

The Iowa County Magazine

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May 2025

Mental Health

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The Iowa County

May 2025 * Volume 54, Number 5

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5500 Westown Parkway, Suite 190
West Des Moines, IA 50266
515.244.7181 FAX 515.244.6397
www.iowacounties.org
Rachel Bennett, EDITOR
Courtney Biere, PRODUCTION AND LAYOUT

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ISAC's Mission:

To promote effective and responsible county government for the people of Iowa.

ISAC's Vision:

To be the principal, authoritative source of representation, information and services for and about county government in Iowa.

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Expanding Access to Mental Health Resources

Johnson County Launches CredibleMind

In October 2024, Johnson County Public Health became the second county in Iowa to launch CredibleMind: a free, self-guided online platform that supports community members in exploring and improving their mental and emotional wellbeing. This initiative reflects a growing need for accessible mental healthcare, as well as an opportunity for local governments to support upstream, preventive behavioral health strategies.

This launch was made possible by Johnson County’s involvement in Behavioral Health 360, a national initiative led by the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO). The initiative supports local health departments in building stronger behavioral health systems, strengthening community partnerships, and improving public access to trusted information and services.



Lisa Parlato
Chronic Disease Prevention Specialist
Johnson County Public Health
lparlato@johnsoncountyiowa.gov

Through this partnership, Johnson County Public Health was able to implement a localized version of CredibleMind—one that not only provides evidence-based educational content but also includes local resources tailored to our community.

A Community-Centered, County-Led Approach

Mental health is one of four community-selected health priorities in Johnson County’s Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP), along with healthcare access, housing, and food security. Community members expressed difficulty knowing where to start when facing emotional or mental health challenges. Barriers like cost, waitlists, transportation, and stigma were common, especially for those who have not yet established care with a mental or behavioral healthcare provider.

CredibleMind addresses these concerns by offering a free, confidential, and approachable entry point to mental wellness. It’s available 24/7 at healthyjoco.crediblemind.com, with the option to create an account, but no login required. Users can explore hundreds of articles, podcasts, videos, and self-assessments on topics such as stress, sleep, anxiety, resilience, grief, meaning and purpose, and many more.

Unlike a generic web search, CredibleMind curates its content from trusted sources—such as Harvard Health, Mayo Clinic, and National Institutes of Health. The platform encourages early engagement and self-reflection, helping users build skills, identify needs, and take steps toward wellness at their own pace.

Local Customization and Resource Integration

What makes Johnson County’s version of CredibleMind unique is its local integration. Our public health team has the ability to add community-specific resources to the site’s resource directory, as well as to edit the homepage and select specific topics to highlight. This means users browsing a topic like “managing anxiety” or “grief and loss” will not only see national information, but also links to relevant local providers and community organizations.

We view this as a dynamic, evolving tool that reflects our community’s assets and needs. Our department continues to work with local mental health organizations, nonprofits, and healthcare providers to ensure the resource list is inclusive, accurate, and representative of the services available in Johnson County. For other counties considering this approach, the ability to customize local content makes CredibleMind a versatile platform for county-wide behavioral health promotion, without requiring extensive infrastructure or staffing.

Expanding Access to Mental Health Resources

Supporting Broader Systems of Care

CredibleMind is not meant to replace professional services—but it plays a vital role in early engagement, prevention, and care navigation. It's especially useful for folks who:

- May not be ready or able to seek traditional services
- Are on waitlists for care
- Prefer to explore wellbeing privately or anonymously
- Are looking for supplemental tools to use alongside therapy or counseling

In addition, providers and community partners can use CredibleMind as a referral and education tool—sharing it with clients and patients to support self-guided learning in between appointments or during gaps in care.

Looking Ahead

As Johnson County continues to expand its local resource listings and promote CredibleMind to our communities, we're encouraged by the early feedback and growing interest from community organizations. We've also begun exploring opportunities to integrate the platform into other county initiatives—like public libraries, the Iowa City Senior Center, and workplace wellness programs—as part of a broader strategy to normalize and support mental wellness.

Additionally, CredibleMind provides quarterly reports of user engagement, so we can see which topics and resources community members are accessing most and share that information with community partners to take into consideration as part of our Community Health Improvement Planning.

