

The Public Health Herald

FROM THE DIRECTOR

My tree has been up for over a month now, and yet, I'm still in a bit of denial that it's almost Christmas and 2024 is about to come to a close. I'm still not entirely sure how that happened. I know I've always heard "the days are long but the years are short," and that has never felt more true than it does right now. Also, it's Friday the 13th. Instead of thinking of that as a bad omen, I'm going to also remind you it's Taylor Swift's birthday and National Ice Cream Day. Celebrate however you deem appropriate 🍰. Might I suggest a seasonal peppermint ice cream while streaming this song: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BpkmUfv114Q>. This is me in my protecting my mental health era. If you don't understand that reference, it's fine. I'm fine. Everything's fine.

Although I swore an oath I would never bring an Elf on the Shelf into my home, and Sarah thought I was a little crazy at first, I have very much been enjoying the shenanigans of Snowy the Public Health Elf. Thanks to everyone who has helped him get into and out of all kinds of public health fun! Truly, I thought we could all use a little joy right now. I hope it helped you as well. There is still time to take him on an adventure before the end of the year!

Speaking of the end of the year...I have a challenge for all of you. It dawned on me during our Public Health Thank You Day post that we still don't have many pictures of "public health in action." Throughout the course of your work – take a picture! If you attend a conference – take a picture! If you present to a class – take a picture! If you have a staff meeting – take a picture! I know we all have a million and one things to do, but these pictures tell a story – and allow us to brag on all the cool stuff you do each year. So please think TAP – Take A Picture!! Then please send it to Sarah for socials, the annual report, and other brag worthy moments in the future.

Lastly, I want to take an opportunity to recognize our Board of Health Chair, Bonnie Rubin. Bonnie has served on the Johnson County Board of Health for twelve years, and next week, she'll preside over her last meeting. I have had the privilege of knowing Bonnie for many, many years and serving with her on the Board of Directors for Iowa Public Health Association prior to working with her in Johnson County. She is such a force in public health, and has been a valued mentor to me. I have learned so much from her, and she has been such a fierce advocate for public health in general and Johnson County Public Health in particular. She will certainly be missed, but I want to thank her so much for her service. If you would like, please stop by the BOH meeting next week to wish her well. I'm certain she'll continue to do amazing work in our community and through the College of Public Health. Thank you Bonnie, sincerely.

I know lots of you will be in and out taking time off over the holidays – get those personal days in! – and so I hope you're able to take some time to spend with loved ones. I know too that this season can be difficult for some, and if that's you, may it land gently.

Thank you for an amazing year. Thanks for being the reason I feel so grateful I get to come to work each day. Thank you for the fierceness in which you serve our community. I appreciate each and every one of you.

Merry Everything!

In Health,

Danielle

DIVISION UPDATES

Clinical Services:

- ITS had a very successful virtual site visit with state. The ITS team received kudos for their excellent work and impressive connections with community partners in all the counties they serve. Bravo ITS Team!
- Oral Health had a very successful in-person site visit with state. State praised their impressive numbers and excellent documentation, among other things. Congratulations and thank you to the OH Team!
- CAH received feedback from state regarding our annual report for FY24. All of the feedback was positive and congratulatory. They noticed our attention to detail, our level of dedication, and our determination to reach as many as possible with our services. Huge thanks and congratulations to the CAH Team!
- Hianca submitted a successful application for the Vitamin Angels project. Through this grant, CS will receive free prenatal vitamins for our MH clients and all clients we serve during childbearing years. Thank you to Hianca for your hard work on this important project!
- Abby completed the Listening Visit training that is recommended for those providing Maternal Health services through the MH grant. This is above and beyond and we appreciate Abby's dedication to her work with MH clients during Hayley's parental leave and as a sub throughout the year. Thanks Abby!
- The Maternal Health Coalition, which was created to comply with an obligation of the MH grant, has merged with an already existing Breastfeeding Coalition. Members tend to belong to both coalitions and this is being done to decrease meetings for all and increase attendance for both causes. Kudos to Hianca for spearheading this effort for our staff and the members of both coalitions!
- CAH hosted a successful Family Engagement Council meeting with our own Mathe serving as interpreter. Her skills and understanding of the community needs helped to provide a very safe space for participation of all in attendance. We hope she will continue to serve in this role for future meetings! Thank you Mathe!
- Brycen M. and Fatou T. met with veteran's service providers at the local Veterans Liberty Center and distributed harm reduction supplies to outreach workers.



