



Welcome from the State Health Commissioner



State Health Commissioner
William C. VanNess II, M.D.

Welcome to the latest issue of the Indiana State Department of Health (ISDH) newsletter! As I write this, the weather is turning cooler and I'm reflecting on what a busy summer it has been. I have been touring the state discussing one of our top priorities, infant mortality.

The infant mortality rate in Indiana is one of the highest in the nation and it is our goal to move the needle on this serious problem. Infant mortality is the number of infant deaths per 1,000 live births during the first year of life and it is widely considered the barometer by which the health of a population is gauged. In 2011, the Indiana infant mortality rate was 7.7 per 1,000 live births and the African-American rate was 12.4. We can do better. I have met with several partners over the past few months and will continue to meet with more to work on solutions to address this disparity. September is Infant Mortality Awareness Month and I encourage you to read the article on the next page for more information.

In the 2012 legislative session, the Center for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Education (CDHHE) was established by House Enrolled Act 1367 and is the newest division at the State Health Department. Located on the campus of the Indiana School for the Deaf, the CDHHE will bring State agencies, local early intervention and educational entities and other stakeholders together to create a seamless system of services and other re-

sources for children who are deaf or hard of hearing and their families. Read the article on page 5 for more information.

The State Health Department has some of the hardest working people I know. We recently introduced a new peer-nominated employee recognition program.

The I.S.D.H. H.E.R.O. Award (Helping Employees Recognize One another), recognizes employees for outstanding efforts. This employee recognition program features a H.E.R.O. each month. Shelly Matheson, shown to the right, is our September H.E.R.O.



I hope you enjoy this issue of the newsletter as it features some of the work that the State Health Department has been doing.

Regards,

William C. VanNess II MD

William C. VanNess II, M.D.
State Health Commissioner

Stay Connected with the State Health Department...



Reducing Infant Mortality is Priority of State Health Department

In 2011, 642 infants died before celebrating their first birthday in Indiana. September is Infant Mortality Awareness Month and State health officials want Hoosiers to be aware of the high rate of infant mortality in Indiana and what they can do to help.

Infant mortality is defined as the number of infant deaths per 1,000 live births during the first year of life. It is widely considered the barometer by which the health of a population is gauged. In 2011, the Indiana infant mortality rate was 7.7 per 1,000 live births. The African-American rate in Indiana was 12.4. During the same year, the U.S. infant mortality rate was 6.1.

Limited access to health care, lack of prenatal care, limited physical activity and diet and nutrition are factors that can contribute to negative pregnancy and birth outcomes, which can lead to increased infant mortality rates.

Prior to pregnancy, a woman should talk to her doctor about preconception health care and the steps that she will need take to ensure she is healthy before becoming pregnant. This includes taking 400 micrograms of folic acid every day because if a woman has enough folic acid in her body at

least one month before and during pregnancy, it can help prevent major birth defects of the baby's brain and spine. As soon as a woman finds out she is expecting, early and continuous prenatal care can help identify conditions and behaviors that can result in low birthweight babies, such as smoking, drug and alcohol abuse. Once the baby is born, having a safe place for the baby to sleep on its back will help protect him or her from Sudden Infant Death Syndrome, suffocation and accidents during sleep.



The State Health Department is hosting an Infant Mortality Summit on November 1 to engage partners around the state on solutions to address the problem. The summit will include a variety of presentations from national and local experts on a number of issues including smoking cessation, reducing elective deliveries prior to 39 weeks, implementing hospital-level obstetric and neonatal intensive care unit standards and addressing large disparities in infant mortality among race and ethnicity.

For more information on the summit, contact Bob Bowman at bobbowman@isdh.in.gov.

Primary Care Symposium Aimed to Improve Community Health

The 2013 Primary Care Symposium took place on September 5 as part of the State Health Department's effort to support primary care with evidence-based public health practice. The focus was on enhancing care with community health workers. Over 100 people attended the symposium.

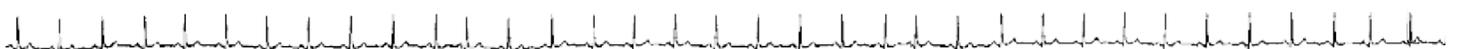
Community health workers serve as a liaison between community resources and the primary care provider, supporting patient self-care goals such as avoiding tobacco, increasing fruit and vegetable consumption and physical activity, practicing stress management skills and assisting patients with medication adherence and access to early prenatal care. Primary care is critical to proactively managing Indiana's disease rates and health care costs.

