

Spring 2025



HUB News: New HUB Lead Navigator

Ernesta earned a Bachelor of Science in Human Services with a minor in Child and Family Welfare in 2013. With 20 years of experience in Human Services, her expertise spans case management, supervision of RCF, SCL, and HCBS homes. She also has a strong background in community health, serving as the first Community Resource Liaison for two emergency departments in Central Iowa.

Ernesta's passion for health equity and advocacy led her to her role as HUB Lead Navigator, where she supports our team of HUB Navigators, engages with program partners, and connects individuals to community programs and resources.



Iowa Community HUB Welcomes New Board Members

We are excited to welcome four exceptional professionals to the Iowa Community HUB Board of Directors. Each brings a wealth of experience and a deep commitment to advancing community well-being, public health, and workforce development across Iowa.



Allison Moses

With 20 years of progressive leadership in healthcare, Allison specializes in integrated healthcare, clinical practice transformation, and improving patient care. She leads the Integrated Health Team, providing oversight for Primary Care, Behavioral Health, Oral Health, and Revenue Cycle for Iowa's Federally Qualified Health Centers. She holds a Master of Science in Nursing with an emphasis on Executive Nurse Leadership. Her expertise in quality improvement and regulatory compliance will be invaluable in supporting the HUB's mission to enhance clinic-community linkages.



Carlos Garcia Rodriguez

Regional Director at Proteus, Inc., Carlos oversees the National Farmworker Jobs Program and Migrant Health initiatives. He earned his BBA and MBA in Taiwan, focusing his studies on intercultural communication and integrating projects across different cultures and languages. He has also served as an ESL and Spanish teacher for Chinese speakers. His leadership in nonprofit program development and multicultural background will help guide the HUB's efforts to expand access to healthcare and workforce training for underserved populations.



Haylee Bergeland

Hayl holds a Master's in Gerontology, graduate certificates in Conflict Resolution and Public Health, and a Bachelor's in Psychology, offering a comprehensive understanding of public health, human behavior, and biopsychosocial factors across the lifespan. She is a certified Community Resource Specialist, Victim Advocate, Grief Support Specialist, and Clinical Health Coach, with a focus on addressing health disparities, especially for individuals with dementia and those navigating mental health systems. Hayl actively contributes to community-based suicide prevention, and her vast mental health expertise will help the HUB enhance access to vital mental health resources.



Bobbretta M. Brewton

Bobbretta is a family equity and community outreach advocate in Polk County, Iowa, with a background in education, nonprofit leadership, and public health. She has led programs in food security, housing, and minority health at organizations like Primary Health Care, Inc. and Des Moines Public Schools. A dedicated AmeriCorps and VISTA volunteer, she has earned honors such as the Iowa Commission on Volunteers Hall of Fame Award. Bobbretta holds degrees in education, business, and public health from Northeast Missouri State, Drake, Upper Iowa, and the University of Iowa. She will help strengthen the HUB's community outreach creating a sustainable framework for chronic disease education.



Healthy Eating and Active Living (HEAL) Project Update

The Iowa Community HUB, in partnership with Grace Fitness, is making strides in community health through a SNAP–Ed Healthy Eating and Active Living (HEAL) grant from Iowa HHS. This initiative goes beyond individual behavior change, focusing on policy, systems, and environmental (PSE) improvements to create lasting impact.

Our cross-sector HEAL Coalition is dedicated to breaking barriers to healthy eating and active living, particularly for Black community members in the 50314 zip code. A Community Advisory Group (CAG), composed of residents with lived experience, ensures that our strategies reflect real community needs.

Eat Well

Key Achievements Include:

- ✓ Grace Fitness's implementation of the Diabetes Prevention Program and Better Choices, Better Health Program in the Des Moines area has supported 69 participants to date.
- ✓ 167 fresh produce boxes have been delivered to 47 Grace Fitness participants.
- ✓ A successful USDA and Iowa HHS site visit, recognized our work in mobilizing resources and amplifying community voices.

Looking ahead, we'll host a Community Asset Mapping Event in April 2025 to identify strengths and gaps in local health resources. Insights from this event will shape a two-year action plan focused on expanding physical activity programs and increasing access to fresh food.

By leveraging data from the HEAL Project, we aim to secure additional funding and policy support to sustain and scale these efforts. Together, we're making healthy choices the easiest choice!



Iowa Community HUB Selected for CDC Evaluability Assessment

The Iowa Community HUB (HUB) has been chosen by the CDC for an evaluability assessment as part of its initiative to enhance lifestyle change interventions (LCIs). Out of 100+ nominations, the HUB stood out for its efforts to improve physical activity and nutrition in the communities we serve.

This opportunity will allow us to collaborate with the CDC and ICF to assess and strengthen our strategies, including expanding access to LCIs, addressing social determinants of health, and enhancing financial sustainability. An in-person site visit in Spring 2025 will provide key insights and feedback to refine our impact.

Beyond this assessment, the HUB may also be considered for a case study or rigorous evaluation in 2026–2027, further advancing our mission. Stay tuned for updates as we embark on this exciting journey with the CDC!

Eat Well

Community Betterment Grant Helping Fund Community Food Project

Through start-up funding from Farm Credit Services of America and the United Way of Central Iowa, the HUB was able to plan and pilot a Community Food Project that began in February of 2024.

This project provides participants with a 12-pound box of fresh produce delivered to their homes each month while they are participating in their chosen health program.

With additional funding from the Prairie Meadows Community Betterment Grant, we have served 368 Iowans and 1,248 produce boxes have been delivered.

The additional funding from Prairie Meadows allows us to greatly expand the reach of this program addressing food and nutrition insecurity for Iowans statewide.



WALK WITH EASE
a program for better living



It's Time to Move Iowa!

