

Echoes From the Past

In reviewing past IPHA newsletters I am often struck by the wisdom and vision reflected in the President's columns. The one reproduced below by Jennifer Lightbody is from the March-April 1996 newsletter. It could easily have been written today. In 45 years of public health I don't think I have ever seen a time when there were so many cuts proposed at the federal, state, and local level at the same time. I have been through quite a few budget cuts, but the current proposals are more serious than I have ever seen.

Dr. Ron Eckoff, Past President of the Iowa Public Health Association

"Blessed are the flexible, for they shall not be bent out of shape!"

From IPHA Newsletter—March/April 1996

What a year! Continuing resolutions, government shut-downs, stalled reauthorization bills, snow storms, political standoffs, 20 percent funding, shrinking county tax dollars, increased personnel costs. Is this anyway to run a business?

You all probably join me in a resounding **NO!** We see the toll inflicted by these events. It's difficult explaining to employees that they must start waiting lists, limit visits, cut their hours, or even face layoffs due to uncertainties in funding. It is even harder to try to explain to a non-English speaking person that the VISTA worker who helps with immunizations was told to stay at home. We don't know when she'll be back.

I find it very frustrating to hear people joke about not needing "nonessential" federal workers. To the people we employ and serve on a daily basis, it is not a joking matter.

To the credit of you all, we quietly managed to get by...this time. Flexibility is a must when weathering day to day difficulties. On the other hand, maybe we should get "bent out of shape". We should let our public, policy makers and constituents know exactly what they will be missing when the funding for Public Health services is cut or eliminated completely.

This is our call to action. We must advocate for the common good, the idea that the fate of each of us is intimately tied to the fate of us all. This is Public Health.

*Jennifer Lightbody
IPHA President, 1995-1996*

We're #2!



Focused on identifying opportunities to improve, The Commonwealth Fund's *State Scorecard on Health System Performance* assesses states' performance on health care relative to achievable benchmarks for 38 indicators of access, quality, costs, and health outcomes. In the recently published Commonwealth State Scorecard, Iowa ranked number two overall and number one on the child health scorecard.

Iowa scored among the top five states on eleven different indicators. To learn more about Iowa's scores on health care including the Child Health Scorecard, [click here](#).