



# *Quick Reads*

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## **Public Health Tracking Portal**

The [Iowa Public Health Tracking Portal](#) (IPHT) has been enhanced and features several upgrades to make it easier to find and understand public health data. A special section has been added for first time users, along with a new larger main menu, a resources section, an updated glossary and more. IPHT is designed to give Iowans access to environmental data and health outcome data simultaneously to build knowledge of potential links between environmental hazards and health effects.

## **Flood response**

Thank you to all the IDPH staff, local officials and state partners assisting in the preparation, response and continued recovery from the [flooding](#) in north, east and central Iowa. At the state level, the [IMS](#) (Incident Management System) was activated to ensure local and state efforts were coordinated and effective. Governor Branstad announced a number of [disaster proclamations](#) for affected counties. While the IDPH IMS has been deactivated, the department continues to assist in recovery efforts as needed.

## **Iowa's top health issues**

With input from all 99 Iowa counties, via local Community Health Needs Assessments and recommendations from multiple stakeholders, the [2016 top health issues in Iowa](#) have been identified. Issues topping the list include obesity, nutrition and physical activity; mental health, illness and suicide; and substance abuse. IDPH partners and stakeholders are now invited to submit your program or organization's goals, objectives

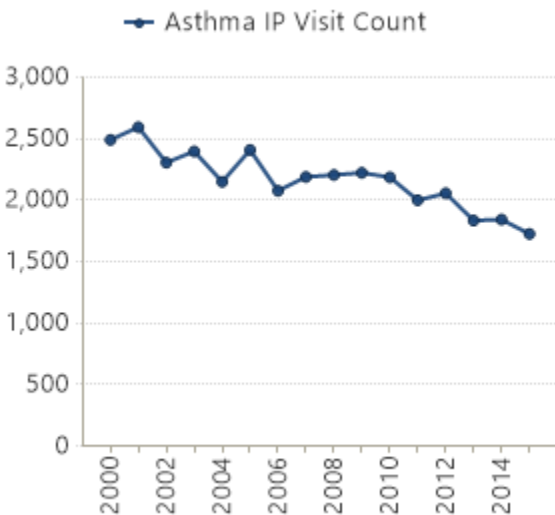
and strategies for the Healthy Iowans 2017-2021 Plan. Submissions are due by November 4, 2016. The submission form may be accessed on the [Healthy Iowans](#) web page.

### Strategic planning continues

Earlier this month, IDPH division directors and bureau chiefs met for a successful two-day strategic planning meeting. It seems it was only a short time ago the [2014-2016 IDPH Strategic Operational Plan](#) was drafted; now work is underway on our new departmental plan. It's important to note the 'old' plan should not be considered outdated, as it was a living document, with ongoing evaluations and updates. That will be the case with the new plan as well and I look forward to not only the process of creating a new plan, but the work of keeping it relevant and reflective of the department's challenges and successes in the coming years.

### Monthly data snapshot

Data are essential to the practice of public health. Each month, Quick Reads highlights selected tidbits to help create awareness of IDPH data and epidemiology.



Asthma hospitalizations in Iowa decreased by nearly 1,000 from 2000 to 2014. Asthma is a serious public health issue, and is one of the leading chronic conditions among children. Asthma hospitalization and emergency department visit data are available on the [Iowa Public Health Tracking Portal](#).

### Congrats and kudos

Randy Mayer, [IDPH HIV/STD and Hepatitis](#) Bureau Chief, was named to the [ASTHO Infectious Disease Policy Committee](#) as a representative of the [National Alliance of State and Territorial AIDS Directors](#) (NASTAD).

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*To everyone in public health and all our partners, keep up the great work!*

— *Gerd*