

IOWA
Department of Administrative Services

October 2025

Fabulous Fall Fanfare!



The shorter days of autumn offer a feast for the senses, from the crisp freshness of the air to the vibrant hues of orange, red, and yellow leaves on the trees and crunching underfoot. While the weather can be variable, with mild days interspersed with increasing rain and brisk winds, the overall feeling of fall is one of both beauty and preparation for the quieter winter ahead. Enjoy this issue of the *Healthy State of Iowa Employees* newsletter which highlights some of the activities we enjoy most this time of year, including opportunities to make a difference in the community.



Finding the Right Doctor

Your primary care provider probably knows your health situation better than anyone. Choosing a primary care provider (PCP) in your network that you feel comfortable with is one of the most important steps you can take to improve your health outcomes. Not sure where to begin? Explore answers to these questions and more, in *How to Find the Right Doctor*, from Wellmark. Blue Cross and Blue Shield.

Strength in Numbers: How Volunteering Builds Community and Friendships

Volunteering is more than just giving back. It's also an excellent way to strengthen your social connections and build community. In a world where it's easy to feel disconnected, volunteering provides a platform to meet likeminded people and form meaningful relationships. Whether you're volunteering with coworkers or working alongside new people, the shared experience of helping others fosters a sense of belonging.

Strong social connections are critical for mental and emotional wellbeing. Volunteering allows you to connect with others who share similar values and passions, creating bonds that can lead to long lasting friendships. The camaraderie that develops through volunteer work provides a support system that can reduce feelings of loneliness and isolation.

Volunteering also helps build a sense of community. When you work with others toward a common goal, it strengthens your ties to the community and gives you a greater sense of place and purpose. You become part of a collective effort that not only benefits others but also enriches your own life.

So, whether you're new in town, or just looking to expand your network, try volunteering. You'll meet neighbors, locals, professionals and leaders in your community, opening doors to new opportunities both socially and professionally. Visit Volunteer Iowa to find your next opportunity. You may even find lifelong friends!

Staff Spotlight



Name: Steve Garrison

Current Position: Health and Safety Division Administrator, Department of Inspections, Appeals & Licensing (DIAL)

Years with State: 2-½ years

My Healthy Choice: Yoga

Steve Garrison has worked for DIAL since April of 2023, and is a 200-hour certified yoga instructor who teaches multiple different types of yoga and strength classes. He has been a yoga instructor for about 10 months, but has been practicing yoga for nearly 10 years. Steve teaches two classes per week and says this activity has also helped his public speaking ability.

Yoga has helped Steve gain patience in difficult situations, and serves as both a mental and physical reset for him.

"My practice is important to me because the time is dedicated to clearing my mind and disconnecting. The 100-degree room forces me to focus on my breath and bring intentionality to my movement. Moving meditation helps me build strength while finding a balance between effort and ease," he says.

Steve says yoga helps him in other ways, too.

"With yoga, I can return to my breath for grounding. My stamina has increased, and I'm able to bike in extreme heat during RAGBRAI, and slow down and focus on movement when I go rock climbing."

Steve has a bit of advice for those looking for an activity to enjoy: "Start with something you're interested in and don't expect perfection. Consistency is key. The hardest part for me in starting any fitness journey was showing up and failing repeatedly. Block time on your calendar, show up, and then reward yourself afterwards with something like your favorite coffee to reinforce the habit."

Simple Cyber Security for Your Wallet

We all work hard for our money. Saving is an important part of building a strong future, but it's just as important to protect that money from scams and hackers. October is Cyber Security Month, making it the perfect time to make sure your savings are safe.

Plan for Security

Today, protecting your online identity and your money is just as important as budgeting or setting up a savings account. Scammers may send fake emails (called "phishing"), create false investment opportunities, or even pretend to be in a relationship with you ("romance scams"). These tricks are designed to get you to hand over your money. The best defense is to recognize the warning signs and stay alert. Remember, part of saving money is learning how to keep it safe.