Replicability for Other Iowa Counties

While every community is different, the challenges Johnson County faces—stigma, fragmented systems, and difficulty accessing behavioral health care—are not unique. That's why we believe CredibleMind could be of benefit for other Iowa counties looking to bolster mental wellness support as well.

For counties considering a similar approach, we recommend:

- Engaging community stakeholders early to identify resource gaps
- Partnering with local behavioral health providers to build the site's resource list
- Using the platform as a springboard for broader community conversations about stigma, prevention, and mental health access

If your county is interested in learning more about our process, implementation, or lessons learned, we'd be happy to share insights. Visit healthyjoco.crediblemind.com to explore the platform or contact Johnson County Public Health for more information about partnership opportunities.

Mastering the Stress Cycle: Practical Interventions for Wellness

Imagine waking up, stumbling to your kitchen, and pinning all your hope for the day on a hot cup of coffee. Only to discover you are out of coffee grounds. And your phone is buzzing with texts and emails. And your outfit is not ironed. And your car needs gas. All while you are running late for a meeting that is making you feel less-than-confident.

This is how the stress response cycle begins - and it is a cycle many of us face daily. But there is good news. By understanding the stress response cycle and our nervous system, we can regain control and move our wellness in the right direction.

As the creator of the “Mastering the Stress Response Cycle- Practical Strategies for Wellness” training at Foundation 2 Crisis Services in Cedar Rapids, I work with individuals and groups who are searching for ways to better manage their daily stress. The key takeaway is when stress or activation occurs, the sooner we take a few minutes to fully feel the emotion and complete the stress response cycle, the quicker we return to calm.



Kara Grafft
Director of Quality & Training
Foundation 2 Crisis Services
kgrafft@foundation2.org

There are three types of stress recognized by health professionals:

- **Positive Stress** – This is a normal and healthy part of life. These are brief and mild stressors that help us grow and move toward completing a goal. Examples include preparing for a wedding, competing in a sport, or studying for an exam.
- **Tolerable Stress** – This type of stress is temporary but more serious. With healthy support and coping strategies, it can be managed. Examples include the loss of a loved one, serious illness, or going through a divorce. These are difficult experiences, but with time and support, they can be managed.
- **Toxic Stress** – This is the most harmful type of stress. It happens over time, is unpredictable, intense, and occurs without adequate support or resources. Examples include long-term abuse, financial instability, or constant work stress. This type of stress can be extremely damaging to both the brain and body.

When we are faced with a stressor — whether it is a chaotic morning, an argument with a partner or something more serious — our stress response is activated. In simple terms, our body goes into “fight or flight” mode. This is a survival mechanism designed to protect us from danger. Our brain signals us to “prepare for action.” The body’s adrenal glands release stress hormones like adrenaline and cortisol to help us respond quickly.

This works great if we are facing a real threat. But in reality, our bodies often confuse perceived danger (thinking about presenting in front of a crowd) with actual danger (swerving to avoid a car crash). Even if the stressor does not physically endanger us, our bodies still release adrenaline and cortisol like it does.

When this response happens, it does not go away on its own once the stressor is over. Our body still needs to process the chemicals released during the stress response. If our stress response is activated too often, or we do not support our bodies in processing it, we can develop physical and mental health issues over time.

Mastering the Stress Cycle: Practical Interventions for Wellness

In the book *Burnout*, co-authors Emily and Amelia Nagoski describe stress as a physiological response that needs to be completed in order to return our nervous system to a calm state. Stress is inevitable, but research shows that completing the stress response cycle can help mitigate its negative effects.

So, how do we do this? Here are some simple strategies:

- **Physical Activity:** Research suggests 30 minutes a day is ideal, but it can be split into smaller chunks. Any physical activity works—dancing, gardening, walking, or even chasing your kids around the yard!
- **Physical Affection:** A 20-second hug from someone you trust, a hand massage, or snuggling with a pet can help reset your nervous system.
- **Laughter and Creative Expression:** A good laugh or any activity that gets you into a creative flow state can help complete the cycle. Take time to draw, sing, share a Dad joke, play an instrument, or solve a puzzle.
- **A Good Cry:** Watch a romantic comedy or a touching animal rescue video. Sometimes a good cry is all it takes!

A good night's sleep, positive social connections, and mindful breathing can also all support your nervous system in returning to calm. You will know your body is completing the cycle when you feel that sense of relief or clarity after crying, the deep exhale you take when relaxing into a hug, or when physical activity stops feeling so difficult and becomes more enjoyable.

