

IOWA

College of Public Health

Business Leadership Network

IMPROVING OUR EMPLOYEE AND FAMILY HEALTH

Community Forum Summary

September 22, 2020

CLINTON



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.

One way the UI College of Public Health collaborates with Iowa communities is through the Business Leadership Network Community Grant Project. Grants are awarded annually 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. Five grants have been awarded for 2020 with projects in Bettendorf, Bloomfield, Muscatine, Postville, and Red Oak.

In fall 2020, the college through its Business Leadership Network, continued to reach out to communities regarding local business and community public health issues. The Clinton community forum (held virtually due to the COVID-19 pandemic) provided opportunities for area business, community, and public health leaders to discuss shared workplace and family health issues, develop practical solutions, and determine potential areas to collaborate with the UI College of Public Health.

The Clinton forum focused on the topic of improving employee and family nutrition and physical activity. This summary provides a glimpse into the day's discussions.

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.

[HTTPS://WWW.PUBLIC-HEALTH.UIOWA.EDU/BLN/](https://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.

IMPROVING OUR EMPLOYEE AND FAMILY HEALTH

The purpose of the community forum was to bring together public health, local businesses, and community organizations to discuss how to improve employee and family health. The forum was jointly sponsored by the UI College of Public Health's Business Leadership Network, Clinton Area Chamber of Commerce, Genesis VNA - Clinton County Public Health, MercyOne Clinton Medical Center, and YWCA Clinton.

A panel was convened to discuss ways to improve nutrition and increase physical activity for children and adults in the workplace.

Michele Cullen is Community Health Manager at Genesis VNA, Clinton County Public Health. She discussed the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation County Health rankings which measures health outcomes and health factors for each county across the U.S. In Iowa, out of 99 counties, Clinton County is currently ranked 86 in Health Outcomes (how long people live and how healthy people feel while alive) and ranked 92 in Health Factors (based on health behaviors, clinical care, social and economic, and physical environment factors).

The most recent Clinton County Community Health Needs Assessment identified lack of physical activity/obesity as a top health concern for the area. Community partners are working to improve nutrition and increase physical activity for residents through promoting items such as walking paths in the area, walking school bus, and a bike share program.

Cullen discussed the Clinton County – Let's Live Healthy initiative to Eat Well, Move More and Feel Better. The program has lots of activity and healthy eating suggestions available at www.facebook.com/LetsLiveHealthyClinton. They received funding from the Iowa Department of Public Health to promote the 5-2-1-0 Healthy Choices Count campaign which focuses on kids staying healthy each day by having:

- 5 or more servings of fruits and vegetables
- 2 hours or less of screen time
- 1 hour or more of physical activity
- 0 sugar-sweetened beverages (drink more water).

Andrea Barnett is Community Health and Wellness Coordinator at MercyOne Clinton. She discussed various community health and wellness programs available in person or virtually at MercyOne:

- Diabetes Prevention Program - Prevent T2
- Lifestyle Medicine Program
- Stop Smoking
- Fall Prevention classes

Onsite health screenings and flu shots are also available at MercyOne.

Paula Schneckloth is Key Account Manager at Alliant Energy and discussed Alliant Energy's employee wellbeing program. Your health and wellbeing determine who you are at work and at home. When you feel your best you can contribute your best. Their wellness program:

- Helps employees evaluate their health and make healthy changes
- Offers health screenings in the fall (blood pressure, height, weight, glucose and cholesterol levels).
- Has resources to help employees get active, eat healthy, quit smoking, and better deal with stress.
- Provides challenges to increase activity and earn points.

Alliant's employee assistance program provides immediate help from professional counselors and up to six visits with local therapists at no cost to the employee and their family. The help line is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

They also offer a LiveHealth Online telehealth program which allows employees to visit doctors (family physicians, allergy specialists, pediatricians, psychologists, and more) by video chats. These virtual visits are lower cost than a co-pay or visit to urgent care or the emergency department.

Diane Rohlman is Professor of Occupational and Environmental Health at the UI College of Public Health, and Director of the UI Healthier Workforce Center of the Midwest, which has resources on safety and health for small employers.

Poor nutrition and physical activity of workers impacts productivity and raises costs for employers. Low intake of fruits and vegetables and physical inactivity are the most common risk factors for health conditions among workers that are the costliest for employers.

She also discussed free resources available for employers and employees on the UI Healthier Workforce Center of the Midwest website: www.HealthierWorkforceCenter.org. There are numerous videos and information on topics including managing remote workers, a suicide prevention campaign for the workplace, stress management, and emergency preparedness.

Vickie Miene is Interim Director of the Iowa Institute of Public Health Research and Policy at the UI College of Public Health, and Director of the Healthy LifeStars Program in Iowa.

Miene described the Healthy LifeStars Program which the college has received funding to implement in Iowa. The program is free to communities and teaches kids 6-12 years how to eat healthy, how to stay active, and how to set personal goals to live healthy active lives. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic the program is currently being offered virtually. Full details on the program can be found at <https://www.public-health.uiowa.edu/healthy-lifestars/>.

GROUP DISCUSSIONS

Much of the discussions focused on making employees and the general public aware of and increase participation in community programs to improve nutrition and increase physical activity.

How do you get busy people to participate in programs? How do you do outreach?

- Cullen said that it can be a struggle to get people to participate. They have developed campaigns on Facebook and Twitter and would like to expand working with community partners to improve outreach.
- Barnett said their best marketing tool is word of mouth, though social media, their website, and PSAs also help. She recommended the website www.auntbertha.com which is a resource listing community programs that is searchable by zip code.
- A participant who runs a homecare agency, mentioned that more of her clientele are becoming tech savvy and are more comfortable using technology. If you make programs available online, such as YouTube and podcasts, people will use them, especially during COVID.
- Students at Clinton Community College would benefit from some of the existing programs in Clinton County. Lots of unhealthy behaviors among students – smoking, stress, fast food etc. Is there a way to connect with community programs?
- There are lots of opportunities in the community but how do we get the message out? Programs are often run by volunteers with little time. Can college students help with this? An attendee who works at Clinton Community College offered to help with getting student workers involved.
- Cost of programming can also be an issue. Mercy in Clinton offers free bus passes for patients and people participating in some of their programs to help alleviate issues with transportation.

Are the employee programs the panelists mentioned typically offered to families?

- Barnett said yes, it's important to involve families as health changes need to be made at home as well as at the workplace.
- Schneckloth said all of Alliant's programs are open to spouses, and some are open to children as well.

Panelists were asked, what is the top thing that would help your program?

- Cullen mentioned that she wishes people would participate more in healthy behaviors. Even getting in short walks three times a week would make a big difference.
- Barnett sees more community participation in exercise, but she would love to see all restaurants show healthy options on their menus. Make it easier for people to make healthy choices.

Are there incentives that we could use to get people to be more active?

- Rohlman said we do have one untapped resource – the role employers can play.
 - In the office, we can change the work environment with simple things, like moving the printer down the hallway, so people have to get up and walk, encourage people to take the stairs, don't provide unhealthy snacks at meetings, etc.
 - With the COVID-19 pandemic many people are working at home and we need to look at the culture of work. Supervisors should model good behavior (taking breaks, taking time for lunch). Can employers work with employees on having flexible schedules (especially now when parents might also be educating children at home). What barriers can be reduced? Can they bring home office equipment they may need? Instead of always having zoom meetings, have a phone meeting and encourage employees to walk outside during the call.

CLINTON COMMUNITY FORUM

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