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- Fatou T. and Brycen M. attended the annual Veterans Stand Down Event. This is an annual event hosted by the local homeless coordinating board, which brings all homeless services providers into a single room to provide folks with resources and connections prior to winter.
- Brycen M. and Fatou T. finalized a DoxyPEP standing order to begin providing Doxycycline as post-exposure prophylaxis to MSM and TGW populations.
- Missy R. and Jess E. have served 7 schools out of the planned 18 for the school year. I-Smile at School has provided dental screenings to 348 students and placed 1608 sealants.
- Missy R. and Jess E. started providing services to the last school for 2024, obtaining 92+ positive consents for services provided by I-Smile at School.
- Tammy F. and Hianca A. recorded a Public Health Q&A sessions with other PH staff for a science course, helping students understand more about public health at the local level.
- Hianca A. continues to meet with Dr. Story and Dr. Platt from the College of Public Health to finalize the details for a collaboration between a Maternal Child Health course and Clinical Services.

Administration:

- Nearing the end of the first half of the year, admin has been working with the other divisions on budget for FY26.
- Alissa has been presenting her workday projects around expenses on the Workday project.
- Catalina completed a course on Assertiveness Skills for Front Desk Professionals.
- Admin Coordinator position has been approved by both boards.

Environmental Health:

- Rob and Jesse completed FDA Retail Standard 9
- Rob and Jesse applying for new 3 year NEHA FDA FFM grant = \$55,500
- Food program received NEHA FFM year 3 travel grant reimbursement for \$2812.61
- Food program submitted NEHA FFM year 3 standards 6, 7, 9 grant work reimbursement \$2554.36
- Watershed staff finalizing Citizenserve data base training
- Emma completed Pools and TNC training. She will now conduct independent field work in these programs
- Ethan working with Adam Gebhart in GIS to create a PFAS tracking map layers for our county
- Laura was in Ames 11/22 working on abstract reviews for 2025 PHCI. Laura is a member of the IEHA Scholarship and IPHA conference planning group
- Tim will begin cross training with Jesse to assist with completing tanning facility inspections

Community Health:

- Nate has been coordinating with Neighborhood Centers of Johnson County (NCJC) on a tabletop exercise for extreme heat. The work will be submitted to challenge.gov, where competition delivers innovation for the public good.
- Karrey has held several offsite clinics for flu and covid-19 through the Vaccines for Adults (VFA) program at various community sites. We're partnering with UI Mobile, NCJC, and others to get adults who qualify vaccinated.
- Jennifer, Amelia, and Rachel have completed monitoring for several contacts related to the lassa fever response. Due to the urgency to coordinate testing and potentially care, the work consumed several hours over the last 20+ days including evenings and weekends. Their work supported rapid testing of symptoms to potentially rule out lassa fever and inform the state and health care partners if there were a need to utilize the special pathogens unit for very ill patients. The student epi team also played a role to support data entry. Dr. Donahue, State Epidemiologist, shared his gratitude on the work and collaboration from our team as did Dr. Wellington and Bonnie Rubin.
- Cole Kruse, HJC intern, debuted the community health improvement dashboard. He's taken secondary data from a variety of sources and our HJC primary data and visualized the information along with state benchmarks.
- Karrey submitted a NACCHO Application for funding to potentially support rural HPV vaccination education and outreach.
- Karrey and a gaggle of students along with other community partners recorded a podcast session on health care access.
- Haley W. and Lisa P. will be conducting a rapid needs assessment to support the Local Homeless Coordinating Board. The assessment will launch in January. Tentative plans include utilizing CPH's Strike Force team.
- Matt W. and Sam J. presented to Dr. Deshpande's intro to public health course, class on financial management and grant writing. The presentation was virtual so there was no need to bust out the 'money dispensing gun', but should there ever be a need.
- Jennifer, Amelia, Rachel, Karrey and other staff from Clinical Services met with the Nurse Manager at Tyson foods to discuss ways to share information and support Tyson workers as our patients and clients.
- Jamie Gade has been hired for the Social Determinants of Health Coordinator position. This is a new role to the department and will oversee the HealthyJoCo team and HealthyJoCo functions and services.
- Sam passed examination for the National Board of Public Health Examiners (NBPHE). The NBPHE was established in September 2005 as an independent organization, to ensure that public health professionals have mastered the foundational knowledge and skills relevant to contemporary public health. To date, over 14,000 public health professionals have become Certified in Public Health.