Speaking at the event was Bernie Emkes, M.D., Medical Director of Managed Care for St. Vincent Hospital, who discussed the current state of medicine and ways in which people can re-

verse the growing tide of disease, disability and death by leveraging community health workers into the care team and quality improvement strategies.

Wayne H. Giles, M.D., Director of the Division of Population Health at the National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, was also a keynote speaker. Dr. Giles discussed a federal perspective on the integration of primary care and community health workers.

There was also discussion about the interconnection between quality care and population health. Sessions demonstrated how organizations such as Anthem Blue Cross Blue Shield, Columbus Regional Hospital, St. Vincent Health, Marion County Public Health Department, Indiana University-Purdue University and Notre Dame are employing community health workers to enhance care.



Volunteer to Help in an Emergency or Disaster

The State Health Department is looking for volunteers! The State Emergency Registry of Volunteers for Indiana (SERV-IN) is an electronic registration system and database of local, district and statewide volunteers who would like to assist the public health and healthcare systems during an event or disaster.



Anyone wishing to volunteer to respond to emergencies can register on this database. SERV-IN is for all types of volunteers. You do not have to have medical training and all training will be provided.

There is no charge to register on SERV-IN. Volunteers can choose to volunteer at the local, regional, statewide or national level. To register, visit www.SERV-IN.org.

State
Emergency
Registry of
Volunteers for
Indiana

SERV-IN is a secure website. Once you have registered, you will be contacted by your local health department.

For questions about SERV-IN, contact Mandy Stirratt, SERV-IN and Medical Reserve Corps State Coordinator, at (317) 234-3563 or at astirratt@isdh.in.gov.

State Health Department Administrative Updates



Bob Bowman became the Director of Maternal and Child Health in August. He has served as Interim Director of Maternal and Child Health since February. Prior to this position, he was the Director of Genomics and Newborn Screening since 2006. Bob received his Bachelor of Science, with a major in Chemistry, from Bethany College in West Virginia. He has Master of Science degrees in Genetics and Developmental Biology from West Virginia University and from the Genetic Counseling Program at Indiana University. He also holds a Master of Art in Secondary Education from West Virginia University.

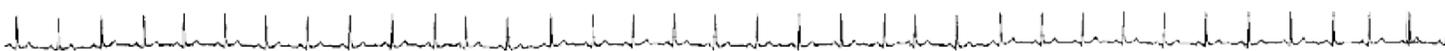


Katie Jones, MSW, became the Director of the Office of Women’s Health in July. She has served as Interim Director of the Office of Women’s Health since Fall 2012. She previously held the position of the Violence Prevention Program Director since 2010. Katie has been working in the women’s health field for seven years. Prior to joining the State Health Department, she worked in domestic and sexual violence victim services and youth mentoring. Katie received her Bachelor’s Degree in Psychology and Criminology from Valparaiso University and her Master in Social Work from Indiana University.



Gayla Hutsell Guignard became the Director for the Center for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Education in May. She previously held the position of Early Hearing Detection and Intervention Program Director for the past five years. Gayla has a Bachelor of Science in Audiology and Speech Sciences from Purdue University and Master’s degrees in both Audiology and Speech Language Pathology from the University of Tennessee-Knoxville. She has 13 years of experience as an instructor of speech-language pathology, audiology and deaf education at UT-Knoxville and served for nearly four years as the Chief Programs Director for the Alexander Graham Bell Association for Deaf and Hard of Hearing in Washington, D.C.

Would you like to work for the State Health Department?
Search for employment opportunities at www.in.gov/spd



Preparedness Conference and Summit Held in June

By Jennifer Pitcher, Director, Preparedness and Emergency Response Division

The State Health Department Public Health Preparedness and Emergency Response division (PHPER) recently sponsored the third annual Indiana Emergency Support Function-8 (ESF-8) Conference and the 2013 Local Health Department Preparedness Summit on June 25 and 26. Both conferences took place at the Sheraton at Keystone Crossing and included national, as well as local, speakers. The PHPER division sought feedback from local health departments and other partners to choose the most beneficial topics when planning the agenda. Evaluations showed that over 96 percent of the attendees were satisfied or very satisfied with the overall ESF-8 conference and over 97 percent of the attendees were satisfied or very satisfied with the overall Local Health Department Preparedness Summit.



District Two K-9 Disaster Mental Health Team

Strike Team Deployment to Hurricane Sandy; Richmond Hill House Explosion Panel Discussion; Ripley County Medical Reserve Corps and Donation Management During Tornado Response; and Mass Fatality Planning: A Coroner’s Perspective from Daviess and Allen Counties.

