

Virology Newsletter

Summer 2021

COVID Vaccinations

As of 7/8/21 only 34% of our clinic population has been fully vaccinated against COVID-19. This is significantly below vaccination rates for persons 18 years and older in the state of Iowa (60.4%) and nationally (58.4%). We'd love to see all of our patients protected from infection.

This is even more important as a new version of the COVID virus, called the Delta variant, becomes more widespread. This variant is thought to be more contagious and cause more severe illness with increased risk for hospitalization and death. Currently, we believe the available vaccinations provide good protection against severe disease and remain one of the most effective methods to control this infection.

If you haven't been vaccinated yet, please consider doing so. This is not only for your health and safety, but also for those who cannot yet get vaccinated, such as children younger than 12.

If you still have questions or concerns about COVID vaccinations please contact us at 319-335-7605 and we'd be happy to talk with you.

If you would like to receive your COVID vaccination, you can now walk into most pharmacies without an appointment, including the UIHC Pomerantz pharmacy on level 2.

The vaccine is free for everyone.



Tips on Returning to Normal

With increased vaccinations and lower infection rates, many aspects of daily life have resumed. While this is exciting, it can also be stressful. Even if you've returned to your routine for awhile, roads are busier, spaces more crowded, and it can be quite an adjustment. It is normal to feel hesitant or anxious during this period of readjustment, so here are some things that might help:

- Before returning to an activity, practice visualizing the experience. Imagine sounds, smells, images, how it felt to do that activity before the pandemic. Practicing this can help refamiliarize your brain with these things before you are surrounded by them
- Start slow. Reincorporate one activity today. Another tomorrow or next week.
- Set time limits. It is easier to handle stress of being around people if you know when you get to go home.
- Build on activities you are already doing or never stopped doing, but do them with more people.
- Practice mindful self-awareness. If you notice you are already tense and uncomfortable, maybe it isn't the time to push your limits.
- Remember that others may be more tense or anxious as well. Practicing kindness and patience with others can help decrease tension for everyone involved.

PRIDE in the Park June 2021 in Burlington, Iowa with Ryan White Case Manager, Pam Bloomer-Pinkston, Mary Hightower, RHS and Carrie Helmick, ARNP (Pictured Right)



New Fellows!

Welcome Michael Olthoff!

Hello, I'm Michael (Mike) Olthoff. I'm excited to be joining the Internal Medicine department and to get to know everyone in the HIV Program! I did my medical school and internal medicine residency training at the University of Iowa, spent the last 2 years as a hospitalist in Cedar Rapids, and am now returning to the U of Iowa for my ID fellowship. In my personal life, I am an animal lover, with multiple pets at home. I also enjoy travelling, hiking/outdoor activities, running, and cooking. I look forward to working with all of you, and hope to continue the clinic's tradition of providing high quality care to all the patients that I work with!

Welcome Andrew Simms!

Hello! I'm Andrew Simms, one of the new ID fellows this year. I grew up in Des Moines and went to medical school at the University of Nebraska Medical Center in Omaha before coming back to Iowa for my residency. I love it here at Iowa and was excited to learn I get to stay for ID fellowship. I live in North Liberty with my wife and two cats. When I'm not in the hospital I enjoy basketball, hiking, disc golf, and board games. Looking forward to getting to know you all better over the next couple years!



PITCH Wellness Summit Postponed until Spring 2022

Who do we serve?

As the largest health care provider in eastern Iowa, the University of Iowa serves a diverse array of Iowans living with HIV. In 2020, the Iowa Department of Public Health reported that roughly 3,000 Iowans were diagnosed and living with HIV through the end of 2020. Currently, a quarter of these people (750) receive their HIV care from the University of Iowa.

In some ways, our patient population mirrors that of the state of Iowa. HIV disproportionately affects communities of color. Compared to non-Hispanic whites in the state, African Americans are roughly eight times more likely to be diagnosed with HIV and Latinx are more than three times as likely to be diagnosed. This is reflected in our patient population as well. While African Americans and Latinos make up roughly 10 percent of the state population, they represent 35% of our patient population and more than half of our patients who have been diagnosed with HIV since the start of 2019.

However, our patient population also differs in some ways from the state and national averages. For instance, almost 40 percent of our active patients are over the age of 55. The average age of our patients is 49, and the median is 50 years old. These numbers continue to trend upwards, which is a testament to the excellent care we provide to our patients, many of whom have been with us for decades. And it's why we work so hard to make sure our eligible patients enroll and remain on programs like Medicare. It's also a testament to the hard work our patients have done to stay healthy and remain engaged in care. Even during a global pandemic, 96 percent of you were fully retained in care in 2020, coming in for at least two clinic visits and/or maintaining a viral load that was undetectable. Because of this, we met our goal, with 90 percent of patients achieving viral suppression last year.

These numbers are astounding and all of us—whether we're patients, family, providers, nurses, or case managers deserve to feel proud of what we've done to achieve them. We remain inspired to do even better in 2021.

COVID-19 vaccines now available in PFP Level 2 Pharmacy

Patients can now receive the COVID-19 vaccine through the Pomerantz Family Pavilion (PFP) Level 2 Pharmacy. These vaccinations are available on a walk-in basis for individuals ages 18 and older.

Vaccinations are available between 8:30 a.m. and 5:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. You can reach this location by taking Elevator L to Level 2. Both first and second doses will be offered.

Providers can direct patients who wish to be vaccinated to the PFP Level 2 Pharmacy without placing an order.

Visit our website, uihc.org/covid-vaccine for more information about the vaccine, as well as details about how to schedule a vaccination if they are unable to be vaccinated through the PFP Level 2 Pharmacy.

Support Group:

Support group is continuing to meet monthly online on the first Wednesday of the month at 4pm. We've discussed topics around relationships, disclosure, and changes in medication among many other topics. As things continue to open up, we are looking at options for meeting in person as well.

If you have any thoughts or ideas as we plan this, please let us know! To join us online or to stay in the loop as we get in-person meetings going, please contact Daniel Czachura at daniel-czachura@uiowa.edu or 319-383-3621

