



# PUBLIC HEALTH CONNECTION

MAY/JUNE 2010

## Public Health: Using Technology to Link The Community to Health Resources

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### SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST

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### Public Health—Making the Link

One of the ten essential services of public health is to link people to health services. This responsibility can often be challenging. Fortunately today, public health is able to take advantage of new technologies including Web sites, mobile devices and social media to connect to people.

### Web Sites

Web sites are an important tool for linking people to needed community and personal health resources. The Scott County Health Department (SCHD) went live on the Web in 1999. Since that time, many advances have been made to make the Web site more beneficial for users. For example, people with internet access can log on to the SCHD Web page to access the most up to date public health information in Scott County. At a glance, users can view featured topics listed on the front page of the site. These features are regularly updated to provide timely public health information. Among other features, the SCHD offers a subscription program for select pages of its site. If a user subscribes to a particular page, they automatically receive e-mails when the

page content has been updated. This feature was very useful during SCHD's H1N1 response to get important H1N1 and vaccine-related information to the general public.



### Public Health Goes Mobile

In recent years, text messaging on mobile devices has become extremely popular. From 2006, texting has grown from 18 billion messages sent in a year in the U.S. to 75 billion in 2008. This makes texting a strong communication tool that could be harnessed by public health to link people to needed health information and resources.

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has already begun a texting campaign to motivate people to get



tested for HIV. Mobile users are encouraged to text their zip code to a short text number. This information is matched to a database of HIV testing centers. Then, the user automatically receives a reply to their message with the name and number of the nearest HIV testing center.

Others have joined the CDC in these efforts. Text4baby offers similar services for pregnant women. Users enroll in the program and receive weekly text messages about what to expect during their pregnancies and tips and strategies to stay healthy.

### Social Media Networks

Public health has also jumped on board with social media networks as a method to reach specific audiences with targeted messages. The CDC is a leader in utilizing social media to reach people with appropriate and reliable health information. In recent years, the CDC has used Facebook, Twitter, Myspace, YouTube, Flickr, and iTunes to distribute messages to the general public. The CDC has used these tools to address concerns with H1N1, *Salmonella* food contamination and recall, and seasonal flu.

## LINKING KIDS TO SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL

NOTE FROM PUBLIC HEALTH SAFETY SERVICE AREA

Safe Kids Worldwide and program sponsor FedEx Express created Safe Kids “Walk This Way.” This program teaches safe behaviors to motorists and child pedestrians and creates safer, more walkable communities.

The goal of the initiative is to prevent pedestrian-related injury to children. Since the launch of the program in 2000, the program has spanned the globe, engaging

FedEx volunteers to reach families in hundreds of communities throughout the U.S. and around the world.

Safe Kids “Walk This Way” relies on FedEx employee volunteers and encourages new partners, including public officials, public agencies, community organizations and parents, to join Safe Kids Worldwide coalitions to improve conditions for child pedestrians. The Scott County Health

Department will be teaming up this fall with the Quad Cities Safe Kids coalition, FedEx Express and a local elementary school to hold the annual “Walk This Way” program. On this day, kids are encouraged to walk to school. A route around the school and throughout the neighborhood is planned for an all-school walk during the day as well. Since the beginning of the program, more than 1.6 million



students worldwide have joined with nearly 12,000 FedEx volunteers in 3,800 schools for International Walk to School Day—the program’s largest and most widespread activity.

## A LINK TO FOOD SAFETY

NOTE FROM ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SERVICE AREA

Scott County Health Department’s Environmental Health Service Area introduces the newly improved food protection program’s Web page. The Web page gives the public useful food safety information and up-to-date information regarding food establishments in Scott County.

The Web page offers many resources on food safety

topics. In addition, licensing information for food service establishments, temporary establishments, mass gatherings and others is available on the Web site. Applications for these and other types of establishments are also available for download on the site.

For those curious about their favorite Scott County restaurant, the restaurant and food establishment

database is a key feature to the Web site. This database allows the user to search by name of the restaurant, address, or license number. The actual inspection conducted by the SCHD staff will appear including violations and comments. Also available are definitions of common violations so that the user may better understand the inspection report.