The ESF-8 conference focused on the many roles that those of us involved with public health and medical emergency preparedness and response play and the importance of building relationships and strengthening our partnerships so that we may be as effective and efficient as possible during a disaster. The Indiana Department of Homeland Security co-sponsored this event and 320 participants were in attendance. State Health Commissioner Dr. VanNess and John Hill, Executive Director, Indiana Department of Homeland Security, started the day and welcomed the group. Congresswoman Susan W. Brooks who represents the 5th District of Indiana and is the Chairwoman of the Emergency Preparedness, Response and Communications Subcommittee was the keynote speaker. Dr. Rajneesh Gulati, Bellevue Medical Center, New York, also presented a plenary session on his response in the emergency room the night that Hurricane Sandy arrived. Local presentations included: District Two Emergency Medical Services

The Local Health Department Preparedness Summit focused on the challenges many local jurisdictions face in coordinating public health preparedness and emergency response and provided examples of how others are successfully approaching these issues. Jim Huston, State Health Department Chief of Staff, welcomed the 150 attendees and Dr. Umair Shah, Executive Director, Harris County Public Health and Environmental Services in Houston, Texas, delivered the keynote presentation. Dr. Shah’s large-scale emergency response roles have included Tropical Storm Allison; Hurricanes Katrina, Rita and Ike; novel H1N1 and earthquakes in Kashmir and Haiti. Local presentations included District Two’s K-9 Disaster Mental Health Team; Working Successfully in County Government; Lessons Learned from Outbreak Responses and Environmental Health in a Natural Disaster—Southern Indiana Tornadoes.

It's flu season!

Flu Shot Locator provides a map that allows you to search for clinics that provide flu shots.

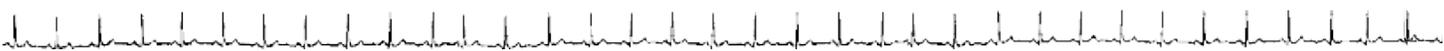
Find a flu shot clinic near you
 Visit: <http://flushot.healthmap.org/>

MY VAX INDIANA
 Keeping Hoosiers Connected & Protected

As of September 16, 2013,

7,608 individual records have been accessed
 and 35,366 PINs issued by providers!

Learn how to access your vaccination records at www.MyVaxIndiana.in.gov





Spotlight on...

Center for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Education (CDHHE)

By Gayla Hutsell Guignard, Director, CDHHE

The State Health Department opened the central Indiana location of the Center for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Education (CDHHE) on July 1. The CDHHE was established in 2012 by House Enrolled Act 1367 and is the newest program at the State Health Department. Located on the campus of the Indiana School for the Deaf (ISD), the Center is comprised of several staff who were formerly employed with the ISD Outreach Services program and newborn screening contract staff from the State Health Department Early Hearing Detection and Intervention (EHDI). Other program components such as audiological and multi-disciplinary educational assessments, Guide By Your Side, the Deaf Role Model/Mentor program, SKI-HI early intervention services and play groups; all geared towards family support and education, have also transferred to the CDHHE.

Through the Center, the State Health Department will work to bring State agencies, local early intervention and educational entities and other stakeholders together to create a seamless system of services and other resources for children

who are deaf or hard of hearing and their families. Between 225 to 250 infants and toddlers who are deaf or hard of hearing are identified through the EHDI program each year. More than 2,400 students (age three through 21) are served by educational institutions across the state, however, this number could be even higher—the Center will play a key role in finding and assisting children who are deaf or hard of hearing; those who are born with hearing loss and those who acquire hearing loss during early to late childhood or adolescence.

The Center will focus on identifying children who are deaf or hard of hearing at the earliest possible age and will track and monitor progress of individual children (when provided with signed parental releases of information) from birth through school exit through an innovative data management system that will be developed.

“The EHDI program through use of its EHDI Alert Response System (EARS) and concentrated efforts of birthing facilities and audiology facilities and staff across the state has been able to move the needle when it comes to children being lost to follow-up after not passing their newborn hearing screening,” said Dr. VanNess. “The current EARS system is a great platform to build upon further success of tracking and helping children and their families get the services they need in a timely manner so that they may grow and develop as expected.”

Part of the Center’s work will involve providing families with ample opportunities to learn about and develop an understanding about the different communication and language options available to children who are deaf or hard of hearing such as American Sign Language, Listening and Spoken Language, Signed English, Cued Speech and combinations of these and other options to assist families in meeting their child’s individual needs. The Center will support parental choice and act as an unbiased resource for parents/guardians as families make decisions about communication and language, as well as technology and education choices.

