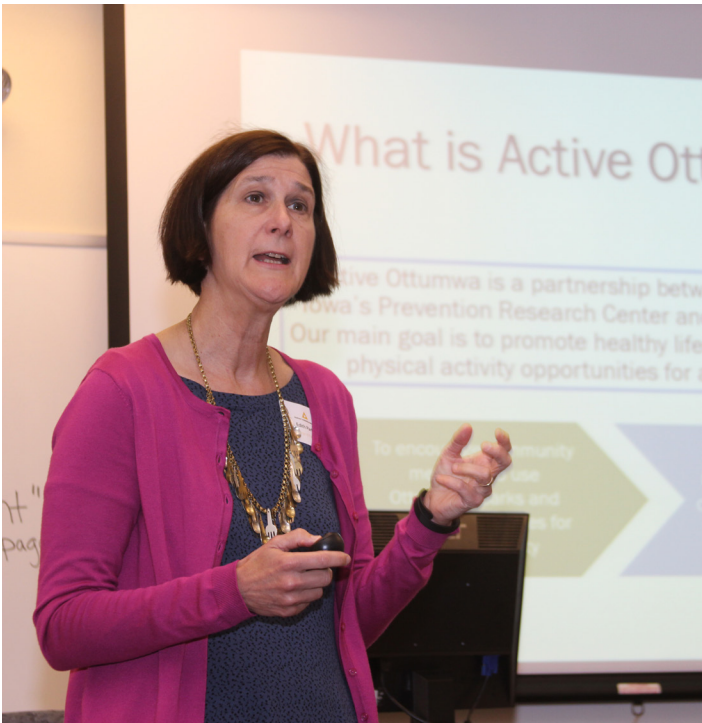


Chelsi Jahn, Outpatient Therapist for the Seasons Center, presented the types of services available at the Spirit Lake facility, emphasizing outpatient therapy services for all ages and dealing with a wide variety of issues. They help to identify how mental health is affecting job performance. Most patients who are being treated at Seasons Center still need to continue working and being productive members of society. They work with employees and employers to identify those who need their services. Jahn directed the group to look for signs of mental illness in their employees and refer them as soon as possible so that they can receive help before they reach crisis level. She mentioned that low productivity, bad hygiene, and absenteeism could be indicators of mental illness. The Spirit Lake office offers outpatient treatment, substance abuse counseling, and group therapy. <https://seasonscenter.org>

Robert Aiken, Vice President of Community Relations for the Seasons Center, emphasized the importance of workforce development and shared the services that their facilities offer. The Seasons Center serves 19 counties in Northwest Iowa by providing outpatient counseling and therapy, substance abuse treatment, psychological testing, medication management, public education on mental illness, crisis services, trauma therapy, inpatient treatments, sex offender treatment, and assertive community treatment for adults with severe mental illnesses. The organization provides services to employers by going to workplaces to provide trainings and by working with Employer Assistance Programs (EAP). Aiken prompted attendees to visit seasonscenter.org for additional services.

Kathleen Scholl, Associate Professor of Leisure, Youth and Health Services at the University of Northern Iowa, discussed the impact of mental overload on workers and students. Because people are connected to technology constantly, their mental health can be negatively affected. Scholl introduced the Kaplan & Kaplan attention restorative theory, which explains how the natural environment can be a resource to combat mental fatigue caused by constant connectedness to technology. The theory discusses directed attention, which is attention without distraction. Scholl explained that constant distractions such as cell phones and other technology limit people's ability to achieve directed attention and, therefore, high levels of productivity. Natural environments away from distractions can help people achieve directed attention and reduce mental fatigue by creating a space where people can clear their minds. Finally, Scholl explained that there is little research about how natural environments can impact human health; however, the study of ecotherapy is changing this. Studies show that in one week's time, a 30-75 minute period outside can reduce cases of depression by 7% and high blood pressure by 9%. Scholl encouraged attendees to think about increasing their exposure to nature to improve health, especially in today's world with increased technology and indoor living.