## LIVE. LEAD. FREE.

NOTE FROM CLINICAL HEALTH SERVICE AREA

The City of Davenport was awarded a Housing and Urban Development (HUD) grant for the removal of lead-based paint hazards in homes. The grant is called Making It Lead and Environmentally Safe (MILES).

Families of children in Davenport identified with elevated blood lead levels

are a priority for the program. Previously, when environmental health inspectors identified lead hazards in the home, they had limited resources to offer the owners to remove them. Through this grant, families who live in Davenport that qualify financially will be able to receive assistance. This

assistance can be in the child’s primary residence, a child care provider’s home, or any other place where the child spends a significant amount of time.

For more information about this program, call the City of Davenport at 563-326-7748 the Scott County Health Department at 563-326-8618 or visit



## UNITED WAY 211

**COMMUNITY PARTNER SPOTLIGHT:  
UNITED WAY OF THE QUAD CITIES AREA**

211 is the information and referral service of the United Way of the Quad Cities Area. The mission of United Way's 211 is to link, in the most direct way possible, people in need with community programs and services designed to meet that need.

Information and referral is the process of helping people to understand their problems and to make informed decisions regarding possible

solutions. Each person who calls 211 is given the opportunity to speak with a specialist who will help with an assessment of the situation and identify appropriate community-based resources, which can meet the caller's needs.

211's database of information is available to the public through a variety of ways including the internet, books, special directories,

informational flyers, CD-ROM's, and over the telephone. To link with this service simply dial 211 or 1-888-680-INFO or log on to <http://www.unitedwayqc.com/211>



**United Way  
of the Quad Cities Area**

## GETTING LINKED UP WITH HEALTH CARE

**NOTE FROM COMMUNITY RELATIONS,  
INFORMATION AND PLANNING SERVICES**

In Scott County, we are fortunate to have available a variety of health care resources. However, availability does not always mean accessibility. The Care for Kids Program is seeking to change that by being a link for families to help them better access care.

Care for Kids works with children and their families to establish and maintain

medical and dental homes, assure that children are receiving regular health and dental check-ups, and ensure that medical conditions are diagnosed and treated as early as possible. Care for Kids provides education regarding various health topics, promotes healthy lifestyles, and provides care coordination to families facing barriers to medical

and dental care. In addition, Care for Kids works with community agencies and providers to make certain that every child in Scott County has access to health care services and that families understand how to navigate the health system.



## TEXTING WHILE DRIVING

**COMMON CONFUSIONS:  
SETTING THE RECORD STRAIGHT**

While texting may be a beneficial communication tool, it has also created a public health safety hazard if used irresponsibly. Recent studies have revealed what was already suspected, texting while driving is a serious form of distraction that increases the likelihood of car crashes.

Findings show that of all cell phone related tasks - including talking, dialing, or reaching for the phone, texting while driving is the most dangerous. For every 6 seconds of drive time, a driver sending or receiving a text message spends 4.6 of those seconds with their eyes off the road.

To reduce crashes and injury many states are looking at or adopting state laws that prohibit texting while driving.

Visit the Governors Highway Safety Association Web site for a listing of all mobile phone related state laws.

[www.ghsa.org/html/stateinfo/laws/cellphone\\_laws](http://www.ghsa.org/html/stateinfo/laws/cellphone_laws)



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## MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

- Thursday, May 20, 2010; 12:00-1:00 p.m.; Scott County Board of Health Meeting  
*Open to the Public; Location: Scott County Administrative Center, Board Room-1st Floor*
- Monday May 31, 2010; *Scott County Offices Closed for Memorial Day*
- Thursday, June 17, 2010; 12:00-1:00 p.m.; Scott County Board of Health Meeting  
*Open to the Public; Location: Scott County Administrative Center, Board Room-1st Floor*

### OUR MISSION:

The Scott County Health Department is committed to promoting, protecting and preserving the health of the community by providing leadership and direction as advocates for the individual, the family, the community and the environment we serve.

### OUR VISION:

As recognized and respected leaders in serving and protecting our citizens, we at the Scott County Health Department are committed to a safer, healthier community and environment. In so doing, we provide a multitude of services with Professionalism, Responsiveness, Involvement, Dedication, and Excellence.



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**Public Health**  
Prevent. Promote. Protect.