Keep What You Earn Safe

If your account gets hacked, your money can disappear in minutes. That's why it's better to prevent problems before they happen. Here's how:

- **Use strong, unique passwords.** Don't use the same one everywhere—it makes you an easy target.
- **Turn on two-factor authentication.** This adds an extra layer of protection to your accounts.
- **Check your accounts often.** Look over your bank and credit card statements for anything that doesn't look right.

Just like we tell people to set aside money for emergencies, protecting your accounts is essential to making sure your savings are there when you need them.

Don't Forget Retirement Accounts

Scammers don't just go after your checking or savings accounts—they also target long-term savings like 401(k)s and IRAs. Even if you don't check them often, you should:

- use strong passwords.
- keep your contact information current.
- review your accounts regularly for unusual activity.

This way, you'll catch problems early and keep your retirement funds safe for the future.

Take Action

Here are a few easy steps to get started:

- Strengthen your passwords and turn on two-factor authentication.
- Regularly check your accounts for suspicious charges.
- Set up alerts so you'll know right away if something looks off.
- Store sensitive documents safely, both online and on paper.

This Cyber Security Month, spend just 15 minutes putting these tools in place. By staying alert and prepared, you'll make yourself a much tougher target for scammers and hackers.

Well-Being Webinars Offer Wealth of Information

Let's Talk Diabetes!

November is Diabetes Awareness Month, and the Department of Administrative Services (DAS) and Health and Human Services (HHS) are teaming up with Livongo for a live webinar with expert tips and support on managing diabetes.

Thursday, November 6, 2025
11:30 am - 12:15 pm
Location: Virtual via Microsoft Teams

Join the meeting now
Meeting ID: 223 143 743 828 9
Passcode: gp6AF3GB

Dial in by phone
+1 469-998-6046,,603197171# United States, Dallas
Find a local number
Phone conference ID: 603 197 171#

This informative session will highlight two valuable (free of charge) health programs from Livongo, available to eligible State of Iowa employees, spouses, and dependents enrolled in the Wellmark medical plan—the Diabetes Management Program and the Diabetes Prevention Program.Don't miss this opportunity to learn how Livongo can help you or your loved ones manage or prevent diabetes with personalized support and technology.

Know Your Numbers Webinar

Listen to a WebMD health coach to better understand what annual preventive lab values mean—cholesterol, blood pressure, blood glucose, and BMI. Learn to appreciate why biometrics are important and realize how lifestyle habits may affect results. Register now and watch later!

Take Action!

- Wherever you are in your mental health journey, the State of Iowa offers tools and benefits to support you and your family. In collaboration with Wellmark, DAS has three guides to assist you, your family, and those of you who work in a supervisory capacity:
  - *Healthy Everywhere Guide for Employees* - A guide to building better mental health at work and home.
  - *Healthy at Work Guide for Leaders* - A leader's guide that outlines important information to help you support employee well-being at work, at home and everywhere in between.
  - *Healthy at Home Parents' Guide* - A guide to supporting your child's mental health.

- SEHARC (State of Iowa Health and Recreation Committee) connects you with offers for discounted tickets to area events and hosts fun activities throughout the year. If you are interested in receiving information on these opportunities, complete this form to be added to SEHARC's mailing list or follow them on Facebook!

- Check out the DAS Employee Assistance Program (EAP) for a number of on-demand seminars covering various topics related to health and well-being. EAP also offers confidential resources at no cost to help employees and eligible family members address challenges.

- For more great information, be sure to check out these Wellmark publications - *Wellmark Blue Magazine* and *Blue at Work*.

To learn more about how Healthy Employees[SM] Powered by Wellmark is working with the State of Iowa to make the healthy choices easier for you,visit the Healthy Employees website.

The Healthy State of Iowa Employees quarterly newsletter is a cooperative effort between the Department of Administrative Services, Wellmark, and the State of Iowa Wellness Champions' Education and Engagement Committee. It's designed to help keep State of Iowa employees connected and informed of wellness opportunities around the state.

If you have questions or suggestions for future content, please contact us at healthyemployees@iowa.gov.