As a crisis services provider, staff at Foundation 2 Crisis Services face stressful situations daily. In our workplace, taking a quick walk, sharing funny videos, or stepping out for a breather during stressful moments are the norm. We recognize that taking time to complete the stress response cycle benefits everyone.

What if we proactively managed our stress so we did not need weekends or PTO to recover? This idea has been a game-changer for me. Maybe it could be for you, too.

Confidence Through the Cave: Mental Health as an Adventure

About a year ago, I experienced a moment where I just couldn't. Like everyone, there are times when mental or physical fatigue zaps our momentary motivation. But this was much more than that. I sat on the floor of my bedroom for what seemed like hours, unable to move. Some literary theorists call this "The Dark Night of the Soul"—a moment when the story's hero is at their lowest point.

At that moment, there were many people I could have called to help me—and if the situation were dire, I would have called. But I didn't want to call anyone. I didn't want to be pulled from that moment. Not because I wanted to have a pity party for myself, but because I knew this was a moment of clarity—a moment of learning. I did not twist this very painful moment with toxic positivity or false encouragement—I just knew, as most authors writing a great story know, that there is a lesson to be learned, and an important one in my mental health adventure.

My own journey with mental health has been an evolving adventure. I grew up as an immigrant, navigating life in a new land with a language and culture to learn. I faced academic and social hurdles, compounded by living with ADHD, which added to my fierce intensity and sensitivity. These early challenges taught me that true growth happens when we lean into discomfort rather than shy away from it.

For much of our lives, we are advised to seek comfort—to avoid the challenging, the painful, and the messy. It is well-intended, but what if we reframe those spaces of discomfort as gateways to growth? What if we see them as stops along the way in our journey? What if we saw mental health as an adventure, not as something to be quickly solved?

The Cave as a Metaphor for Transformation

I've often been reminded of the words of Joseph Campbell: *"The cave you fear to enter holds the treasure that you seek."* This idea encapsulates the essence of embracing the discomfort that life inevitably offers. In our personal caves—the hidden rooms of our minds where anxiety and sadness dwell—we uncover raw materials for transformation. Rather than rushing through our pain or covering it up with superficial positivity, we must learn to value every emotion.

In fact, as Daniel Pink writes in his book *The Power of Regret* (which, by title alone, says quite a lot),

"Human beings also hold what amounts to a portfolio of emotions. Some are positive...others negative. We tend to overvalue one category and undervalue the other. We stuff our portfolios with positive emotions and sell off the negative ones."

This perspective reminds us that dismissing our negative emotions only robs us of the full spectrum of our human experience. Every feeling, whether joyous or sorrowful, has a role in our emotional growth, teaching us resilience, empathy, and self-awareness.

Cultivating a Personal Inventory of Well-Being

For me, self-care isn't a one-size-fits-all checklist—it's an evolving toolkit that I continually refine. Over the years, I have built what I call my "mental health inventory," a collection of practices that help anchor my well-being. This toolkit includes daily meditation sessions, the physical release from CrossFit workouts, and transformative therapies like EMDR. These tools aren't magic cures; they are how I reclaim control during life's challenging moments.



Erik Dominguez
Speaker | Trainer | Coach
speakupstories.com

Confidence Through the Cave: Mental Health as an Adventure

Challenging moments like the day I couldn't move from my bedroom floor. I sat for a few hours, unable to find the next steps. I felt stuck, sad, anxious—but I was never judgmental. Because of my inventory of well-being, I understood that acknowledging and processing our negative emotions is not a sign of weakness but a necessary step toward healing.

A Call to Embrace the Adventure

Mental Health Awareness Month calls on us to honor the entire spectrum of our emotions. It is not about sugar-coating our pain or forcing a rapid recovery; it is about acknowledging every facet of our experience. Each moment of discomfort, every instance of anxiety or sadness, holds the potential for learning, growth, and, ultimately, transformation.

As we observe Mental Health Awareness Month in May 2025, I invite you all to step boldly into your caves. I challenge you to reflect on this: What treasures might await you in the cave you fear to enter? Whether you decide to seek professional guidance, engage in therapy, or simply devote time to introspection, remember that every step into discomfort is a step toward personal empowerment. And in every such moment, you are never alone—friends, family, community, and even strangers can and do offer the support we all need.

