

# Virology Newsletter

Winter 2022

## **An ATTITUDE of GRATITUDE** *by Tricia Kroll*

It seems this note is overdue, but some would say better late than never. It's been a long 22 months since our intro to the COVID pandemic, its restrictions, remote work and zoom on the daily. It is incredibly difficult to put into words just how much our team and our colleagues around the state have had to adapt, learn, be flexible and expand our capacity. The amount of sickness spreading through our hospital and at times, our own families made it incredibly difficult to know how we would tackle the day to day, the deadlines and initiatives we committed to. I am beyond proud of the effort made by our team: filling in for one another, offering to help when sensing a co-worker is overwhelmed and showing up, whether virtual, in-person or remote. At the end of the day, our priority is always to provide the best patient care we can. I am impressed by our team's responsiveness and knowledge to ensure our patients have ongoing access to care and treatment despite whatever barriers come their way.

We have not acted alone! The clinic staff, schedulers, lab techs, pharmacists, our colleagues at the Iowa Department of Public Health, referring case management agencies, and of course our patients have kept us going and lifted us up at some of our weakest moments. I want to say *THANK YOU* for helping us all get through, it takes a Village!

Practicing gratitude can greatly improve our mental health and enhance our relationships with others. Taking the time to let someone know you appreciate them or sharing a simple *thank you* is hard to express at times and yet so important, especially now. I want to challenge each and every one of you reading this to practice gratitude.

### **Gratitude Tips:**

- \* Write a thank you note to someone that has helped you
- \* Keep a journal to track the joy (big or small) in your own life
- \* Fill a gratitude jar with words of encouragement for someone else
- \* Surprise a friend or a complete stranger with a random act of kindness

***May the new year inspire you to grow!***



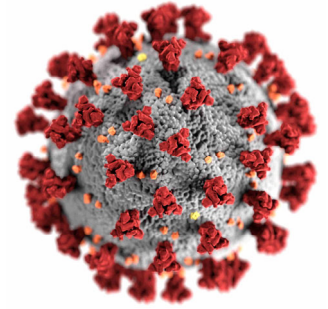
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## COVID Refresher

Precautions remain the same:

- Mask in public areas
- Wash and sanitize your hands frequently
- Social distance by staying six feet from others when possible
- Get vaccinated and get boosters when recommended
- Avoid large gatherings when possible



Please continue to stay informed/pay attention to what is going on locally as well as worldwide. With the new variants guidelines can change daily and we as a center cannot disseminate this information as quickly as it is coming out. It is important to remain engaged in this to protect yourself as well as others. We prefer to receive our information from the following websites:

Local: <https://uihc.org/2019-novel-coronavirus-covid-19>

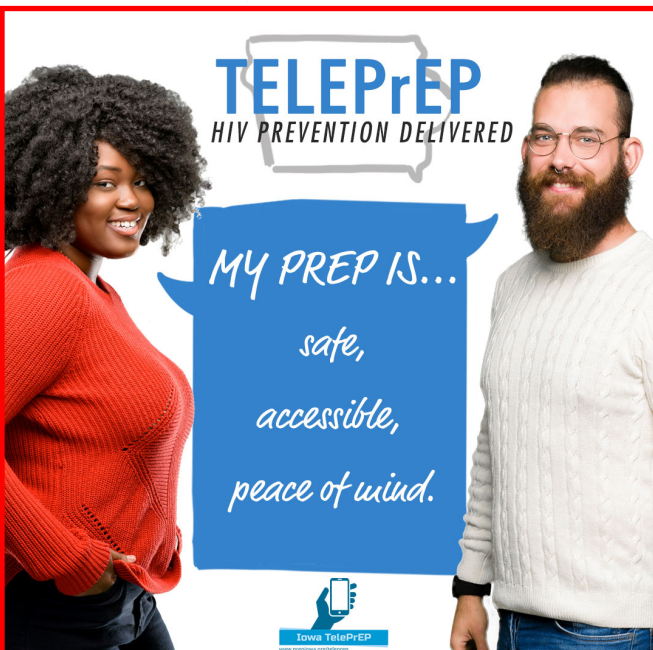
National/World: [https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/variants/about-variants.html?](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/variants/about-variants.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fvariants%2Fvariant.html)  
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If you have had a known exposure or have been diagnosed with COVID infection please call 319-384-9010 and inquire about your eligibility to receive monoclonal antibody infusion. This treatment, in most cases, will decrease the severity and shorten the duration of the illness.

