



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Webster County Board of Health
723 1st Avenue South, Suite 220
Fort Dodge, IA 50501
Telephone: (515) 573-4107 Fax: (515) 955-1682
Email: public_health@webstercountyia.org

December 4, 2015

Iowa Department of Public Health
Director, Gerd Clabaugh
321 East 12th Street
Des Moines, Iowa 50319

Dear Mr. Clabaugh,

The Webster County Board of Health is writing to express a grave concern for the local public health system in the State of Iowa.

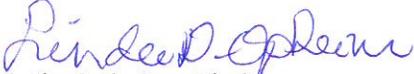
It disheartens our board members that our state agency has remained silent in negotiating for the core services that are provided by local public health and programs administered through contracts from the Iowa Department of Public Health to contractors in our local communities. The mere suggestion to local public health to individually negotiate contractual agreements with Managed Care Organizations representatives for services that should be "core services" in our communities is ludicrous. Managed Care Organization representatives lack knowledge of the local public health system. This suggestion encourages more inconsistency and fragmented services. The entire mission of the Iowa Department of Public Health is to assess, assure and develop policy to protect the health of Iowans. Yet, our leadership remains silent.

Funding that was provided to Maternal and Child Health Title V agencies for local care coordination activities will now be embedded into the Managed Care Organizations who will only focus on their own enrolled participants. The lack of local coordination of care, especially with our child population, will be detrimental to our most vulnerable population, our children. The expectation that local public health can and will continue to provide these services without funding is a travesty.

Future plans for the inclusion of dental services in Managed Care Organizations are a concern. School-based Sealant Programs that in most cases have been the only oral health services provided to some children, especially in rural Iowa, is in major jeopardy. The coordination of care between this program and the Maternal and Child Health Program could potentially be deflated and become non-existent. The Iowa Department of Public Health needs to take the leadership role and educate Managed Care Organizations about the importance of local, grass-root practices that is embedded around care coordination.

The Webster County Board of Health is concerned about the lack of support and education from the Iowa Department of Public Health to the Managed Care Organizations around the importance of the services being provided by local public health in our communities. The major role of the Iowa Department of Public Health is to promote and protect the health of Iowans. Nowhere is it listed in the mission or vision, only if it suits the wishes of the political party of the Governor. The lack of structure and mismanagement will be devastating to the citizens of our community and will reflect poorly on the Iowa Department of Public Health and the State of Iowa.

Respectfully,


Linda Opheim, Chairperson