Embrace the discomfort, learn from it, and discover the hidden treasures that lie within. In doing so, we not only change our own lives—we change the world around us.

Erik Dominguez is a keynote speaker and communication trainer who helps individuals discover the power of their voice. He equips and inspires leaders to communicate with clarity and confidence—especially in high-pressure situations—all while keeping it engaging and just a little fun.



Ahlers & Cooney, P.C.
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American State Bank Sports Complex, Sioux Center

Make It OK

One in five Iowans will experience a mental illness at some point in their lives. That's more common than diabetes, which affects about one in ten. But the way we talk about these two conditions couldn't be more different. While one is often met with sympathy and support, the other is still too often met with silence—or worse, shame.

If you've ever struggled with your mental health, you know how hard it can be to ask for help. Sometimes, we stay quiet out of fear of being judged. Other times, it's because mental health simply isn't something that's talked about openly in our families or communities. That silence? That's stigma. And stigma is one of the biggest reasons people don't get the support they need.

That's where **Make It OK** comes in.

Make It OK is a community campaign to reduce stigma around mental illness in Iowa. It's about starting real conversations and helping people understand that mental health is just as important as physical health. It's a door opener—a way to help people talk more openly and compassionately with one another.

"Make It OK is here to educate and give people the tools they need to have a caring and informed conversations with others around mental health, meet others where they are, and just be kind and supportive humans," said Brianna Sink, Make It OK Coordinator. The truth is, you don't have to be a mental health professional to make a difference. Just showing up with empathy and a willingness to listen is enough to open a door for someone who's been silently struggling. That's why Make It OK offers free monthly online presentations open to anyone in Iowa. They're a great first step for learning how to support others and talk openly about mental illness.

If you're someone who feels called to do more, consider becoming a Make It OK Ambassador. You don't need to be an expert—just someone who cares about creating a more supportive and understanding community. Ambassadors help bring the conversation to life in their own towns, schools, and workplaces. Right now, there are over 80 ambassadors across the state helping to break the silence and spread hope.

Workplaces can get involved too. Over 500 businesses and organizations in Iowa have already taken the step to bring mental health awareness into their work culture by registering as Make It OK workplaces. With access to easy-to-use toolkits, it's never been simpler to make your workplace more supportive for employees who may be quietly carrying more than they let on.

At the heart of this campaign is the simple but powerful truth: everyone has mental health. And we all play a role in making sure Iowans in all corners of the state can get the help they need.

So this May—and beyond—we invite you to be part of something bigger. Take the pledge, start a conversation, or simply check in on a friend. However you choose to show up, know that it matters.

Learn more and get involved at www.makeitokiowa.org. Together, we can stop the stigma and help every Iowan feel seen, supported, and safe. The Make It OK campaign is a program of the Iowa Healthiest State Initiative, a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization driven by the goal to ensure every Iowan can live their healthiest life.



Chase Langos
Iowa Healthiest State Initiative
www.iowahealthieststate.com





Evidence-based Mental Health Training Available for U.S. County Workers

Create a workplace where county employees thrive, and foster a healthier, happier community for all with Mental Health First Aid at Work.

40% of employees say their jobs have a negative impact on their mental health.

Let's talk



MHFA.org/NACo

Your county workers put their lives on the line every day. It's time to put their mental wellbeing first. Your county can champion mental wellbeing — to help ensure your team has the tools they need to thrive personally and professionally — by providing **Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) at Work**, mental health training for employees, administered by the National Council for Mental Wellbeing in partnership with the National Association of Counties (NACo).

**12 BILLION
WORKING DAYS**

are lost annually due to depression and anxiety...equating to around \$1 trillion per year in lost productivity.

What is MHFA at Work?

MHFA at Work teaches employees how to identify, understand and respond to signs and symptoms of mental health and substance use challenges they may encounter in the workplace.

- **It's research-informed.** More than 40 peer-reviewed studies demonstrate that learners experience increased mental health literacy, confidence in helping others and empathy toward distressed individuals.
- **It's trusted.** More than 4 million people in the U.S. have been trained in MHFA.
- **It's customizable.** Delivered in-person or virtually, we will work with you to address your county and workforce's specific concerns and reinforce existing benefits and resources that support workplace wellbeing.

Who should take the training?

- County employees at all levels.
- Elected officials.
- Human resources and benefits partners.
- Senior leaders and managers.

