



Frequently Asked Questions

Healthy Iowans: Iowa's Health Improvement Planning Process

What is Healthy Iowans?

Healthy Iowans is a statewide process to identify the most important factors affecting health in Iowa and to plan collaborative strategies to improve the health of all who live, learn, work, and play here. It includes the state health assessment (SHA) and state health improvement plan (SHIP).

Why is Healthy Iowans important?

Healthy Iowans educates, unites, and mobilizes agencies, organizations, and individuals from across the state to focus on actions that improve the health of all who live, learn, work, and play in Iowa. The process is a fundamental component of Iowa's state health accreditation.

Participants in the assessment and planning can connect efforts with other groups, use the results to prepare grant applications or other funding requests, link to other planning efforts, and guide policy development. Local public health agencies and others also can use the plan to benchmark their own improvement efforts.

Who is involved?

Because health is affected by many factors, IDPH casts a wide net to gather input on what is important to Iowa's health from individuals, local and statewide governmental agencies, and non-governmental organizations from across Iowa. The process depends on the abilities of organizations to reach out to and work with individual Iowans to identify opportunities to improve health for all.

How are priorities and potential actions identified?

Four types of analysis serve to pinpoint a set of Iowa's top health issues. Analyzing the issues includes

- Recommendations submitted by local and statewide organizations and individual Iowans, including local community health needs assessments (CHNA) and opportunities to build on things already in place or that we do well (assets and resources);
- Comparisons with other states on thousands of indicators showing Iowa's results that are in the bottom 10 of all states nationally, based on such data sources as America's Health Rankings, Kids Count, State Health Facts, and other nationally comparable sources;
- An analysis of health inequities indicating disproportionately affected populations; and
- An analysis based on the results from the previous Healthy Iowans process, population trends that may affect Iowa over the next five years, the federal Healthy People plan, and other evidence-based health improvement frameworks.

In an effort to build collaboration, the plan focuses on a few of the top issues. In addition, organizations identify some of their top strategies for addressing the issues. The plan does not attempt to document all of the work that is underway to address every health-related issue in Iowa. Many more organizations take action on additional issues that are important to Iowa's health.

How was the 2017-2021 improvement plan developed?

An estimated 25,000 Iowans were involved in one or more of the assessment steps to pinpoint the critical health-related issues that needed to be addressed in the current plan (2017-2021). Using these priority issues as a framework, nearly 100 partners submitted measurable objectives and action steps for inclusion in the plan demonstrating the commitment they and their partners have made to Iowa's health improvement efforts.

Does the Healthy Iowans improvement plan relate to other plans?

Priorities in counties' health improvement plans were the fundamental building blocks for Healthy Iowans 2017-2021. The federal Healthy People 2020 also served as a key reference for Iowa's 2017-2021 plan. Healthy People 2030 will be used as a bedrock document for the 2022-2026 plan. Each section of Healthy Iowans links to other private and public planning documents. The plan also informs IDPH's strategic, workforce development, and performance improvement plans.

How can Iowans stay informed about Healthy Iowans?

A web page, <https://idph.iowa.gov/healthy-iowans>, contains updated information and provides an opportunity for feedback. Subscribing to the Healthy Iowans listserv connects about 2,300 Iowans to regular updates of new and related activities, data, resources, and health issues.

Timeline:

