Indiana State Department of Health
"Working for Hoosier Health – a Lifetime Investment"

Express

A Bi-w[illegible] Public

Friday, July 6, 2001

Rural Health Association Conference Attracts 190 to Event Packed Calendar, June 13-15

Motivational speakers exercised a variety of approaches to help heighten creativity in this year's crop of attendees at the Rural Health Association Conference, held at French Lick, June 13 -15.

Keynote speakers Ben Glenn, Donya Lester, and Val Schott each demonstrated through personal accounts how, by sheer force of will, they or someone close to them was able to transcend adversity and rise to attain their vision of success.

Ben Glenn, a chalk artist, drew, smudged, and blended brilliant colored chalk on cloth to produce an artistic creation while he talked of how he struggled to overcome dyslexia and taunting endured through his early school years. He told how he worked to develop basketball skills leading to a college basketball scholarship before injury ended an athletic career.

Undaunted, Glenn spoke of awakening, and developing a combination of artistic and speaking skills that he has perfected, through dint of hard work, to lead to a current annual speaking schedule of 300 engagements per year. His finished creation, a lively, stylized landscape, produced during his talk, was purchased by an attendee with a high bid of $350, for benefit of the Rural Health Association.

Donya Lester, executive secretary of the Purdue Agricultural Alumni Association, wove family stories into her speech, "Championship Choices." She spoke of her husband, Daniel Gwin, a paraplegic, making his "championship choice" immediately following an accidental fall from a grain truck while adjusting a tarp.

As he lay on the ground with legs paralyzed, "he vowed," she said, "that

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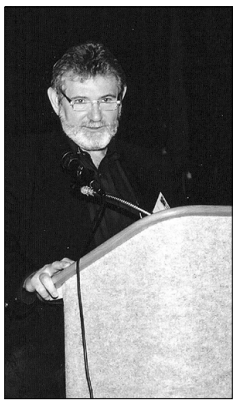
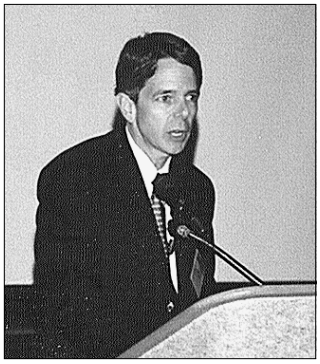
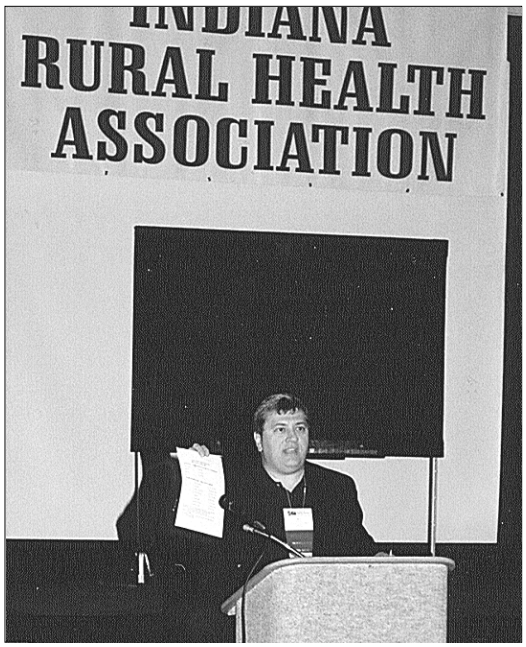


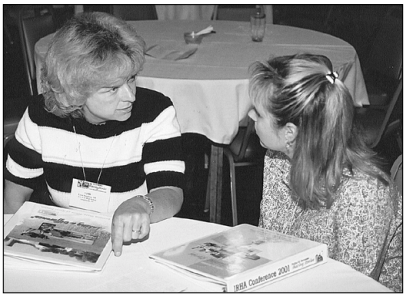
KEYNOTERS ENLIVEN AUDIENCES: Ben Glenn (left) does it with chalk drawings; Donya Lester (below left) with family stories; Val Schott (right), presient elect of the National Rural Health Association, with tales of success; and State Health Commissioner Greg Wilson, M.D. (below right), with enthusiasm for cooperative progressive change.

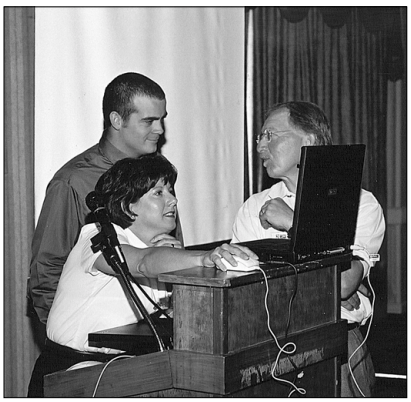


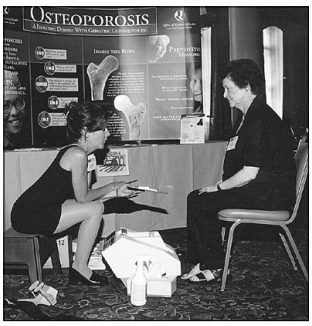
RURAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION President Roy Geib (below left) welcomes conference attendees.Linda Miller, R.N. (below, upper right) displays one of the the many hats she donned during her talk on her varied and unusual roles as a public health nurse. Hazel Katter (right, bottom right), director of the ISDH Local Liaison Office, chats with Rural Health Association Treasurer Carol Hegel.

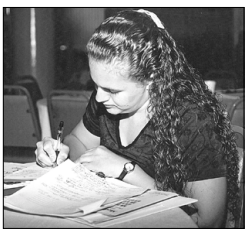


More 2001 Rural Health Conference Memories . . .

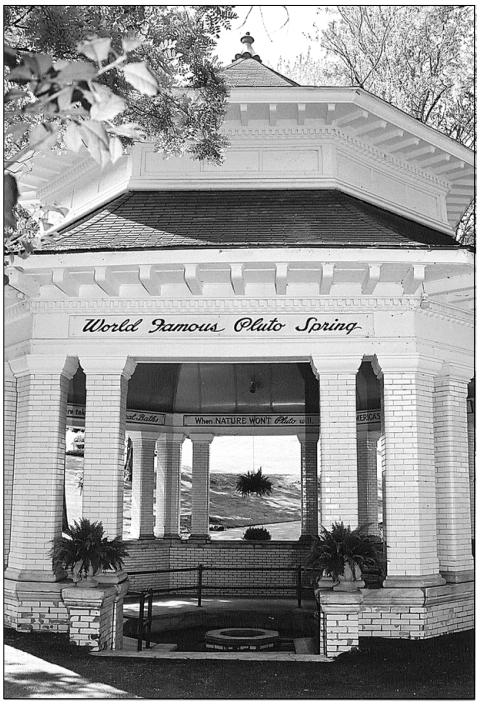








All Rural Health Conference photos are by Daniel Axler



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no matter what it would take, he would continue his career as a farmer,"—and he has.

Approximately 190 people, including speakers, participated in the conference, according to Hazel Katter, director of the ISDH Local Liaison Office.

Conference attendees included representatives from local health departments; rural clinics and hospitals; Indiana University's Schools of Medicine, Public Health, Optometry, and Nursing; and Purdue University's CARe Project and Schools of Nursing and Agriculture.

Among the workshop topics were: Reimbursement Issues for Rural Health Clinics; Telemedicine Projects for Medical Needs; Integrating Family Practice Medicine and Behavioral Science in Training and Practice; Innovative Uses of Public Health Resources for Rural Health Care; Managing Chronic Disease in a Rural Setting; Delivery of Home Health Care in a Rural Setting; Preventing Dental Disease: A Rural Health Priority; Partnerships in Rural Health; Primary Eye Health Care in Rural Health Clinic Settings; Living Well with Arthritis; and Leadership for Health Care Delivery in Rural Communities.

Adequate HYDRATION Helps Keep Disease At Bay

The image of the prospector lost in the desert, gasping for water through parched, cracked lips may be a classic illustration of dehydration, but it's a far cry from the pervasive dehydration found in the general population. Dehydration is so common that the average person can experience chronic dehydration, day in and day out, for years, totally unaware of it or its connection to chronic illnesses like migraine headaches, angina pectoris, osteoporosis, and obesity.

The reason? "Thirst in adults is not a good indicator of the body's need for water, " said Martha Mendez ISDH's Diabetes Program nurse. "As adults age," she says, "we lose our thirst mechanism. Without thirst, we think we don't need water."

To the contrary, Mendez said, "Some deaths in nursing homes are premature because residents become dehydrated, refusing water, primarily because they are not thirsty. " She adds, "Dehydration heightens the symptoms of diabetes, cardiovascular problems, stroke, chronic fatigue, emotional stress, or headache, which can easily be misdiagnosed. Misdiagnosis can result in the prescription of expensive pharmaceutical solutions, often with toxic side effects, which may control the symptoms but not treat what all too often is the root cause – dehydration." Dehydration can prevent the body's complex systems from functioning efficiently, or even adequately, resulting in stress or disease.

Judy Rose, ISDH Community Nutrition Program, said, "Proper hydration, combined with adequate nutrition from a balanced diet and exercise, holds the best promise for good health."

"Dehydration can happen faster when out in sunny hot weather, especially if physically active,"she added.

Surprisingly, many people think they are adequately hydrated because they drink an assortment of juice, coffee, tea, and soft drinks throughout the day. Mendez says, "Drinking coffee and soda is no substitute for water because the concentrated sugars and other chemicals – like caffeine – in many of these drinks act as diuretics, drawing water from the body's cells, rather than hydrating them."

"There is no substitute for water," she says.

"I've heard many people refuse to drink water because they say it's tasteless, or that they don't like the taste of chlorine used to treat it," Mendez added. "Filtered water is one solution."

"High efficiency filters that can be easily attached to a home's water faucet or water supply lines can remove the unpleasant taste of chlorine, as well as lead, mercury, and even traces of agricultural pesticides and herbicides," she said. She also suggested adding lemon or lime juice to make water more palatable.

F. Batmanghelidj, M.D., a doctor living in the U.S. who was educated in Scotland, has dedicated much of his medical career to the research and promotion of the life-preserving, disease-preventing properties of water.

In his book, *The Body's Many Cries for Water*, in which he describes how water aids the body's many functions, Dr. Batmanghelidj recommends drinking eight to ten glasses of water—approximately two and a half quarts—of water daily, to which have been added one quarter teaspoon of sea salt per quart to assure the proper electrolytic and metabolic functioning of the digestive process, the cardiovascular, circulatory, and nervous systems. He says, sea salt, available in most health-food and grocery stores, assures that the body gets needed trace minerals, which are unavailable in mined salt. Without adequate salt in the diet, he says that the body may find needed salt by leaching it from the bones, contributing to osteoporosis.

"One way to help assure that one drinks enough water is to have a daily supply available on the desk or work space," said Mendez.

— David Pilbrow

HYDRATION is one of many topics of professional interest shared by Judy Rose (left), director of the ISDH Community Nutrition Program, and Martha Mendez (right), Diabetes Program nurse.

WATER ON THE DESK, in the work space, makes drinking water convenient throughout the day.

Photos by Daniel Axler

CDC, Dental Associations Recognize ISDH Oral Health Program for Indiana's Fluoride Dispensing Accuracy

Indiana is one of only four states where 90 percent or more of its municipal water fluoridation units have been documented to maintain fluoride levels within the narrow tolerances recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the American Dental Association, and the Association of State and Territorial Dental Directors.

Last month these organizations jointly presented a Certificate of Appreciation and a State Fluoridation Quality Award to Mark Mallatt, D.D.S. in recognition of the water fluoridation program administered by the Indiana State Department of Health for Indiana. Dr. Mallatt is director of the ISDH Oral Health Program.

Dr. Mallatt says that monitoring and surveillance administered by the Oral Health Division, with support of the ISDH laboratories, is largely responsible for Indiana's success.

Dan Cain, who supervises the ISDH fluoride surveillance program, says a three-pronged monitoring program requires each fluoridation site to monitor water daily with an on-site test kit.

Each site also monitors appropriate usage by comparing the quantity of fluoride added to a measured volume of the water. The ISDH labs perform the third check on weekly water samples mailed by each fluoridation site.

DR. MARK MALLATT (far left)**,** director of the ISDH Oral Health Program, with (left to right) fluoride inspection staff Daniel Cain (holding the award), Jim Powers, and Fred Finney. Team member George Marks is not shown.

Photo by David Pilbrow

"When testing reveals that fluoride in a sample falls outside the range of 0.7 to 1.2 parts per million, then adjustments are made on site or with the assistance of the Oral Health field staff," said Cain. "Field staff can get to the site within a few hours to evaluate what adjustments or repairs are needed to bring the fluoride back into the desired range."

Dr. Mallatt said, "Many states mandate that fluoride levels be monitored, but they don't have surveillance programs in place to confirm that their regulations are observed."

Cain reports that some state health departments only require monthly test samples, but he believes weekly tests are better because potential problems can be detected and addressed sooner.

"A local water superintendent is a jack of all trades," added Cain. "He has a lot of things to do with water that he's got to worry about. He's got to put chlorine into the water. When water lines break, he's got to get those fixed. He's got to take care of well pumps and high service pumps in water plants."

"It's hard to find one of those people who does not need our expertise sometimes. However, there are some exceptions; we don't have to do very much for Indianapolis where they have more specialists," Cain said.

"The importance of holding fluoride within tolerances is to assure sufficient fluoride to prevent tooth decay, but not so much as to be toxic or cause fluorosis of teeth, which can cause pitting and erosion of tooth enamel," said Mallatt.

— David Pilbrow

Lab Staff Monitor Water Fluoridation

YOGINI PATEL runs fluoride tests at ISDH labs.

Photo by Daniel Axler

Chemist Yogini Patel, together with Chemist Supervisor Bharat Patel, are the ISDH laboratory staff primarily involved with the ISDH fluoride water surveillance program.

While other lab staff assist by shipping and receiving water samples, Yogini Patel and Bharat Patel are responsible for accurate testing of the weekly water samples submitted by approximately 265 municipal water plants and 50 schools in Indiana.

Although unusual, Yogini Patel says that whenever a sample falls outside permissible tolerances, she or Bharat Patel will contact Dan Cain in Oral Health to get to the bottom of the problem in a hurry. She takes care of routine submission of the sampling reports to the Oral Health Program.

Indiana State Department of Health **Express**

The *Indiana State Department of Health Express* is a bi-weekly publication for ISDH employees and stakeholders. To submit news items, call (317) 233-7336 or send information to: ISDH Express, Office of Public Affairs, 2 N. Meridian St., Section 2E, Indianapolis, IN 46204-3003. Inquiries should be directed to:

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NewsLink

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Nurse Leaves 39-Year Service Legacy to Dubois County

Karen Craig, retiring administrator and public health nurse in Dubois County, is a health care professional who has seen many evolutionary changes in pubic health during her 39 years at the Dubois County Health Department. In fact, she initiated many of them.

On Tuesday, June 19, Dubois County Health Officer Thomas Gootee, M.D. presented Craig with the State Health Commissioner's Award, which had been sent from State Health Commissioner Greg Wilson, M.D. for the occasion of a reception held in honor of Craig.

Only days before, Craig was recognized by the county commissioners in appreciation for her long career serving the residents of the county under five different health officers.

When Craig started her career in June of 1962, she was the health department's only employee. In those days before the health department administered immunization programs, and before most school systems provided their own nurse, she spent much of her time at the schools where she weighed students, administered eye exams, performed scoliosis screenings, and showed health education films.

She says that she was supposed to administer eye exams only to a limited number of students, but there were so many exceptions referred for testing, that she began to give annual eye exams to every elementary school student in the county's 27 grade schools.

"Without the help of kids' moms who volunteered to hold cards over the eyes of students while I worked with the test target, we wouldn't have been able to do all those tests. We had a good group of volunteers," she said.

Craig says her career helped build strong arms. "On many an evening I hauled a 35-pound 16 mm film projector down the stairs from the health department's second floor offices to take to a club meeting. She would visit private homes where members of one of the county's numerous home economics clubs had invited her to show health education films to a gathering of its members.

KAREN CRAIG, R.N. (right) holds State Health Commissioner's Award presented to her, on behalf of State Health Commissioner Gregory Wilson, M.D., by Dubois County Health Officer Thomas Gootee, M.D. (left) at June 19 reception.

Craig recollects, "This was a time when there were few educational films on television, and no computers or Internet with all its educational resources. I received many requests."

Craig says she started providing immunization inoculations to children in a 1966 Head Start summer program, and began offering immunizations at the health department offices when rubella vaccinations were required a few years later.