Mental Health First Aid at Work does not teach or endorse diagnosis, encourage self-disclosure of mental illness or substance use, embolden participants to become counselors, or promote the use of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) or medical leave of absence.

Prioritizing Mental Health in the Public Sector

A Call to Action During Mental Health Awareness Month

Every May, Mental Health Awareness Month serves as a vital reminder that mental well-being is just as important as physical health. Across the United States, communities, organizations, and individuals come together to raise awareness, reduce stigma, and promote mental wellness. For those working in the public sector, this is an annual spotlight that is especially relevant. Public employees face unique pressures that can take a serious toll on mental health, and it's time we make their well-being a priority.

IMWCA

Iowa Municipalities Workers'
Compensation Association



Katie Wheeler

Director of Communication & Engagement

IMWCA | Iowa League of Cities

katiewheeler@iowaleague.org

The Mental Health Landscape in the Public Sector

The public sector is powered by people who provide essential services—emergency responders, road workers, administrators, and countless others. These roles are often high-stakes, under-resourced, and exposed to emotional strain. Public employees frequently encounter demanding workloads, public scrutiny, bureaucratic constraints, and political pressures. For many, these stressors are compounded by a lack of mental health support, outdated workplace norms, or fear of stigma.

While the broader conversation around mental health has become more open and inclusive in recent years, public institutions have often lagged behind. Tight budgets and limited HR capacity can delay meaningful progress. Yet the cost of neglect is high: burnout, absenteeism, low morale, high turnover, and diminished service quality.

Why This Matters Now

Mental Health Awareness Month is not just symbolic, it's a strategic opportunity for public sector leaders to foster a more supportive and resilient workplace culture. Post-pandemic realities, rising community needs, budget constraints, and growing workforce challenges make this more urgent than ever. If governments want to retain skilled employees and maintain effective service delivery, mental wellness must become a core component of organizational health.

What Public Sector Employers Can Do

Leaders in government and public agencies have a responsibility to support the mental well-being of their employees, not just for moral reasons, but to ensure the sustainability and effectiveness of their workforce. Here are some strategies public sector employers can implement during Mental Health Awareness Month and beyond:

- 1. Normalize Conversations About Mental Health:** Create safe spaces for employees to talk about stress, burnout, and mental health without fear of judgment. Encourage managers to lead by example, sharing their own challenges and advocating for balance.
- 2. Invest in Mental Health Resources:** Offer employee assistance programs (EAPs), teletherapy services, or mental health workshops. Ensure employees know how to access these services and feel empowered to use them.
- 3. Train Managers and Supervisors:** Equip frontline leaders with the tools to recognize signs of distress, have compassionate conversations, and guide employees toward appropriate support.
- 4. Prioritize Work-Life Balance:** Flexible scheduling, remote work options (where feasible), and clear expectations around after-hours communication can reduce chronic stress.
- 5. Measure and Address Burnout:** Conduct regular surveys or check-ins to gauge employee well-being. Use this data to identify departments or roles at risk and develop targeted interventions.
- 6. Review Policies and Culture:** Examine whether current policies, performance expectations, or workplace culture inadvertently contribute to employee stress. Foster an environment where self-care is encouraged and respected.

Prioritizing Mental Health in the Public Sector

A Community-Wide Commitment

Promoting mental health in the public sector isn't just the responsibility of HR or upper management, it's a shared commitment that requires buy-in at every level. Department heads, union leaders, elected officials, and frontline employees all have a role to play in reducing stigma and creating supportive workplaces.

May is the perfect time to start or expand these efforts. Host a mental health awareness campaign. Offer a lunch-and-learn on stress management. Highlight employee testimonials about mental health journeys. Recognize departments that champion well-being initiatives. The goal is to move beyond awareness and into action.

Looking Ahead

A mentally healthy workforce is not a luxury - it's a necessity. When public employees are supported, the ripple effect reaches every corner of the community. Services improve. Morale rises. Retention strengthens. And perhaps most importantly, we begin to rewrite a narrative where public service does not have to come at the cost of personal well-being.

As we observe Mental Health Awareness Month this May, let's commit to building workplaces that honor not just the hard work of our employees, but their humanity. Let's invest in systems that care for the caregivers, support the supporters, and value the vital role mental health plays in the public good.

Because behind every policy, every program, and every public service, there's a person who deserves to feel seen, supported, and well.

