BHCHD started FY2018 with excitement and momentum. The passing of the meningococcal vaccine requirement during the 2016 Iowa legislative session gave us an opportunity to further improve our immunization rates and protect our children from preventable diseases. BHCHD installed 10 billboards across the Cedar Valley to educate the public on the need to get the vaccine. Also, in collaboration with Covenant Clinic, Health Department staff established a district-wide vaccination program at the Waterloo Center for the Arts. The mobile clinic provided not only the meningococcal vaccine, but also additional vaccines that are given to adolescents, such as tetanus, diphtheria, pertussis (Tdap), and human papillomavirus (HPV). Cedar Falls school district parents were informed and educated on the meningococcal vaccine and the locations on where to obtain the vaccine. The mobile immunization campaign resulted in the immunization of more than 200 students.

Furthermore, in order to have a significant impact on the community and to better address the health disparities within our communities, BHCHD continued to restructure its organization to implement effective and efficient operational processes. This is to ensure that every function and activity is essential in achieving our mission of providing quality public health programs and services. We seek to effectively accomplish core functions of public health through the development of new initiatives and quality improvement strategies. Finally, to strengthen and build public health skills and competences, BHCHD conducted a workforce development survey, which will inform a workforce development plan that will ensure that our training needs are understood and competencies are achieved.

Over the past century, our nation has made significant achievements towards health outcomes. We have made strides in childhood vaccination rates, better workplace standards, improved academic standards, and quality healthcare. Unfortunately, upon closer examination, there remain significant health differences in health outcomes based on race, neighborhood, education, and income. The built environments in which people reside have a significant impact on their quality of life. Thus, people’s ability to make healthy choices can be seriously limited by the opportunities available to them.

It is well understood that the social determinants of health are driving factors in achieving health equity. In Black Hawk County, significant health inequities driven by race/ethnicity, income, and zip code continue to exist. Many of the county’s low-income residents and ethnic minorities live in communities that have faced historical and systemic disadvantages. Public policies of disinvestment have affected community conditions, such as access to economic opportunities, well-maintained and affordable housing, high-quality education, access to healthy foods, safe neighborhoods, and clean water and air. Today, Black Hawk County social and economic factors negatively rank the county at 92 out of 99 Iowa counties for factors that have an impact on health.

Thus, it is with excitement that I share that FY2018 ended with the BHCHD being awarded $125,000 from the Kresge Foundation to strengthen its role as an innovator in public health. BHCHD strives to become a Community Health Strategist and drive the development of cross-organizational initiatives to promote health equity and well-being for diverse communities to build a healthier, vital, and resilient community.
Oral Health Program

Background
Black Hawk County has a population of 132,648, and 16.1% of residents live in poverty. Poverty has a profound effect on the presence of dental caries, with a total caries prevalence of 56.3% in youth in families living below the federal poverty level, versus 34.8% in youth with a family income greater than 300% of the poverty level. The prevalence of untreated dental caries was 18.6% in youth living in poverty, in comparison with 7% in youth with a family income greater than 300% of the federal poverty level.

The I-Smile™ program, funded through a grant provided by the Iowa Department of Public Health, provides necessary services for vulnerable at-risk children, who have multiple barriers to receiving oral health services. Their parents may be overwhelmed, overworked, and unaware of the importance of their children’s oral health. Many families in these situations may experience language difficulties, poor literacy, unreliable transportation, or homelessness. They also may not be aware of free programs that prevent tooth decay or treat dental disease. Language barriers are a significant impediment to meeting children’s oral health needs. External resources are necessary to bridge the communication gap, and parents and providers often do not know how to access these resources.

The Oral Health Program Manager planned and/or participated in several community outreach events to reach a broad segment of the Black Hawk County population.

Accomplishments in Fiscal Year 2018

- Hawkeye Community College Oral Health Event (September 2017): Acting on behalf of the Board of Health and in collaboration with Hawkeye Community College Dental Clinic and Peoples Community Health Clinic, dental hygiene students and their instructors provided oral health services to Burmese families across the life span. The Health Department collaborated with Ethnic Minorities of Burma Advocacy and Resource Center, which provided a training before the event to give an overview of the rich Burmese history and how they came to the United States.