**\*\*\*Please note that UIHC continues to have visitor restrictions and PPE requirements for anyone entering our facility. The latest information can always be found at <https://uihc.org/>. \*\*\***

### **Best Wishes, Angela!**

*From Field Benefits Specialist Angela Speers: It's amazing to think that this January has been 6 years that I've been with the Ryan White Program. It's also bittersweet, because I wanted to let you know that I've accepted an offer to be the TelePrep Coordinator at UIHC. My last day in my current position will be 1/28/2022. While I'm sad to leave our patients, I'm excited to continue the mission of stopping HIV in Iowa in a different capacity. It was an honor to work with each of you that trusted me with your benefits.*



PrEP is an important tool in the campaign to end the HIV epidemic. Please refer anyone in Iowa that you believe could benefit from PrEP. Iowa TelePrEP can help people with Medicare, Medicaid, private insurance and those who are uninsured get no or very low cost PrEP. We offer telehealth visits at the clients' convenience, and meds delivered to their home. Call or text 319-930-9093, visit our website at [prepiowa.org/teleprep](http://prepiowa.org/teleprep), or ask to talk to Dena in clinic.

PITCH IS PROUD TO PRESENT

# ANNUAL WELLNESS SUMMIT

APRIL 29 - MAY 1, 2022



[WWW.PITCHIOWA.COM](http://WWW.PITCHIOWA.COM)



# ANNUAL WELLNESS SUMMIT

## About the Summit

The Wellness Summit provides a safe, non-judgmental environment for Iowans living with HIV/AIDS. The Wellness Summit is one way to help reduce the stigma and isolation that many people living with HIV/AIDS feel. The Summit is a source of encouragement, provides educational opportunities, camaraderie and a sense of community.

## About PITCH

PITCH is a non-profit formed in 2006 supported directly by Iowans living with HIV.

**Mission:** PITCH exists to create an atmosphere where people living with HIV and our support system can unite, advocate, and assist other PLHIV for better health & wellness

## This Year's Theme

"Living Out Loud" encourages people living with HIV to live as their authentic selves when it is safe to do so.

**LIVING  
OUT  
LOUD!**

**FOR MORE INFORMATION,  
PLEASE CONTACT  
PITCHIOWA@GMAIL.COM**



## Virology Clinic Data Updates

Despite the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic complicating nearly everything for everyone, our clinic stayed busy in 2021. 771 patients completed more than 1800 appointments with our doctors, physicians assistants, and nurses, including 94 patients who were either new or returned to our program. We are pleased to say that health outcomes for our patients living with HIV continue to improve. More than 93 percent of our patients had an undetectable viral load at their last testing, meaning that they are doing a fantastic job with their medications. On top of that, more than 70 percent of our patients reported that they elected to get vaccinated for COVID-19, helping to limit the spread in our community and improving the chances that, should a breakthrough infection occur, their symptoms will be minimal. We want to thank you for everything you did in 2021 to keep our community safe and healthy, and to encourage everyone to get their COVID booster shot as soon as recommended. Hopefully, by this time next year, these efforts will have allowed our lives to get back to normal.

One area we think we can improve is our “no-show” rate. You may have noticed that our schedule seems rather full. It is! Please try to avoid cancelling on the same day as your appointment and let us know if you are not able to show up as this delays openings that can be used by other patients.

### 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 and in general serve as a safe, friendly space for people to be open about themselves. We are always welcoming new members, as well as thoughts and ideas people have for support group.

If interested in participating or if you have questions, please contact **Daniel Czachura** at [daniel-czachura@uiowa.edu](mailto:daniel-czachura@uiowa.edu) or **319-383-3621**.

