

Maureen Sedlacek - IPHA President - 1998

Dear Iowa Public Health Association Members:

Congratulations on your 85th year anniversary! What a wonderful idea to create a document reflecting the history of the organization. Having worked over twenty-two years in public health, I have a very special appreciation for all the effort public health professionals put forth to improve the health and lives of the citizens of Iowa.



Being a member of the Iowa Public Health Association provides many opportunities to fulfill its mission of “advancing the public health profession through leadership, education, advocacy and collaboration”. As IPHA president, I was very honored to be selected to serve on the first Advisory Committee for the newly established University of Iowa College of Public Health. That truly was an exciting time in Iowa as both the University of Iowa and the University of Osteopathic Medicine and Health Sciences were developing advanced degree programs for public health students.

Also during that time public health advocates spent much time debating how the Iowa Tobacco Settlement should be spent. Opinions varied from advocating for use of the funds to pay for Medicaid and other established healthcare services in order to reduce needed state dollars to strongly advocating for use of the funds to develop and support tobacco *prevention* programs. We could hardly imagine it...to actually have funding to pay for prevention programs...what a novel idea!

During my tenure in IPHA leadership positions, I was fortunate to have the encouragement and support of the administration at the Iowa Department of Public Health to participate in the association activities. I also was surrounded by a fantastic team of Community Health Consultants who were there to provide much assistance with planning, developing and coordinating activities. Iowa Public Health Association members are such dedicated, tireless people! The friendships that I developed, the goals we were able to accomplish, and the experiences I gained all created memories that will last me a lifetime.

Since Dr. Eckoff is helping compile our memories, I have to share this little story. One night after attending an evening public health conference, downtown Des Moines, I walked to the parking ramp in which I *thought* I had parked my car. There I was, walking around and around...not many cars left and it was very dark...and I was not locating my car. Along came Dr. Eckoff in his pickup truck. Being the kind gentleman that he is, he stopped and asked me if I was having trouble. When I related that I couldn't find my car, he offered to drive me around until we located it a couple parking ramps south of where I was walking. I never would have found it. Bless you, Dr. Eckoff.

Again, congratulations and best wishes for a successful celebration!

Sincerely,

Maureen Sedlacek
IPHA President 1998-99