



Iowa Department of Public Health

Mary Mincer Hansen, R.N., Ph.D.
Director

Thomas J. Vilsack
Governor

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Memorandum

Date: 9/6/2007

To: Iowa's School Nurses

From: Mary Rexroat
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Subject: "Iowa Gets Smart-Know When Antibiotics Work"

Antibiotic resistance is rapidly becoming a serious public health concern. The number of bacteria resistant to antibiotics has been steadily increasing, largely due to the repeated and improper use of antibiotics. According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), children are particularly vulnerable; given the fact they have the highest rates of antibiotic use and have the highest rate of infections caused by antibiotic resistant pathogens. Therefore, the Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH), Center for Acute Disease Epidemiology (CADE) plans to promote "Iowa Gets Smart-Know When Antibiotics Work" to educate parents on the importance of using antibiotics correctly.

School nurses can play a very important role in the health of school children and be a major source of health education for parents. Therefore, IDPH is asking for your assistance with our educational campaign and would like school nurses to deliver the curriculum to parents this fall. The campaign will target **parents** of school-aged children 14 and younger, with the intent of improving their knowledge on appropriate antibiotic use. IDPH has an "Iowa Gets Smart-Know When Antibiotics Work" curriculum targeting parents that can be provided to parents to increase their awareness that antibiotics are ineffective in the treatment of most ear infections, colds, influenza and other viral illnesses.

IDPH is asking for school nurses to deliver the "Iowa Gets Smart" curriculum and become a resource for parents on antibiotic resistance. The school nurse would 1) agree to deliver 20-minute presentations to parent groups, 2) distribute Iowa's Antibiotic Resistance Task Force materials, and 3) provide pre/post feed back on the project and materials. IDPH hopes that school nurses will share our concern about antibiotic resistance and will be willing to serve as the essential link between public health and parents, by presenting the information to them.

If you are willing to participate in this project, please respond to Charlotte Burt by return email, preferably before August 1st 2006. If you have additional questions, please contact Mary Rexroat or Charlotte Burt.

Promoting and protecting the health of Iowans

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