Attendees asked the panelists questions about whether the opioid crisis was present in the Spirit Lake community. Jensen explained that alcohol and methamphetamine were the largest issues for the community currently. There are some in the community who struggle with opioid addiction and seek out prescription painkillers. It is difficult for clinics to determine



if their patients are drug-seeking or if they truly need drugs for medical purposes. Aiken added that pharmacies and treatment centers are working on preventive measures to prepare for the opioid crisis coming to Iowa. For instance, treatment centers and law enforcement officials are receiving new training about opioid abuse and they are being equipped with Narcan. Pharmacies are also giving away Narcan. One of the attendees mentioned that employees of the Good Samaritan Society can receive treatment for substance abuse without fear of losing their jobs. The Seasons Center and Compass Pointe are happy to work with other businesses and Human Resources professionals who are interested in referring employees for treatment services. The panelists explained that employees are usually better and more productive if they get treatment in time, so employers have a vested interest in this practice.

Community Wellness

Diane Rohlman, Associate Professor of Occupational and Environmental Health at the University of Iowa College of Public Health, explained the research that the College does on workplace safety and how they develop that research into tools and resources that employers across the state can use. Rohlman specifically mentioned some of the health and safety tools and conference opportunities that are available for the agriculture and construction industries. She also referenced the UI Healthier Workforce Center of the Midwest, which has resources about safety and health for small employers. Rohlman explained that people who are experiencing mental health issues and stress are more likely to be injured on the job. She prompted attendees to think about low-cost solutions for health and safety that can reduce hazards in the workplace. As an example, Rohlman prompted people to think about why they or others in their office do not take lunch breaks. By thinking about the demands of the job and the workplace environment, this problem can be solved by reducing workload, installing a microwave or refrigerator, etc. www.public-health.uiowa.edu/hwcmw

Erin Reed, Executive Director of Dickinson County Trails Association, explained that convenience and access are the most important aspects when designing trails and encouraging people to make the healthy choice to use them. Dickinson County has a network of 30 miles of paved trails and 70 miles of bicycle trails. Reed showed the attendees a map of where trails currently exist and where she would like trails to be developed. The biggest struggle with developing trails is finding funding sources. She explained that a mile of trail can cost about \$400,000. Current funding comes mostly from state and federal recreational trails grants and local grants from Okoboji and the Department of Natural Resources. Reed also informed the group about the eight trail counters that they purchased last year. This tool allows them to track the utilization of the trails. <https://dickinsoncountyltrails.com>

Edith Parker, Dean of the University of Iowa College of Public Health, discussed a partnership between the college's Prevention Research Center and the City of Ottumwa to promote healthy lifestyles by creating more physical activity

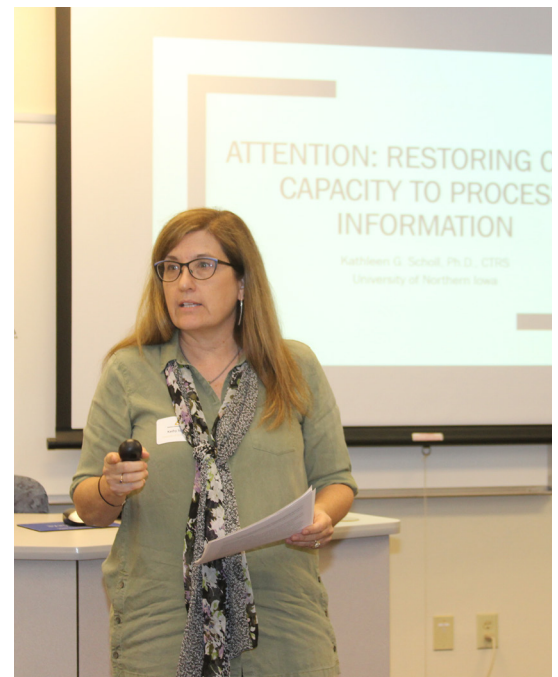
opportunities for adults in Ottumwa. The project, known as Active Ottumwa, encouraged people to use existing parks and trail systems and to be more active. Before the project began, 74% of people in Wapello County reported that they had access to physical activities although 55% of people in the community reported sedentary behaviors. The College worked collaboratively with local community groups to identify people in Ottumwa that community members go to for support to create a structure of social support for the initiative. In addition to activating these local helpers, the project also created a media campaign through social media, newspapers, and radio to publicize the free fitness classes and community events that were being offered, such as walking groups, strength training, yoga, water walking, and Tai Chi classes. Since 2016, the project provided 800 free physical activity opportunities in Ottumwa that attracted over 4,000 participants. Dean Parker reported that the daily average minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity increased by 18 minutes and sedentary activity decreased by over 24 minutes. If they receive a grant they have applied for, the College is hoping to introduce a similar program in Spirit Lake.