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PHWINS Update

We have officially surpassed the number of PHWINS surveys needed to review the “full” dashboard when it is released early next summer! Thank you all for your participation – results will be analyzed and presented to everyone as soon as they are available!

PHWINS has authorized one final reminder email to be sent out on 1/6/25 – there are still six employees who have not started and/or failed to complete the survey. Even though we have achieved our goal of utilizing the full dashboard, if you do receive that reminder email try and take some time to complete your survey. The closer we can get to 100% of staff participation the better the picture we can paint of the needs of the department!

SUCCESSION PLANNING UPDATE

Huge shoutout to ALL Clerk IIs who have been participating in the trial run of creating a succession profile for each division. To date, Catalina (Admin), Kristy (CH), and Ali, Amy, Amber, Grace, Mathe, and Skyler (CS) have completed a:

Position Overview – where core competency data was reviewed and discussions were had regarding certifications/training possibilities for the work being conducted. There was also a brief review of the official job description.

Work of Position – where staff entered information specific to day-to-day work including primary responsibilities, ongoing projects, important contacts, reoccurring meetings, etc.

We will complete the succession profile with **Position Coverage**, where primary duties will be listed with a “coverage position” listed to ensure we have the best coverage in case of long-term absences or during times of replacement. The department will move forward with completing a profile for all positions over the coming months to solidify our department’s succession planning.

HEALTH EQUITY WORK

Karrey has been out in the field, working with community partners who are already providing established services in the area to bring vaccines to uninsured/underinsured adults in the area through the IHHS Vaccines for Adults program. By building upon existing relationships, we’re able to complement the crucial services these partners are already offering to our residents and identify even more ways we can be serving under-resourced members of our patient populations. We’re also working hard to identify even more community-based organizations to team up with to continue offering these services and others to those in our communities most in need. Some of the partners we’ve worked with so far:

- Proteus, Inc.
- UI Mobile Clinic
- Iowa City Free Medical & Dental Clinic
- Neighborhood Centers of Johnson County
- Open Heartland

Let her know if you have suggestions on other partners we can work with to provide timely vaccines in the community!



Are you a SUPER USER?!

What is a super user? Someone who knows how to use a specific software really well, they love a challenge, they’re open minded to change, they love to learn and they’re patient when teaching others.

You are?! Well you’re in luck! JCPH has purchased a “scribe” account where recorded tutorials and trainings can be made by you! Are you interested in creating your own tutorials, instructions, SOPs?!? Give a like and hit the link below to sign up!

SIGN UP HERE



Above: Karrey gives vaccines through her work with Proteus, Left: PH & JoCo staff celebrate the remodel and grand reopening of “The Cafeteria” aka Casey’s with General Manager Billy on December 6th.