### ***CLEAR is Back!***

CLEAR stands for: choosing life, empowerment, action, and results! The CLEAR program is open to persons living with HIV who are interested in increasing or enhancing behaviors that promote healthy living, practice ways to effectively face challenges of daily living, increase positive thoughts, feelings and actions as well as develop daily routines to stay healthy.

Participation in CLEAR will involve at least 6 one-hour weekly sessions with a trained CLEAR counselor. Depending on demand, there may be a wait list. To learn more about screening and the enrollment process please call **Daniel Czachura** at **319-383-3621**, or **Kari Vrbanc** at **319-467-5655**.

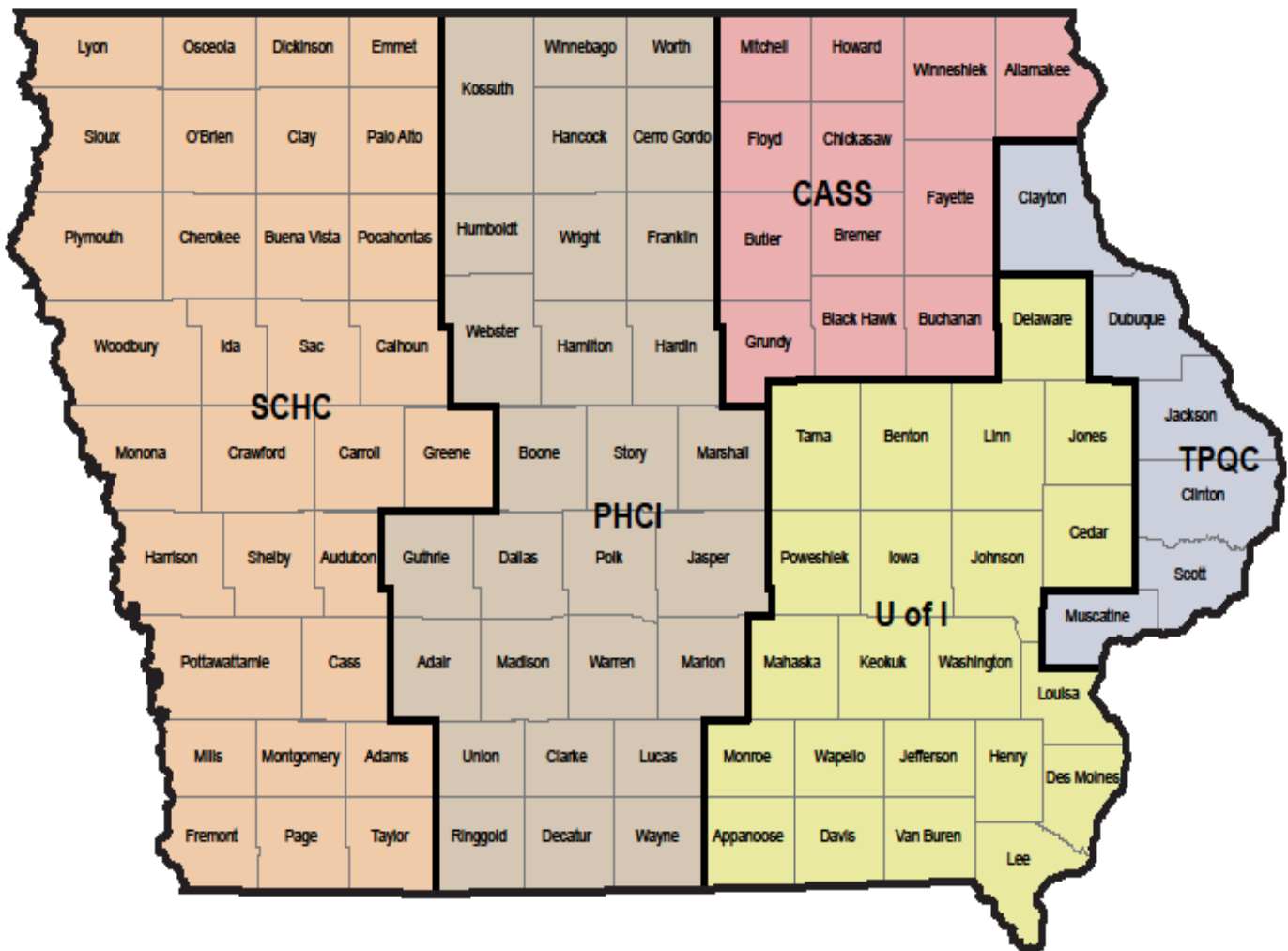
## Insurance Happenings

- As a reminder, ADAP insurance stayed the same for many. New this year, some members enrolled on BCBS using tax credits due to not being offered employer sponsored insurance. Please keep your case manager updated if your employment or income situation changes to keep this as up to date as possible. More information on how to file taxes with tax credits in 2023 to come at a later date. Additionally, some members changed from BCBS to Medica for tricky tax situations. Please remember to get a copy of your new insurance card to your case manager so this information can be updated with NSP and UIHC.
- Some Medica plans still show active for 3 months after cancelling them. Please remember to not use this insurance with outside pharmacies or provider offices so they do not bill the wrong insurance.
- If you switched Medicare Part D plans for 2022 you will be receiving new cards in the mail. Please update your pharmacy with this new information, and your case manager if you have one.

# 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)



Stouland Community Health Center (SCHC)  
1021 Nebraska Street  
PO Box 5410  
Sioux City, IA 51102  
(712) 252-2477

Primary Health Care, Inc. (PHCI)  
1200 University Avenue  
Des Moines, IA 50314  
(515) 248-1517

Cedar AIDS Support System (CASS)  
2101 Kimball Avenue  
Suite 2880  
Waterloo, IA 50704-2880  
(319) 727-2002

University of Iowa (U of I)  
200 Hawkins Drive  
Iowa City, IA 52242  
(319) 467-5662

The Project of the Quad Cities (TPQC)  
1701 River Drive #110  
Moline, IL 61265  
(309) 762-5433

## New walk-in clinic available to those seeking treatment for substance use

By Francie Williamson, Communications Coordinator, Department of Psychiatry

