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**Iowans Recognized at the Iowa Cancer Summit for Radon Research, Cancer Screening, and Collaboration**

Coralville, IA – October 22, 2024 – Nearly 300 people convened in Ankeny this month for the Iowa Cancer Summit. While much emphasis was placed on Iowa’s high and growing cancer rates (Iowa is second-in-the-nation for cancer incidence, behind only Kentucky, according to the Iowa Cancer Registry), there was time to celebrate what Iowa is doing right in cancer control. Four Iowans were honored for their contributions to cancer control efforts at home and abroad.

**Dr. Bill Field (University of Iowa)** was posthumously awarded the George Weiner Cancer Control Visionary Award for his lifelong dedication to radon research. Radon is a naturally occurring radioactive gas that can cause lung cancer when it becomes trapped in homes and buildings. It is the second-leading cause of lung cancer after tobacco.



*Archive photo from the 2017 Iowa Cancer Summit when Dr. Bill Field won the 2017 Iowa Cancer Champion Award. L-R: Julie Weisshaar, Energy Association of Iowa Schools (Creston, IA), Dr. Bill Field, and Gail Orcutt, an advocate and retired teacher diagnosed with stage 4 lung cancer due to radon exposure who passed away in 2020.*

Iowa has the highest percentage of homes at or above the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) radon action level of 4 picocuries per liter (pCi/L). The state also has the distinction of being home to the late Dr. Bill Field, a world-renowned “giant” in radon research. Dr. Field coordinated the Iowa Radon Lung Cancer Study in 1993 while working at the University of Iowa. The study is the most comprehensive residential radon study ever conducted.

Dr. Field later founded the Occupational Epidemiology Training Program at the University of Iowa College of Public Health. He served on the EPA Science Advisory Board and Radiation Advisory Committee, was a presidential appointee on the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC)/National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) Advisory Board on Radiation and Worker Health, and he was very active with the American Association of Radon Scientists and Technologists (AARST).

Dr. Field was a friend and fellow advocate of Gail Orcutt, a retired teacher diagnosed with stage 4 lung cancer, which she and her doctors attributed to radon exposure. Dr. Field’s research, advocacy, and expertise eventually helped lead to the passing of the Gail Orcutt School Radon Safety Bill in May 2022.

Dr. Field was a thyroid cancer survivor and passed away from refractory mantle cell lymphoma on November 4, 2022, at the age of 68.

A group of people posing for a photo

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*Members of Dr. Bill Fields’ family pose with Iowa Cancer Consortium leaders to recognize Dr. Fields’ radon work with the 2024 George Weiner Cancer Control Visionary Award. L-R: Dr. George Weiner (Iowa City, IA), Katie Reasner (Coralville, IA), David Field (Iowa City, IA), Dr. Liz Field (Iowa City, IA), Dr. Mary Charlton (Iowa City, IA), and Kelly Wells Sittig (North Liberty, IA).*

**Dr. Holley Bermel & Katie Golberg, RN, (UnityPoint Health Clinics)** were selected as this year’s Iowa Cancer Champions for implementing a quality improvement project across UnityPoint Health for at-home colorectal cancer screening.

A group of women standing in front of a podium

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*L-R: Dr. Mary Charlton (Iowa City, IA), Dr. Holley Bermel (West Des Moines, IA), Katie Golberg, RN (Webster City, IA), and Kelly Wells Sittig (North Liberty, IA).*

The UnityPoint team partnered with Exact Sciences to send Cologuard at-home test kits to nearly 8,000 eligible patients. Of those, over 2,000 kits have been returned since July 2023, and 183 positive results were identified and followed-up with. By leveraging the health system’s electronic medical records and automating the process, Dr. Bermel and Ms. Golberg were able to reduce the workload on their care teams and improve patient outcomes.

**Katie Jones, MPH, (Iowa Department of Health and Human Services)** received the Spirit of Collaboration Award for connecting cancer control partners across the state for over a decade.

A group of women standing together

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*L-R: Kelly Wells Sittig (North Liberty, IA), Katie Jones, MPH (Des Moines, IA), and Dr. Mary Charlton (Iowa City, IA).*

Ms. Jones manages the Comprehensive Cancer Control Program at the Iowa Department of Health and Human Services. She works closely with the Iowa Cancer Consortium, cancer centers, community health clinics, managed care organizations, tribal agencies, and more to promote evidence-based cancer control initiatives in Iowa.

The Iowa Cancer Summit is held annually by the Iowa Cancer Consortium.

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About the Iowa Cancer Consortium

The Iowa Cancer Consortium is Iowa’s statewide comprehensive cancer coalition. As a leader in cancer control, the Iowa Cancer Consortium offers the state’s key cancer partners access to resources, expertise, and non-competitive collaboration across traditional boundaries for a bigger impact in cancer prevention, early detection, treatment, quality of life, and health equity. The Iowa Cancer Consortium also maintains the Iowa Cancer Plan, a blueprint for Iowans to work together to reduce the burden of cancer. Learn more at www.canceriowa.org.