- Give Kids a Smile Day in the Cedar Valley (February and May 2018): In these two single-day events, the Oral Health Program Manager utilized the services of two dental providers to provide free dental services for primarily low-income children. Providers then followed up with families whose children required additional treatment, e.g., root canals, restorations.

- Fluoridation as a Public Health Priority (December 2017): The Black Hawk County Board of Health increased its community and policy engagement, including endorsing a position statement in support of fluoridation of the water supply.

- Black Hawk County Health Department Newcomer Services (ongoing): In 2018, the Board of Health voted unanimously to continue providing newcomer services to vulnerable populations in Black Hawk County. A dedicated Public Health Nurse conducts care coordination for dental services for children as part of numerous other services provided in this community-based program.

Public Health Funding Sources

- 58% - Grants & Contracts
- 30% - Black Hawk County - Taxes
- 7% - Medicaid Reimbursement
- 1% - Patient Fees, Donations & Other
- 4% - Environmental Health Licensing, Permitting Fees & Certification
Environmental Health

Grants to Counties Well Water Program

Background

The goal of the Grants to Counties Well Water Program is to protect groundwater quality through the testing of private water wells, the plugging of abandoned private water wells, and the reconstruction of private water wells. Environmental Health Officers completed well water sampling, permitting, and inspections throughout the year.

Accomplishments in Fiscal Year 2018

- 278 well water tests for coliform bacteria, nitrates, and arsenic, including 40 additional samples for neonicotinoids in support of the State Hygienic Laboratory Iowa Well Survey Program
- 16 well pluggings
- 13 well renovations
- Fall 2017 and Spring 2018 direct mail campaigns to promote well water testing and Grants to Counties cost sharing services to Black Hawk County rural homeowners
- Increased funding from the Iowa Department of Public Health to perform additional water testing, well reconstruction, and well plugging for Black Hawk County homeowners, particularly those in rural areas

Future Directions

In 2019, the Environmental Health staff will raise awareness of the program through a social media campaign and will conduct an evaluation of its direct mail and media messaging to determine how best to reach Black Hawk County residents.

Social determinants of health are the conditions in which people live that affect their overall health. These conditions can provide advantages or disadvantages to living a healthy life.
10 ESSENTIAL SERVICES OF PUBLIC HEALTH

Monitor health status to identify and solve community health problems

The Black Hawk County Health Department continues in its mission to monitor the health status of the community. The Department is focused on Health Equity, to ensure that all Black Hawk County residents have an equal opportunity to attain the highest level of health.

- Poverty: 19,469 people (15.3%) in Black Hawk County live in poverty. 18% of children live in poverty.
- Medicaid Eligibility: 15,327 children in Black Hawk County were eligible for Medicaid.
- Unemployment: 15.3% (Iowa: 10.7%)
- 2.2% of babies were of a low birth weight (Iowa: 1.8%)
- Heart attack hospitalizations occurred in those 35 years and older at a rate of 319/100,000
- 15% of people had serious housing issues, such as lack of complete kitchen and/or plumbing, severe overcrowding, or housing cost of at least 50% of one’s monthly income (Iowa: 12%)
- Food Insecurity: 18,960 people (14%) in Black Hawk County do not have access to affordable, nutritious food.
- $8,861,000 in additional funds are needed for families with food insecurity to buy enough food for their families.
- Free and Reduced Lunch: 50.2% (Iowa: 41.8%)

Diagnose and investigate health problems and health hazards in the community

- The Health Department partnered with the City of Waterloo for the Healthy Homes Program as part of the city’s Housing and Urban Development (HUD) program to provide Healthy Homes assessments of potential hazards, as well as lead inspection risk assessments. One percent of the children who were tested for lead had elevated levels, exceeding the state average of 0.5%. The Department also conducted follow-up clearance activities and ensured that contractors effectively carried out mitigation efforts.

Inform, educate, and empower people about health issues

- The Iowa Nutrition Network School Grants Program Nutrition Educator collaborated with the Waterloo School District to ensure that children have the opportunities to engage in healthy eating and physical activity. The Nutrition Educator and FoodCorps service members provided students with healthy snacks, much of which was from local sources. School gardens have become a priority in six Waterloo schools, with the assistance of FoodCorps service members, Blue Zones, UNI's Local Food Program, ISU Extension, and Waterloo school educators and administrators. In 2018, more than 1,555 children worked in, learned at, or ate from their schools’ gardens, an increase from 900 children in 2017.
- WISEWOMAN cardiovascular risk reduction and health coaching services were provided to 70 women, 24% of whom were Hispanic/Latina, and 13% were African American.
- The Health Department continued its work with the Good Food Network, expanding into Cedar Valley Regional Food and Farm Partnership, which includes local farmers and other food providers, the Northeast Iowa Food Bank, Operation Threshold, the Center for Energy and Environmental Education from the University of Northern Iowa, and the Iowa Northland Regional Council of Governments, to increase access to fresh fruits and vegetables.

