



## Cerro Gordo County Department of Public Health

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MEDIA RELEASE

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### **Health Department Nurse Graduates from Prestigious Leadership Program**

(Mason City) – Karen Crimmings, RN, Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion Manager with the Cerro Gordo County Department of Public Health, graduated in September from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation’s Public Health Nurse Leadership Program.

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation’s Public Health Nurse Leadership program was a two-year leadership development program designed to strengthen the capacity of senior public health nurses to improve population health, address social determinants of health, respond to emerging trends in health and health care, influence policy, and lead collaboration in their communities. The class was comprised of 25 nurses from across the country.

The program’s goal was to support nurses who were ready to lead public health departments in building a Culture of Health in their communities. The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation’s Public Health Nurse Leaders program was open to registered nurses who hold leadership positions in governmental public health organizations. Their goal is to help the Public Health Nurse Leader’s develop their leadership skills and connections with key influencers so they can build and spread a Culture of Health.

During the course of the program Karen aligned with the Iowa Action Coalition to develop an initiative focused on driving Iowa towards a Culture of Health.

The Culture of Health initiative Karen set forth to accomplish was a perfect opportunity to bring key partners and stakeholders together in a concerted effort to engage communities across Iowa in preventing the onset of type 2 diabetes, and improving clinical outcomes for patients already diagnosed with the disease. “For decades I’ve observed diabetes slowly rob the health of family members, friends, and patients,” says Crimmings. “I instantly felt compelled to address the diabetes epidemic our nation, and more specifically Iowa, continues to face”.

“Karen is a great leader for our organization,” said Ron Osterholm, Health Director for the Cerro Gordo County Department of Public Health. “She is a strong advocate for policy and a system change, and is passionate in her work to improve the health and wellbeing of residents in North Iowa.”

Karen has been an employee of the Cerro Gordo County Department of Public Health for 15 years. She has held two management positions of advancing responsibility within the Cerro Gordo County Department of Public Health including Disease Prevention Service Manager, and most recently, the Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion Service Manager. Karen also serves as the Health Department’s Assistant Deputy Health Director. She has worked on the delivery of many public health

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programs and services, created new programs, and advised on public health policy. Her current duties include serving as program director in health related initiatives, leading complex population based programs that embrace community engagement, and cultivating community support toward important projects. Karen serves on the Iowa Action Coalition, Mercy Medical Center Breast Center Committee, Iowa Public Health Association Committee, Iowa Cancer Consortium Committee, and the Partnership for Tobacco Free Cerro Gordo County.

Karen was the 2014 recipient of the Iowa Public Health Hero Award from the University of Iowa College of Public Health, and the 2017 recipient of the 100 Great Iowa Nurses Award.

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Enc: Photo of Crimmings delivering final project presentation.