COVID-19: Change
By Dr. Michele Dikkers, Chair of Clayton County Board of Health

Change. Ughhhh. Who doesn’t groan with the thought of change?

Kick offs from the 35-yard line…
The designated hitter…
The 3-point shot…
The seatbelt…
Child car seats…
The 5-cent deposit on cans…
No smoking in hotels and restaurants…
Getting married…
Having children…
Changing jobs…
Speed limit of 55 mph…
The loss of a parent or grandparent…

This year has seen a lot of change…

Learning how to work from home…
Staying home…
Cancelling plans, vacations, graduations, weddings, etc. …
Shopping online…
Curbside pick-up…
Hand sanitizing…a lot…
Physically distancing…
Wearing masks…
Mandatory seatbelt laws went into effect in the 1980’s. On average it saves 15,000 lives a year. Of the 37,000 people that die in car accidents every year, about half were not wearing a seat belt. It took everyone a little while to get used to wearing a seatbelt. Now it is habit. If I forget to put on my seat belt it feels weird, like I’m not secure or safe.

Wearing a mask takes getting used to as well. The numbers of COVID-19 cases in Iowa have been climbing. The best way to protect yourself and others is to wear a mask, physically distance and wash your hands.

People still die in car accidents. But the numbers are smaller than before we wore seatbelts.

People will still die of COVID-19, but the number could be smaller.

In the first 6 months of this year 135,000 people have died of COVID-19. (Approximately 3 times more than died of influenza last year).

In the 12 months of 2017, 37,000 people died from car accidents. Without seatbelts, this number could have been as high as 52,000.

Imagine the number of lives we could save if everyone wore a mask.

Charles Darwin once said, “It is not the strongest species that survive, nor the most intelligent, but the one most responsive to change.”

We are in this together.