Questions from the audience centered on ways to promote physical activity, such as insurance companies who offer discounts for gym memberships. At a national level, there's an initiative called Parks Rx that encourages doctors to write prescriptions that call for patients to walk for thirty minutes outside each day.

Employment Opportunities

Toni Tewes, Manager at My Choice Employment Services at Hope Haven, Inc., explained that her role is to help businesses find solutions for their unmet needs. They consult employers through supported employment, matching employees and employers, individual placement and support for individuals with disabilities, and customizing job descriptions to ensure that they are accommodating to people with disabilities. The organization is 5 years old and they have placed individuals in 395 jobs in the community. www.mychoiceemployment.com

Molly Giddings, Rehabilitation Counselor at Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services in Palo Alto and Emmett Counties, explained that her organization helps a wide range of individuals with disabilities reach their employment goals. While they work directly with individuals with disabilities, they consider businesses to be their customers, too, because they want to provide businesses with qualified people for their job openings. Giddings and her colleagues work on pre-employment transition services with high school students who have disabilities. They provide youth with opportunities for career exploration through job shadowing and fun activities like dream boards. They also support youth with disabilities who want to go to college by helping them understand what accommodations they might need and identifying who they should contact to obtain them. Giddings also explained that they support businesses by helping them make sure they are compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act and by providing disability awareness presentations to normalize disabilities and reduce stigma. For more information contact: molly.giddings@iowa.gov.





Joanne Follon, Business Retention & Workforce Partnership Coordinator at Iowa Lakes Corridor Development Corporation, talked about how the low unemployment rates are causing all organizations and businesses to struggle with workforce issues. In fact, a survey of 22 businesses found that 95% expressed difficulties with workforce issues. Many of these issues stem from a lack of soft skills in the workforce, which includes having a positive attitude, a good work ethic, being collaborative, taking initiative, and making decisions. Follon explained the variety of career experiences that are available to young people to get them excited about entering the workforce and to help them develop the skills they need for these jobs. For instance, Spencer High School allows students to visit businesses and explore their interests. The middle school has career days and workplace visits, as well. No Boundaries, a new program being launched, will give students the opportunity to hear about real-world problems in business that they can try to solve. J-Terms at colleges also allow two or three weeks for students to explore careers that might be interesting to them. Local schools are involved in robotics competitions where students can apply their new knowledge to business and industry. Spencer just began an ACE mentor program which inspires students to pursue careers in architecture, construction, and engineering. IowaWORKS provides a list of apprenticeship programs in the state that provide good wages while learning a trade. High school students also have the opportunity to take dual enrollment classes where they receive both high school and college credit. The 260 E & F state programs provides training dollars for new employees or current employees who need to learn new skills. The community is doing a campaign called “Get a Lakes Life” which is intended to recruit new people to the region to help build the workforce. At the state level, Future Ready Iowa is addressing Iowa’s skilled workforce gap and working on building a talent pipeline for the state. Follon encouraged attendees to determine their goals and then utilize the numerous resources that the community offers to accomplish them. <http://lakescorridor.com/ilcdc>

Jason Kemp, Program Manager for Home Base Iowa, explained the ways that this statewide public-private partnership is connecting companies to veterans. There are currently 87 communities, 2,000 businesses, and 24 colleges who have partnered with Home Base Iowa to attract and recruit veterans. The Home Base Iowa website (www.homebaseiowa.gov) provides a search tool for veterans and businesses to use to find and connect with one another. Kemp explained that he travels to career fairs across the country to promote this initiative where he attracts 3-5 veterans to Iowa at each event. Overall, 50 new veterans register with the program each month. Kemp promoted this tool for businesses as a way to combat the shrinking unemployment rate and get connected to interested and capable workers. He encouraged the attendees to visit the Home Base Iowa website and sign up for their newsletter where they can receive tips for recruiting veterans, news about events, success stories, and the latest data on the initiative.