ISAC Staff Reflect on Leading on Purpose Course

Years ago, after I graduated with my BA from college, I realized that I am a “forever learner”. What is a forever learner you ask? A forever learner is someone who is always seeking something new to learn that can help improve their personal and professional life. So, in 2022, when I was given the opportunity to participate in the High Performance Leadership Academy I jumped at it. I absolutely loved the information and varied learning platform, and the course provided me a whole new skill set that I could add to the foundation I had already built in my professional life related to leadership.



Jessica Trobaugh
ICACMP Project Manager/Trainer
jtrobaugh@iowacounties.org

When given the chance to participate in the Leading on Purpose course I was a little hesitant to take it at first because I was afraid it would be very similar to the High Performance Leadership Academy and wasn't sure I would get much out of it. Boy was I wrong! The Leading on Purpose course challenged me to look at what my “Purpose” for leading truly was. Each week the course provided new topics related to focusing on your purpose in a new way. One of my favorite topics in the course related to “Followership”. When I first saw the word “Followership” I was confused as to how that word related to being a good leader. During that week I learned so much about how I can't be a good leader if I don't know how to be a good follower first!

Most importantly, the course provided me insight into how to motivate and help those who work for and with me to be the best versions of themselves and to find their purpose!

I loved the platform for the course which allowed you to read, reflect, learn from interviews with experts in leadership roles, and interact with others taking the course from all across the United States in breakout sessions. This course is designed to make sure no matter what your learning type is that you can be successful in finding and building upon your “Purpose” for leading. I would strongly encourage anyone who has an opportunity to take the course to do so!

Participating in the NACo Leading on Purpose class has been a truly groundbreaking experience for me. I was eager to enhance my leadership skills and find new ways to lead with intention and clarity. This program exceeded my expectations in every way.

From the very beginning, the class delved into the core principles of purpose-driven leadership. The curriculum was thoughtfully structured, guiding us through modules that covered defining personal and organizational purpose, aligning actions with values, and creating a vision that inspires and motivates teams. Each concept was not only explained in detail but was also made practically applicable to our daily roles.

One of the most valuable aspects of the NACo Leading on Purpose class was its emphasis on practical application. The interactive sessions, real-world case studies, and peer discussions were incredibly beneficial. These elements allowed me to gain insights from the experiences of others and apply the theoretical knowledge in a practical context. The hands-on approach reinforced the learning and made it more relevant to my role in the organization.



Molly Hill
ISAC Staff Accountant
mhill@iowacounties.org

The NACo Leading on Purpose class is an exceptional program. It helped me reconnect with my core values and understand how to lead with purpose both professionally and personally. Fostering a positive and productive work environment. I left the class with a clear vision and the confidence to lead with purpose and intention.

ISAC Spring Conference General Session Minutes Summary

Thursday, March 13, 2025

President Linda Zuercher called the meeting to order at 10:30 am and led attendees in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Dave Muhlbauer expressed condolences for the colleagues, family, and friends of John Werden, Carroll County Attorney and ISAC Past President, who unexpectedly passed away during the Conference. A moment of silence was held in his honor.

Linda introduced the ISAC Executive Committee and Board of Directors.

Executive Director Andrea Woodard welcomed the group and thanked ISAC staff, the ISAC Board, exhibitors, and sponsors. She also announced the 99-County Tour that ISAC will begin later this spring/summer.

Andrea presented the ISAC budget for the Fiscal Year 2026. The members in attendance were given the opportunity to ask questions.

Moved by Ray Peterson, Clayton County Supervisor, seconded by Michelle Sims, Iowa County Treasurer, to approve the ISAC budget for Fiscal Year 2026 as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

Barry Anderson, Clay County Supervisor and ISAC Past President, presided over the ISAC scholarship ceremony. Barry presented scholarship awards to all attending winners. He notified all in attendance that the ISAC Scholarship Golf Fundraiser is being held on June 18, 2025, in Pleasant Hill.

President Zuercher adjourned the meeting.

◆◆◆ THE 20TH ANNUAL ◆◆◆

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JUNE 18, 2025
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EAGLE LEVEL - \$300, BIRDIE LEVEL - \$200, PAR LEVEL - \$100: LISTED IN PROGRAM, WEBSITE, AND MAGAZINE.