A sanitary engineer was added to the staff in 1970 to monitor septic systems and commercial food establishments. In 1971, Craig began offering county-wide diabetes screenings when a company made a testing machine and test strips available on a promotional basis. Now such screenings are performed at one of the county's two hospitals.

In 1976, the year after being appointed the health department's administrative director, Craig began administering childhood immunizations. Today, Dubois County's immunization rate has been running at 91 to 95 percent for the past three years. Asked how this was accomplished, Craig said, "It's due to setting appointments, to good advance preparation, by being able to get parents and children in and out of the office in 20 minutes, by having established a reputation for being friendly and courteous, and by not turning down walk-ins."

From the three-person staff of 1975, Craig says staff increased gradually in response to the workload and demand for services. Today, health department staff number 22 and operate out of offices in the courthouse annex.

Early on, she says her job was more like that of a caseworker because she could see that a person had need for a number of things. For awhile, she provided physical therapy in stroke victims' homes, now provided by the hospitals.

Since 1977, Craig says the health department has operated a home health agency to provide care and visits to Medicare and Medicaid eligible shut-ins; she says this type of program is operated by no more than two other health departments statewide. Craig also got the WIC program started in 1988, which is still operated by and at the health department's offices.

She says, of all her involvements, she especially liked working with families to assist with arranging services to care for children with disabilities.

LOCAL HEALTH OFFICERS (seated right) are among those gathered in Indianapolis on June 21 for a presentation by State Health Commissioner Greg Wilson, M.D. (upper left).

Dr. Wilson discussed the State Health Department's priorities and the role he hopes local health officers and health departments will play.

Photo by Daniel Axler

T.V. News Reporter Nets State Award for Local Public Health Coverage

In appreciation for the work of local WTWO TV-2 news reporter Jon Swaner, the Vigo County Health Department nominated Swaner for the Media Award of the Indiana Public Health Association.

Swaner was chosen as the winner of this year's award at ceremonies during the IPHA's annual conference, held in West Lafayette.

The nomination of the reporter, prepared by Joni Burke-Foulkes, health educator at the Vigo County Health Department, praised Swaner thus: "Timing is everything in public health, and Jon can be counted on to cover stories quickly, accurately, and objectively. He uses public health situations to educate the community, not as a sensationalized hook. Jon does excellent research, checks the facts, and calls back for clarification. He uses positive terms like "fixable" or "preventable" with follow-up telephone numbers provided for the public. Jon is always careful to accurately present the facts. I trust him. This is why I feel Jon Swaner is deserving of an IPHA 2001 Award."

IPHA makes awards in a number of categories, which will be covered in a subsequent issue of *NewsLink*.

The *Nation's Health* Cites Vigo H.D. For Public Health Week Activities

The *Nation's Health*, the American Public Health Association's newspaper, has recognized the Vigo County Health Department's extensive National Public Health Week activities with a summary news article. Vigo County apparently is the only Indiana local health department to have received such coverage.

The *NewsLink* was intrigued with how this came about, so we contacted Joni Burke-Foulkes, the department's Health Educator.

Burke-Foulkes says that all she did was fax a summary of the department's Public Health Week activities to the *Nation's Health*, and voila, the article appeared.

She also mentioned, in a related account, that a local TV news reporter who covers the department's activities, as well as other important public health issues, received the top media award at this year's Indiana Public Health Association conference awards presentations (see article, above).

As an aside, Burke-Foulkes said the health department has an excellent relationship with public officials in her county.

She said that's both because the health department works closely with local officials to provide needed health services and because the department also works at maintaining a positive relationship with the news media to keep the public informed about those activities.

Allen County Nurse Presents to National Immunization Conference Workshop

KOCK presents at immunization workshop.

Melanie Benge Kock, the public health nurse for the Fort Wayne–Allen County Health Department, presented at a workshop session of the National Immunization Conference held in Atlanta, May 30.

Koch discussed the educational program she created in the summer of 2000 for local Head Start staff, entitled "Head Start: Immunization Overview."

The state of Indiana is now using Koch's PowerPoint presentation to educate Indiana Women's Prison inmates and to encourage them to make informed decisions regarding future immunizations for their children.

Koch says she designed her conference presentation with the hope that her educational work might serve as a model to encourage attendees to increase immunization awareness among lay people in various community settings.

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