We invite you to join the statewide 'Spring into Summer' physical activity initiative. The program follows the evidence-based Walk with Ease (WWE) program, but it has been customized to help you adopt and sustain a regular habit of physical activity



The programming in Iowa is coordinated in collaboration with Healthy Iowans and other state partners. **The 6 week online program enrollment window is from March 7th to March 21st** and will get you ready for an active and healthy summer!



Scan Code to Sign Up!



Key Features

- FREE Access to Online WWE Portal
- Self-Guided Programming
- Short Video-Based Lessons
- Self-Monitoring Tools
- Learn how to Build Healthy Habits

Organizations can pick standard start dates in the 2 week window to facilitate group interactions

For questions or interest in customized county or community versions, please contact moveyourway@iastate.edu



www.walkwitheaseISU.org
www.wellnessworksISU.org

Move More

Spring into Summer: Get Moving with Healthy Iowans!

Join the Spring into Summer initiative to promote physical activity across Iowa!

In partnership with Iowa State University, Healthy Iowans, and other state partners, we're sharing Iowa-specific **MOVE YOUR WAY** messages and offering free access to a customized Walk with Ease (WWE) program. Originally designed for older adults through a statewide arthritis grant, this version is now open to all Iowa adults looking to stay active.

Check out the flyer for details, and share with your networks!

We encourage you to share opportunities to **MOVE YOUR WAY** for broader engagement in your county or your worksite.

Additional information is on the ISU Wellness Works page
www.wellnessworksISU.org

Programming will be more impactful if we have everyone's help in promoting it and customizing it in ways that work locally.



Feel Better

APEX Students Anti-Bullying Campaign

Aleah Port and partner, Ella Rosic, are members of the Waukee Apex program who collaborated with Iowa Community HUB on the Community Health and Wellness Feel Better project to educate children about bullying.

Inside the Project: APEX

Through a collaboration between education, business, and the community, Waukee Aspiring Professional Experience (APEX) develops highly-skilled, adaptable, global innovators and leaders. Waukee APEX draws on the expertise of business partners, like the HUB, to bring real-world experience to high school. Through passion-based learning, authentic projects, and experiences, students add value to business partners while exploring career possibilities identified by economic trends within our metro area and state.

We presented to three fifth-grade classes, engaging approximately 80 students in our anti-bullying project. The children were enthusiastic and actively participated in creating posters to promote anti-bullying.

Students and teachers provided overwhelmingly positive feedback. The project equipped students with the knowledge and understanding of bullying and its consequences, inspiring them to share their insights and contribute to a positive learning environment.



NACHC 2025 Design Sprint Primary Health Care and Iowa Community HUB Arthritis Project

Primary Health Care (PHC) was awarded participation by the *National Association for Community Health Centers (NACHC)* in the 2025 "Design Sprint".

As part of this project, PHC chose the Iowa Community HUB as their partner to strengthen joint efforts in connecting patients to community programs and resources that address both health and social needs. Through this collaboration, we will use data-driven strategies to develop tailored solutions that improve referrals to the HUB and, ultimately, enhance patient outcomes, including better daily functioning and pain management.

Inside the SPRINT Project

- PHC Ames clinic will be working to identify patients who have ***Degenerative Joint Disease of the hip or knee***, screening their physical activity levels and referring them to the HUB.
- The HUB will then connect the referred patients to programs in the community to increase physical activity and improve symptoms.
- The goal is to increase appropriate referrals to the HUB and ultimately support better outcomes for patients' daily functioning and pain management.
- The CDC funded Arthritis Care Model Pilot Project through the National Association of Chronic Disease Directors working with the HUB and PHC Des Moines will be enhanced by the Design Sprint Project.
- The Design Sprint kicked off February 20th and will continue through June 2025.

Published - Caring for All: Upholding Nursing Ethics and Equity

Led by our HUB Board Chairman, Jimmy A. Reyes, Ph.D., the HUB has co-authored an article featured in the Iowa Nurses Association newsletter.

The article reinforces the ethical duty of nurses to provide compassionate, unbiased care to all patients. Grounded in the American Nurses Association (ANA) Code of Ethics, it underscores the commitment to human dignity and equitable healthcare. Federal regulations such as EMTALA and HIPAA ensure emergency care and patient confidentiality, while Iowa's nursing standards emphasize professionalism and inclusivity.

To better support vulnerable populations, the article encourages nurses to:

- Engage in "Know Your Rights" training.
- Partner with legal aid organizations.
- Utilize culturally responsive resources.
- Advocate for policies that expand healthcare access.

By fostering inclusivity and cultural humility, nurses uphold their ethical responsibilities and help improve health outcomes for all.

To read the article in full context visit:

<https://www.myamericannurse.com/caring-without-boundaries-embracing-inclusivity-in-nursing-practice/>

Iowa Community HUB

2024 End of Year Report



The Iowa Community HUB saw significant growth in 2024, achieving financial stability with a 221% increase in grants and contracts, securing funding from eight national and eight state sources. Labor costs remain the largest expense, with ongoing efforts to expand the HUB Navigation team.

Key accomplishments include:

- ✓ 3,500+ individuals enrolled in HUB partner programs across 225 workshops
- ✓ 1,248 produce boxes delivered to 368 individuals through the Community Fresh Produce Program
- ✓ 1102 participants engaged in Arthritis programs, with 49 new instructors trained
- ✓ ~550 healthcare providers made referrals to the HUB

Additionally, the HUB expanded cross-sector partnerships, launched innovative technology initiatives, and strengthened board leadership. With a strategic focus on sustainable revenue growth, supporting network partner programs, and enhanced community engagement, the HUB is well-positioned to drive lasting impact in 2025.

To see a more detailed report click [HERE](#).