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSIONS

Behavioral Health Panel Discussion

The Behavioral Health discussion group discussed a wide range of issues regarding workers and mental health:

- » **Employment issues** – the group discussed employee burn out as a real concern, especially in the health care fields. Hospitals are a 24/7 operation and it is difficult to find employees for 3rd shift. Burn out is also prevalent with behavioral health workers who have increased client base and are overworked and under paid. This causes stress and anxiety and leads to high employee turnover.
- » **Students** have a lot of behavioral health issues that are sometimes exacerbated when they leave for school. At ILCC, they see students suffering from depression, anxiety, and food insecurity. Anxiety gets in the way of thinking. Often, it is difficult for them to navigate the bureaucratic issues associated with getting treatment. Student health centers across the state are overwhelmed with the number of students needing help and campuses are seeing an increase in student suicide. Rising student debt is also an issue causing depression and anxiety, as students feel that they cannot get ahead.
- » **Paid internships** would help to reduce stress in a student's life. Most majors require an internship for graduation, but most are not paid. Students need to work to pay expenses and unpaid internships are a burden. At UNI, Koob grants help to pay students who have internships at nonprofits. More grants to pay for internships and student loan forgiveness programs would relieve stress and allow students to pursue jobs they really want instead of those good enough to pay off loans.
- » **Soft skills** - The group discussed the lack of soft skills with students. Phone addiction is rampant. Others in the group reported that students have a lack of problem solving skills and are very dependent. Employers need employees who can figure things out and find solutions. Young people also have unrealistic expectations of job advancement. They don't want to start at entry level and work their way up. Employers need to offer paths for growth and professional development. However, employees do not want to stay at one job that long. With low unemployment, they often don't have to stay. One way to keep workers would be to offer paid internships and provide some loan forgiveness in exchange for a longer commitment. Have employees sign a contract to require the employee to remain for a certain amount of time.
- » **Managed care** has hurt all of the health care businesses in the group. There is less money for services. Students in crisis need access to services, but cannot get an appointment for three weeks. Jensen indicated that if students are in crisis, they may contact Compass Pointe 24/7. Spencer Hospital has care coordinators to assist patients. This is specifically helpful for chronic care patients or those suffering with severe and persistent mental illness.
- » **Opioid training events** – There are Triple S grants that allow health professionals, working with guidance counselors and families, to go into schools to assess students at risk of becoming addicts. All need to adopt the model, "See something, say something."





Community Wellness

The discussion group discussed a series of group goals and observations:

- » Goals include getting people on the wellness train; connecting patrons with jobs and education; and, have healthy recreational activities and benefits. One participating company in the group self-funds its health insurance so wellness is a priority for them to keep employees healthy and able to work.
- » The Dickinson County Department of Public Health is in the process of conducting the county needs assessment for a state report so this forum was beneficial in assisting with collecting data for the report.
- » The Blue Zones Project has been excellent at making the healthiest choice the easiest choice. Being physically active reduces risk factors. Towns that are not part of Blue Zones can take advantage of another program called Healthy Home Towns, which is trying to bring evidence-based practices into their health programs and is available at no cost.
- » A suggested workplace program could include a walking program (morning/afternoon) during breaks. Getting out of the office for a few minutes clears your brain to be able to work more productively. In addition, it would help to build workplace relationships. Another suggestion was to have a “get up and move” alarm twice a day to remind individuals to get up and move.
- » Nervous to be out alone, young girls are anxious about recent violent events and that makes it harder to keep them active and healthy. Walking groups should be encouraged to give them a safe environment to exercise. Aging populations should be included in walking groups as well as individual and family walks.
- » A general website was suggested for a Community Calendar/Wellness Calendar that could be updated by anyone offering an activity. Current area activities are located on a variety of sites: Resorts, chambers, city halls, courthouse, maritime, and the Dickinson County trail website. A centralized site would be more convenient.
- » Online ebooks and videos are available through the library so citizens can access different activities such as yoga & Tai Chi in their own home.
- » Family groups for biking can be organized. For those who do not have a bike or cannot afford one, establish a bike borrow or rental place.
- » Adopt a friend programs could be implemented for those who might not be able to or have access to activities. Families could adopt a family to help keep them active.
- » Develop an app with trail maps and show where other activities are located.
- » Get businesses involved by sponsoring a monthly walk or ride to keep the community active.
- » For businesses, use wellness incentives or have a competition around activities to increase participation. Pit organizations against each other to get everyone involved. Eight week challenges help form healthy habits and routines.
- » Employers, rather than waiting for the exit interview, should have a “Stay Interview” to see why employees stay with individual companies.
- » Library summer reading programs could incorporate physical activity and include outdoor activities with the help of community organizations.