- The Health Department coordinates an 8-county emergency preparedness effort administered through the Bureau of Emergency and Trauma Services. This coalition is composed of hospitals, emergency medical services, and public health from each county, who collaborate to plan for and provide a coordinated response to public emergencies that could occur in the region.

- The Kresge Foundation accepted the Health Department’s application for the Emerging Leaders in Public Health initiative to be a Community Health Strategist that will drive the development of cross-organizational initiatives to promote health equity and well-being for diverse communities of Black Hawk County. The goal of this initiative is to improve health equity by prioritizing awareness of the social determinants of health, which include economic stability, neighborhood and the physical environment, education, food, community and social context, and health care system. This innovative, community-centered model will provide strategies to tackle challenges in our community.

- Infant and child immunization rates continued to exceed state averages at 75% (versus 70% for the state) for DTP, polio, MMR, Hib, hepatitis B, varicella, and pneumococcal vaccines.

- Food Safety Inspection Officers provided Food Safety Certification classes, resulting in an:
  - Increase of Certified Food Protection Managers (CFPMs) from 71% to 100% in small-chain food establishments
  - Increase of CFPMs by 17% in independently owned food establishments

- Environmental Health Officers:
  - Performed 472 inspections of food service establishment inspections
  - Provided 495 temporary vendor licenses and 141 mobile food licenses
  - Inspected food vendors at 97 special events (festivals, fairs)
  - Provided 16 Farmers Markets licenses

- Environmental Health Sanitarians inspected:
  - 103 swimming pools
  - 23 tattoo establishments
  - 47 tanning establishments

- Environmental Health management and staff conducted an ongoing risk and frequency audit to revise categorization of all food establishments. The department refined its inspection schedule accordingly, and revenues from the program increased by $57,851 in FY2018.
• The First 5 initiative helps health care providers in early detection of developmental and family risk factor vulnerabilities to ensure healthy development in families with children ages 0 to 5 years. In 2018, the Black Hawk County Health Department provided 344 children with care coordination to link them to such community services as safe and affordable housing, mental health treatment, medical specialty care, and emergency assistance. First 5 has engaged 31 committed health care provider practices to screen children for developmental delays, autism-spectrum disorders, and other vulnerabilities and then to refer to enhanced care coordination through First 5.

• The EPSDT (Early Periodic Screening, Detection, and Treatment) program, known as Care for Kids, ensures that families with children who are enrolled in Medicaid are informed about the medical and oral health services their children can receive. In 2018, 3,160 families were contacted to inform them of the availability of services for their children; 1,392 families were given information about medical or community services for their children.

Assure competent public and personal health care workforce

• The Health Department underwent a rigorous, agency-wide Workforce Development assessment in partnership with the University of Iowa. The assessment helped identify training needs, establish core and specialty competencies, and develop a Workforce Development Plan. The plan will have a Health Equity focus, which will allow staff to understand the conditions that lead to unequal access to safe neighborhoods, health care, economic stability, education, and social and community enrichment.

Evaluate effectiveness, accessibility, and quality of personal and population-based health services

• The Health Department continually evaluates the effectiveness of its interventions, implementing a Performance Management system to improve grant seeking, fiscal management, Board of Health engagement, communicable disease surveillance, and vaccination rates.

Research for new insights and innovative solutions to health problems

• The Oral Health Services Success Story on page 2 highlights Black Hawk County Health Department’s innovative partnerships and service model to meet the needs of underserved populations. We will continue with that work in 2019 to oversee the needs assessments of two newcomer communities, and then continue to leverage community partnerships to broaden a Community Health Worker model, removing barriers to newcomer health and safety.

• The Kresge Foundation’s Emerging Leaders in Public Health will provide the groundwork for pioneering community conversations to understand and address the challenges facing the Cedar Valley.