On Dec. 8, University of Iowa Hospitals & Clinics began offering walk-in visits to those seeking medication treatments for substance use disorders.

The clinic will be available from 1 to 4:30 p.m. each Wednesday at UI Health Care—Scott Boulevard, 3640 Middlebury Road, in Iowa City.

Andrea Weber, MD, MME, assistant director of the UI Addiction and Recovery Collaborative, says the goal of the clinic is to provide more access for those seeking to start medication treatments for substance use disorders.

“For people with substance use disorders, often times there’s a critical period where they’re ready to make a change or seek help,” Weber says. “This clinic might remove another barrier where people can come when they’re ready, and they don’t need to be in withdrawal or go to the emergency room to begin treatment.”

Weber says she, along with Benjamin Miskle, PharmD, a peer recovery specialist, and other medical learners will be at the Scott Boulevard location on Wednesdays to conduct evaluations, as well as prescribe a treatment regimen as needed. That might include buprenorphine for those with opioid use disorders and/or medications for nicotine and alcohol use disorders, such as naltrexone or acamprosate.

Patients also will be welcome to schedule follow-up visits at the Medications for Addiction Treatment (MAT) Clinic at either the main hospital campus in Iowa City or Iowa River Landing in Coralville.

For more information, call or text (319) 359-9072 or email [uiarc@healthcare.uiowa.edu](mailto:uiarc@healthcare.uiowa.edu)

## 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 Tracy Peters, LPN at **319-335-7605** or 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 Malory Dreasler at **319-356-1545** until new hire determined.
- If you have a medical emergency during the 8am-5pm work day, please try contacting Tracy, Amber or your provider. If Tracy, 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 in W. Burlington at **319-800-5430**, and River Hills Community Health Center in Ottumwa at **319-800-5561**.
- Social work questions and concerns should be directed to:

**Malory Dreasler** at **319-356-1545** or **319-359-9181**

**Viri Estudillo Gil** at **319-353-8951** or **319-930-9829**

**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**

If you have questions or would like more information about our HIV program please contact **Amber Phelps** at **319-335-7218**. For budgetary and contractual items, please contact **Rina Chaudhary** at **319-335-7437**