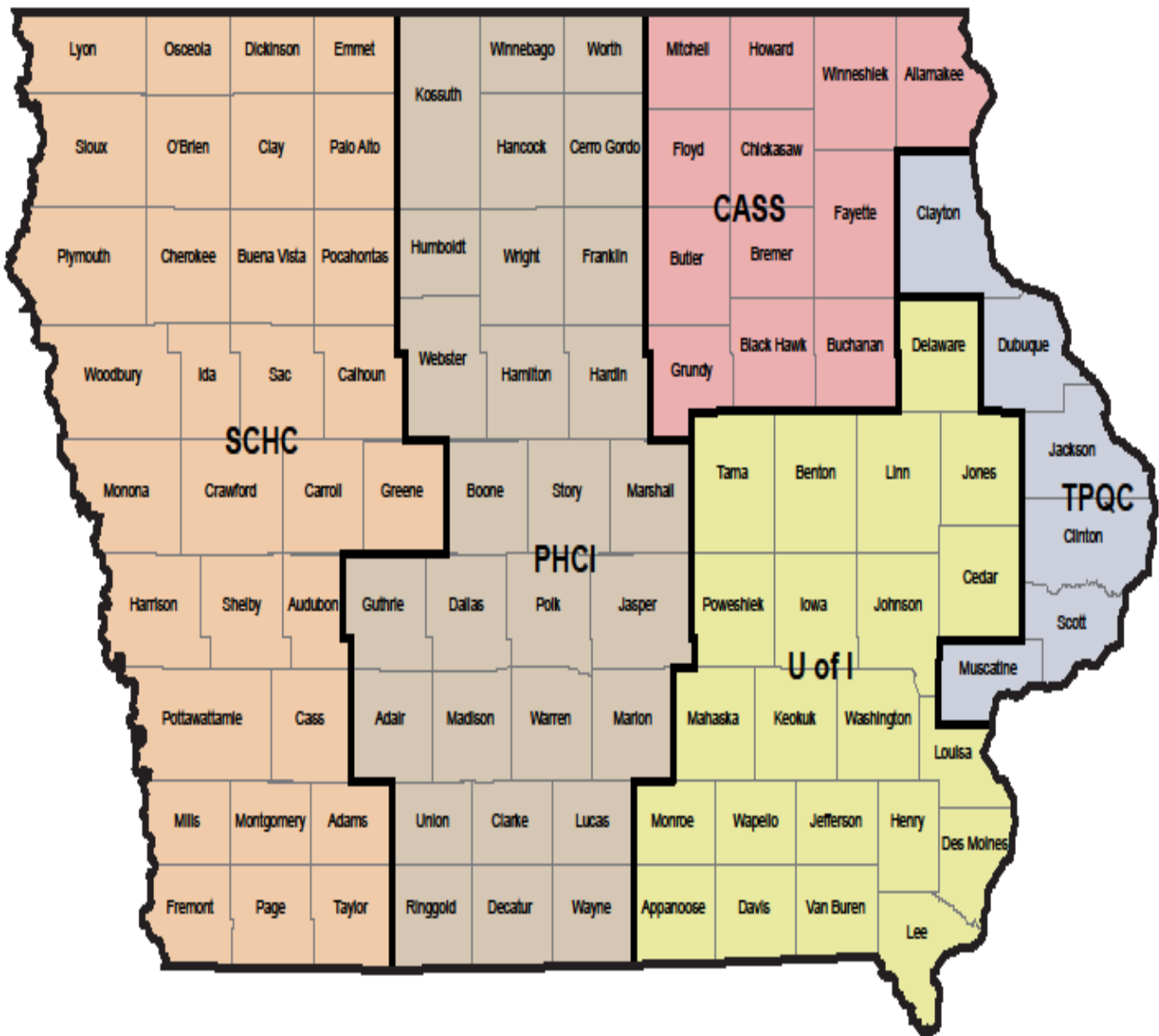
HOPWA

Having trouble maintaining your housing due to an emergent situation such as job loss or illness? You may be eligible for HOPWA assistance. Please contact the HOPWA provider in your area to see if assistance is available. UIHC currently offers assistance with long-term rental assistance (TBRA), short-term rent, mortgage, and utility assistance (STRMU), and permanent housing placement services (PHP) (deposit and/ or 1st months rent). If you live in the U of I area, contact:

Jennifer at 319-467-5662.



Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA)



<p>Siouxland Community Health Center (SCHC) 1021 Nebraska Street PO Box 5410 Sloux City, IA 51102 (712)-252-2477</p>	<p>Primary Health Care, Inc. (PHCI) 1200 University Avenue Des Moines, IA 50314 (515) 248-1517</p>	<p>Cedar AIDS Support System (CASS) 2101 Kimball Avenue Suite 2880 Waterloo, IA 50704-2880 (319) 727-2002</p>	<p>University of Iowa (U of I) 200 Hawkins Drive Iowa City, IA 52242 (319) 467-5662</p>	<p>The Project of the Quad Cities (TPQC) 1701 River Drive #110 Moline, IL 61265 (309) 762-5433</p>
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Iowa City/Coralville Transit Changes

Iowa City and Coralville have announced changes to the city bus systems that will be effective this summer! These changes are designed to make riding the bus easier and more convenient for more people.

Effective July 6, 2021:

-Elderly and disabled bus passes can be used any time! There will no longer be restrictions on use during peak hours.

-Passes and single ride tickets are good on Coralville and Iowa City buses. You will no longer need separate passes/tickets for the different buses.

Effective August 2, 2021:

-New routes with new names will begin. You may need to take a different bus or find a different stop than before.

More information and maps of the new routes can be found at <https://www.icgov.org/project/iowa-city-area-transit-study>

As always, you may ask to speak to a member of our social work team if you have transportation issues or need help understanding these changes.



CONTACT US

- To schedule a clinic appointment at UIHC, call **319-356-8133** and for Cedar Falls Outreach, call **319-356-8133**.
- For lab results or health related questions, please call Amber Phelps, MA at **319-335-7218**.
- For refill requests, have your pharmacy fax a request to **319-356-3004** or contact the Infectious Disease refill line at **319-356-8133**.
- For insurance questions, contact **Angela Speers** at **319-335-7309** or **319-333-8714**.
- If you have a medical emergency during the 8am-5pm work day, please try contacting Amber or your provider. If Amber and your provider are unavailable, you may call the hospital operator at **319-356-1616** and ask for the Infectious Disease doctor on call.
- For medication questions, contact Dena Dillon at **319-541-0335**.
- Sub-contracted Ryan White case management services now offered at Great River Medical Center in W. Burlington at **1-319-800-5430**, and River Hills Community Health Center in Ottumwa at **1-319-800-5561**.
- Social work questions and concerns should be directed to:
 - Malory Dreasler** at **319-356-1545** or **319-359-9181**
 - Katie Vodraska** at **319-353-7173** or **319-383-6563**
 - Jennifer Keeler** at **319-467-5662** or **319-499-7963**
 - Tricia Kroll** at **319-384-7307** or **319-383-1759**
 - Kari Vrban** at **319-467-5655** or **319-471-2123**
 - Sade Creach** at **319-335-7444** or **319-331-0031**
 - Viri Estudillo Gil** at **319-353-8951** or **319-930-9829**

If you have questions or would like more information about our HIV program please contact **Amber Phelps** at **319-335-7218**.