



news release

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The Wellmark Foundation Supports Development of a Statewide Health Data Warehouse

(Des Moines, Iowa) – The Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH) was awarded a twenty-two-month, \$150,000 grant from The Wellmark Foundation to create a statewide health data warehouse. The warehouse will collect, organize and disseminate important health information from multiple sources across the state. A 2007 capacity-building grant from the Foundation supported establishment of a user-group as part of the research phase in the warehouse development plan.

“The IDPH Data Warehouse project will enhance the Department’s ability to deliver timely and consistent population-based data to local communities,” says Tom Newton, director of the IDPH. “The warehouse will provide local public health partners and other stakeholders with online, interactive access to health data, which they will use to conduct evidence-based needs assessments, identify health priorities and prevention targets, plan programs and services, and make important decisions to improve health conditions in their communities.”

A team of IDPH staff will work closely with an information technology company to design, develop and implement the data warehouse with nine initial datasets. The datasets will include births (vital records), deaths (vital records), inpatient hospital discharge data, health and financial information from the Iowa Department of Human Services, Behavior Risk Factor Surveillance Systems (BRFSS), Iowa Youth Survey (IYS), Iowa Disease Surveillance System (IDSS), U.S. Census, and Childhood Lead Level Surveillance System.

According to Newton, the warehouse will allow users to combine data from different internal and external sources, as well as different datasets, which will result in more thorough, holistic assessments and analyses of public health. For more information on the IDPH Data Warehouse, visit www.idph.state.ia.us/adper/data_warehouse.asp or contact Martha Gelhaus at mgelhaus@idph.state.ia.us or (515) 242-5224.

The Wellmark Foundation has provided nearly \$16.3 million to fund 412 health-related grants in Iowa and South Dakota since 1997, including \$593,558 this cycle. “The Wellmark Foundation works to improve the health of Iowans and South Dakotans,” says Matthew McGarvey, director of The Wellmark Foundation. “The IDPH Data Warehouse will provide an important and greatly needed service - accessible and meaningful health information for local stakeholders across Iowa. The data will ultimately be used by local health boards, public health agencies and many others to

make important decisions impacting the health status in their communities and the state.”

The Wellmark Foundation is a private, non-profit foundation created by Wellmark, Inc., doing business as Wellmark Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Iowa. The Foundation is offering two new grant programs in 2009. The **Growing Up LEAN: Living to be Energetic, Active, and Nutrition Grant Program** supporting childhood obesity prevention projects has an application deadline of April 21, 2009. The deadline for the **Healthy Communities Grant Program: Supporting a Culture of Wellness and Prevention** supporting community-based wellness and prevention projects is September 3, 2009. Visit The Wellmark Foundation's Web site at www.wellmark.com/foundation for grant application instructions as well as a list of previous grant recipients. Wellmark Blue Cross and Blue Shield and The Wellmark Foundation are independent licensees of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association.