****A REMINDER TO SPONSORS THAT IOWA LAW PROHIBITS COUNTY OFFICIALS FROM ACCEPTING GIFTS (INCLUDING FOOD, DRINK, REGISTRATION FEES, AND ANYTHING OF VALUE IN RETURN FOR WHICH LEGAL CONSIDERATION OF EQUAL OR GREATER VALUE IS NOT GIVEN AND RECEIVED) FROM RESTRICTED DONORS UNLESS AN EXCEPTION APPLIES. EXCEPTIONS THAT MAY APPLY AT ISAC CONFERENCES LIKELY DO NOT APPLY TO THIS EVENT AND GENERALLY SPEAKING THE ONLY EXEMPTION LIKELY AVAILABLE IS A GIFT THAT IS VALUED AT \$3 OR LESS. IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS ABOUT YOUR COMPLIANCE WITH THE GIFT LAW, PLEASE CONSULT WITH YOUR LEGAL REPRESENTATIVE.**

Environmental Health Consultants

Division of Public Health, Bureau of Environmental and Local Public Health
Iowa Department of Health and Human Services



Health and
Human Services

As part of the public health infrastructure Grant (PHIG), Iowa HHS has hired two Environmental Health Consultants to support the Local Environmental Health Workforce.

The Environmental Health Consultant positions are primarily responsible for the following tasks:

- development of onboarding program for new local Environmental Health staff
- technical assistance on Environmental Health topics
- education to Board of Health members and Public Health Administrators
- lead inspections and EBL case management
- serve as a point of contact for the Private Well Grants Program
- assess the Environmental Health workforce system

Tammy began in this role in November 2024 and has over 25 years of experience in the environmental health field. Tammy previously served as the Director of Clay County Environmental Health. During her time in Clay County, she built a network of support for environmental health programs in the Northwest region of Iowa. In her role at Iowa HHS, she's working to implement that same support network model to assist programs across the state of Iowa. Tammy has a passion for helping others by utilizing her vast experience to provide insight, training and guidance to help others be successful in their career. Tammy is ecstatic to be able to share her passion with other professionals who are just starting in the environmental health field. Tammy lives in Sioux Rapids, Iowa where she enjoys small town living and the company of her family and two sons.

tammy.mckeever@hhs.iowa.gov
515-672-5155

Tammy McKeever

Environmental Health
Consultant



Shala Llewellyn

Environmental Health
Consultant



Shala began in this role in November 2024 after previously working for Warren County Environmental Health. In Warren County, she served as an Environmental Health Specialist for almost seven years and discovered her passion in this field. She is excited to assist local environmental health staff in building programs that will positively impact the health of their communities across the state. Shala is committed to collaborating with community partners, other state agencies and associations to create a support system that enable environmental health programs to train and retain staff as well as empower them to effectively carry out environmental health duties. Shala currently lives in Indianola, Iowa with her husband and son.

shala.llewellyn@hhs.iowa.gov
515-201-4348

2025 Calendar

May 2025

- 7 ISAC Board of Directors Meeting
(ISAC Office)
- 14-16 Iowa Treasurer's May School
(Gateway Hotel & Conference Center, Ames)
- 21-23 Western Interstate Region (WIR) Conference
(Pennington County, South Dakota)

June 2025

- 4-6 ICIT Conference
(The Meadows Event and Conference Center)
- 18 ISAC Scholarship Golf Fundraiser
(Toad Valley Golf Course, Pleasant Hill)
- 18-20 ICRA Summer School
(West Des Moines, Iowa)
- 25-27 ISACA Summer Conference
(Hilton Garden Inn West Des Moines)

July 2025

- 11-14 NACo Annual Conference and Exposition
(Philadelphia, Pennsylvania)

August 2025

- 20-22 ISAC Annual Conference
(Veterans Memorial Community Choice Credit Union Convention Center, Des Moines)

September 2025

- 16-19 ISSDA Fall Jail School
(Holiday Inn Des Moines Airport)

October 2025

- 1-3 ISAC Board of Directors Retreat
(Carroll County)
- 5-8 Assessors Fall School
(Holiday Inn Des Moines Airport)

November 2025

- 19-20 ISAC Board of Directors Meeting
(ISAC Office)

December 2025

- 2-5 ISSDA Winter School
(Holiday Inn Des Moines Airport)
- 3-5 79th Annual Iowa County Engineers Conference
(Veterans Memorial Community Choice Credit Union Convention Center, Des Moines)

If you have any questions about the meetings listed above or would like to add an affiliate meeting to the ISAC calendar, please contact Kelsey Sebern at ksebern@iowacounties.org.

