



Healthy Iowans: Iowa's Health Improvement Plan 2017-2021

Frequently Asked Questions

What is Healthy Iowans?

Healthy Iowans, an ongoing five-year health improvement planning process, sets the agenda for solving priority health issues facing Iowans so they can live longer, more productive lives.

Why is Healthy Iowans important?

Improving the health of Iowans goes beyond the domain of governmental health agencies. **Healthy Iowans** unites and mobilizes a wide spectrum of stakeholders by achieving interrelated goals that range, for example, from a reduction in obesity and increased physical activity to access to transportation, educational attainment, and safe housing. This collective effort, coordinated by the Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH), is designed not only to improve the health of Iowans but also to close the gaps in health equity for Iowa's at-risk groups.

How do stakeholders become involved?

An invitation to participate in framing **Healthy Iowans** is posted on the department website and e-mailed to about 170 stakeholder groups. Prospective partners recommend up to three health issues for inclusion in the plan along with measurable objectives and action steps to achieve improvements. Collaborating partner organizations commit staff and other resources to monitor progress and make annual revisions.

Does Healthy Iowans relate to other plans?

Priorities in counties' health improvement plans, part of the Community Health Needs Assessment and Health Improvement Plan (CHNA&HIP) process, are the fundamental building blocks for **Healthy Iowans**, and the federal *Healthy People 2020* provides a framework for Iowa's plan. Other private and public planning documents are linked to each section of **Healthy Iowans**.

How do partners benefit from this collaborative effort?

Each year when collaborating partners assess progress, they report on how they have used the plan. Although their responses vary slightly from year to year, partners report coordinating efforts with other groups most valuable, followed by preparing grants or other funding requests, linking to other planning documents, and guiding policy development. Local public health agencies and others also can use the plan to benchmark their own planning efforts.



How can Iowans stay informed about Healthy Iowans?

A web page, <http://idph.iowa.gov/healthy-iowans>, provides updated information and an opportunity for feedback. A listserv on the web page connects interested Iowans to webinars, resources, and related health issues. To join the listserv, send a blank e-mail to: join-HealthyIowans@lists.ia.gov. Collaborating partners offer another avenue for outreach to interested Iowans.

How are the priority health issues and potential actions identified?

Criteria for analyzing the priority issues include recommendations from prospective partners, the results of CHNA&HIP, Iowa's ranking with other states, health disparities, CDC and IDPH data, *Healthy People 2020*, and additional evidence.

How are health problems not identified as priority to the improvement plan addressed?

Healthy Iowans is not intended to address every health issue facing the state; other organizations take action on additional issues. Related plans and reports are referenced in **Healthy Iowans**.

What is the role of Healthy People 2020?

Healthy People 2020 is an important resource in identifying priority health needs and potential actions to address the problems.

How are at-risk population groups represented in the process?

Representatives of advocacy organizations are invited to participate and to become members of advisory committees and stakeholder organizations.

When will the final plan be released?

Healthy Iowans is scheduled for release in January 2017.

How is Healthy Iowans implemented?

Actions outlined in the plan include the partner responsible for completing each objective and a timeline for completion. Each year, partners submit a progress report and make changes. A progress report and a revised plan are posted on the **Healthy Iowans** website.

What is the timeline?

Following is the anticipated timeline:

April-December 2015: Establish the framework for the needs assessment.

January-May 2016: Conduct the needs assessment.

June-December 2016: Prepare a health improvement plan.

January 2017-2021: Ongoing monitoring of progress and revisions.