Employment Opportunities Discussion

The Employment Opportunities discussed many ways to improve employee health in the workplace.

- » The group enjoyed hearing about all of the different programs that are out there for workforce development. It was valuable to know about additional places to search for employees in this time of low unemployment.
- » Some people were hoping to seek out more mentorship opportunities in the community. The Iowa Lakes Corridor Development Corporation works directly with entrepreneurs. Tewes, at My Choice Employment Services, said she would partner with new entrepreneurs and assist them with any hurdles that arise.
- » Spencer High School, Buena Vista University and ILCC all have entrepreneurship classes that would provide a platform for developing a formal mentoring program in the area. Real-life conversations with youth would help them know what careers to explore and understand the reality of what it's like to be employed in different jobs.
- » Vocational Rehabilitation students don't feel like they have a purpose and are struggling. A mentorship program could be helpful to them. Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation can teach HR professionals how to work with people with disabilities.
- » The group discussed how to get the message out about programs offered. Tewes indicated that they work with a marketing company to create fliers, website, and other marketing materials and it has been successful for them. They also do a lunch and learn program for employers to understand the services they provide. Community organizations like Kiwanis Clubs and Chamber meetings are excellent networking opportunities.
- » The group discussed how HR professionals want to be contacted. Often they do not know the services available, so they do not know what they need. Getting emails from IowaWORKS informs them of programs available. These organizations have resources and supports that businesses can utilize.
- » Seasons Center
 - Needs high-skilled workforce with Masters Degrees
 - They are trying to get students interested at a young age so that they will come back and work there eventually
 - They do internships for college students but they aren't paid if they do not have to have their bachelor's degree
 - Doctorate level internships are paid
- » Group discussion occurred around diversifying workforces. Diversity training is needed to ensure fair treatment of those from different backgrounds.
- » Child care is a huge barrier to employment. Lack of quality and affordable child care inhibits employees from working fulltime. In Dickinson County, the capacity for early childhood is covered, but there is a need for after school care. Spirit Lake has an afterschool program and the YMCA has the Character Room for older youth.
- » Manufacturing companies in the area have day care on site for 2nd and 3rd shifts. In fact, one partnered with a day care provider next door to the facility to provide quality care. Employers try to match school hours with shifts.
- » The group discussed how to keep workers in the area. Child care and affordable housing are key factors. The Iowa Great Lakes Corridor Development Corporation can help with housing and child care, but it is still a difficult problem.
- » Employee soft skills were discussed. Overall, the workforce is great, but there's a small percentage of people who feel entitled and have poor attitudes. There are more problems with people who come through the temporary service agencies. Employers need to establish employee expectations at all levels. Try to set up onboarding, meeting with supervisors, training in order to develop the soft skills and expectations. More veterans should be considered as they have the needed soft skills.

COMMUNITY FACILITATORS



Robert Aiken



JoAnne Follon



Molly Giddings



Chelsi Jahn



Ryan Jensen



Jason Kemp



Erin Reed



Kathleen Scholl



Toni Tewes

Robert Aiken – VP of Community Relations, Seasons Center

Kasey Fear – Treatment Supervisor, Compass Pointe

JoAnne Follon – Business Retention & Workforce Partnership Coordinator, Iowa Lakes Corridor

Molly Giddings – Rehabilitation Counselor, Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services

Jason Harrington – CEO, Lakes Regional Healthcare

Chelsi Jahn – Outpatient Therapist, Seasons Center

Ryan Jensen – Co-Occurring Clinician, Compass Pointe Behavioral Health

Jason Kemp – Program Manager, Home Base Iowa

Erin Reed – Executive Director, Dickinson County Trails Association

Kathleen Scholl – Associate Professor, Leisure, Youth and Human Services, University of Northern Iowa

Toni Tewes – Manager, My Choice Employment Services, Hope Haven, Inc.

COLLEGE OF PUBLIC HEALTH FACULTY AND STAFF



Edith Parker



Diane Rohlman



Tara McKee

Edith Parker – Dean, UI College of Public Health

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

Tara McKee – Business Leadership Network Coordinator

BUSINESS LEADERSHIP NETWORK STEERING COMMITTEE



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



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



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



Tony Cannon – Oelwein; Firm
Administrator at Ridihalgh,
Fuelling, Snitker, Weber &
Company



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



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



Tom Douglass – Mason City;
Agent/Owner of Edwards-
Brandt & Associates



Greg Fenton – Centerville;
Former Mayor of Centerville;
Realtor at Weber Real Estate



Diane Rohlman – Iowa
City; Associate Professor
of Occupational &
Environmental Health, UI
College of Public Health



Gerald Edgar – Garner;
Director of Hancock County
Veterans Affairs and Iowa
Director of Employer
Outreach at ESGR

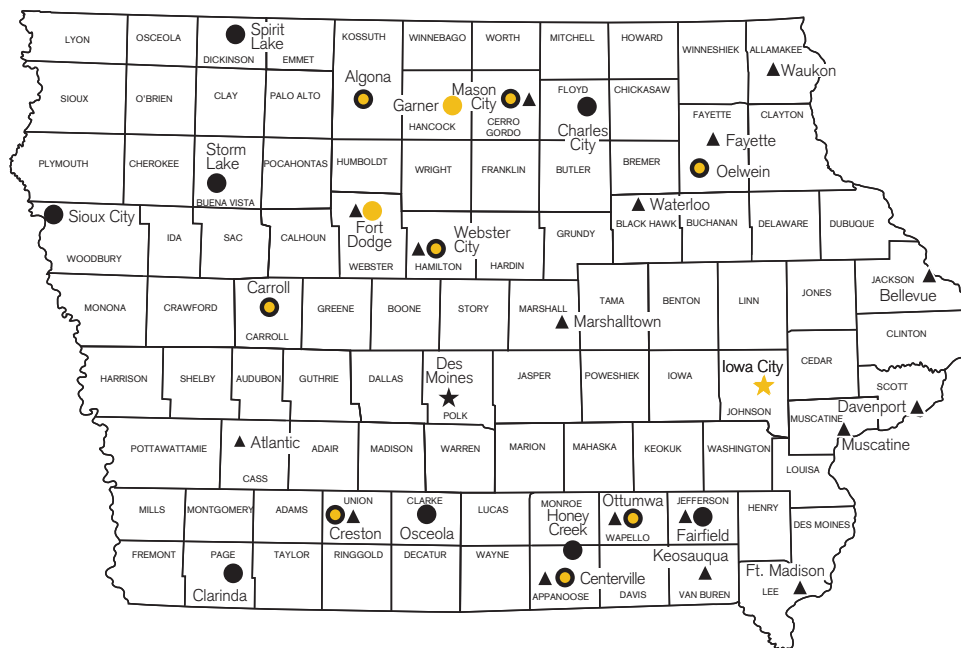


Claudia Gates – Ottumwa;
Manager of the Pickwick
Branch at US Bank



Don Woodruff – Fort Dodge;
President of Woodruff
Construction

BUSINESS LEADERSHIP NETWORK AREAS OF FOCUS



● Steering Committee Member ● Forum Location ● Steering Committee Member and Forum Location ▲ Community Grant Locations



Business Leadership Network



**College of
Public Health**

University of Iowa College of Public Health · 145 N. Riverside Drive, S170 CPBH, Iowa City 52242

cph.uiowa.edu/bln

Tara McKee: tara-mckee@uiowa.edu