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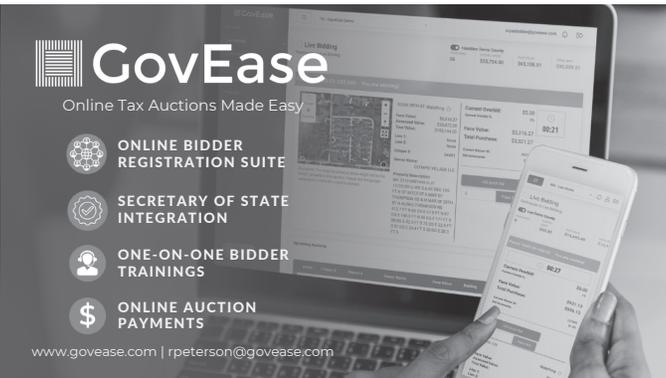
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Travis Squires | +1 515 247-2354
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 Garrett Pochop | +1 515 247-2359
 Matthew Gillaspie | +1 515 247-2353
 Will Braverman | +1 515 247-2344

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Paul Kruse
Senior Vice President,
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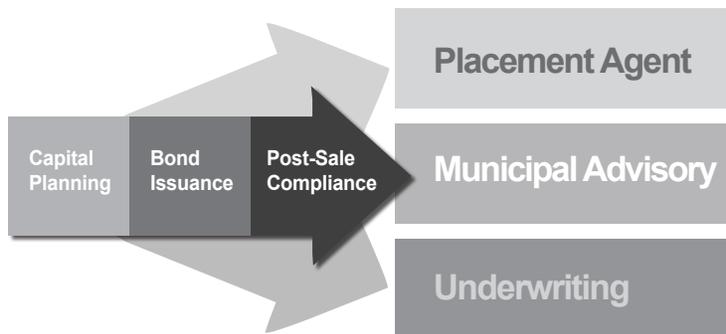
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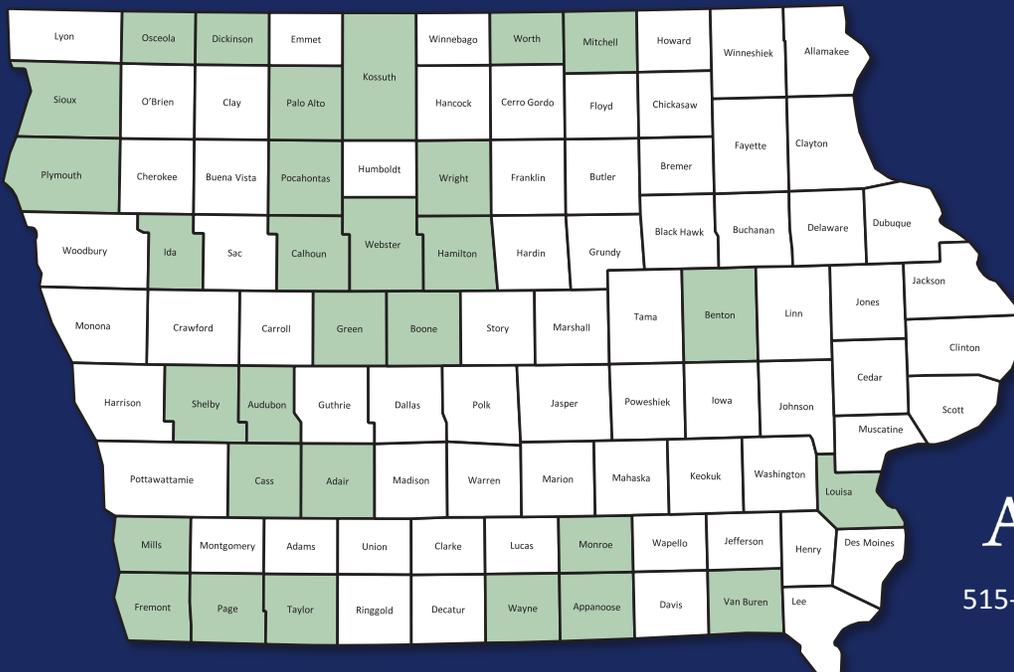
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