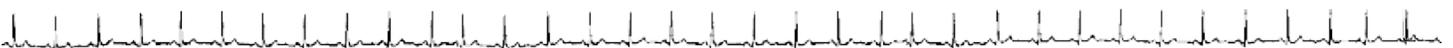
Educators and other providers of services to children and families should also experience new benefits due to the establishment of the Center. The “Transition Plan” for the CDHHE was developed last year from May through September by a 25-person stakeholder group and plans exist for provision of professional development.

“Every child who is deaf or hard of hearing and their family should have access to qualified experts as they journey through early childhood and educational experiences,” said State Health Department Chief of Staff Jim Huston. “However, many families have great difficulty in finding appropriate services, especially those families who live in rural areas, which, of course, is a large portion of our state. The State Health Department is committed to working in partnership with the Indiana Family and Social Services Administration, the Indiana Department of Education and the Indiana School for the Deaf, as well as family support groups to enhance the skills of our professional workforce. We all want to see children achieving the outcomes their families wish for them. Collaborating and working together allows us to combine efforts for the good of children.”

Children are currently receiving services now through the central location and the priority is to have the central office fully staffed and completely operational this Fall. Work will then begin on determining the locations of smaller regional offices in four other parts of the state. Regionalization of the CDHHE will allow for local outreach and educational services to occur for more children, their families and their professional providers.



**Center for Deaf
and Hard of Hearing
Education**



Ask THE EXPERT



with Shawn M. Richards
Respiratory Epidemiologist
Indiana State Department of Health

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is working closely with the World Health Organization and other partners to better understand the public health risk posed by MERS-CoV that was first reported to cause human infection in September 2012.

What is MERS-CoV?

MERS-CoV is a viral respiratory illness and was first reported in 2012 in Saudi Arabia. It is different from other similar viruses that have been found in people before.

Is MERS-CoV the same as the SARS virus?

No. MERS-CoV is not the same virus that caused severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) in 2003. However, like the SARS virus, MERS-CoV is most similar to viruses found in bats.

Is it in the United States?

So far, there are no reports of anyone in the United States getting infected with MERS-CoV.

What are the symptoms?

Most people who got infected with MERS-CoV developed severe acute respiratory illness with symptoms of fever, cough, and shortness of breath. About half of them died. Some people were reported as having a mild respiratory illness.

Can I still travel to countries in the Arabian Peninsula or neighboring countries where cases have occurred?

Yes. The CDC does not recommend that anyone change their travel plans because of MERS-CoV. The current CDC recommendation is to advise travelers to countries in or near the Arabian Peninsula to follow standard precautions, such as hand washing and avoiding contact with people who are ill. A list of the affected countries with MERS-CoV infections can be viewed at www.cdc.gov/features/novelcoronavirus.

What if I recently traveled to countries in the Arabian Peninsula or neighboring countries and got sick?

If you develop a fever and symptoms of lower respiratory illness, such as cough or shortness of breath, within 14 days after traveling from countries in the Arabian Peninsula, you should see your healthcare provider and mention your recent travel.

Is there a vaccine?

No, but the CDC is discussing with partners the possibility of developing one.

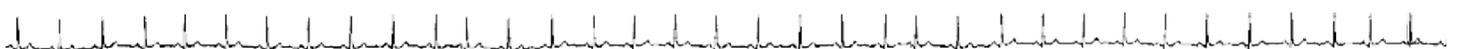
For more information, visit www.in.gov/isdh/25796.htm.

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effective and available 24/7
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www.eQuitNow.com





Indiana Attorney General and the Indiana Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention Task Force

Indiana Attorney General Greg Zoeller and State Health Department Chief Medical Officer Dr. Joan Duwve have teamed up to co-chair the Indiana Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention Task Force. The taskforce recently unveiled a new website, www.BitterPill.IN.gov, as part of a comprehensive statewide public awareness campaign targeting Indiana's prescription drug abuse epidemic.

In 2012, the task force was launched by Zoeller and consists of state legislators, law enforcement, members of the medical community, health officials, pharmacists, state and local agencies and education providers. The goal of the task force is to significantly reduce the abuse of controlled prescription drugs and to decrease the number of deaths associated with these drugs in Indiana.

In 2011, 718 Hoosiers died from accidental drug overdoses, compared to 654 deaths the year before. More people abuse prescription drugs in the U.S. than cocaine, heroin, hallucinogens and inhalants combined, according to the National Institute on Drug Abuse.

In addition to the launch of the website, the public awareness campaign sets off a series of online, print, television and radio service announcements which will soon begin appearing across Indiana.



The Indiana Prescription Drug Abuse Task Force launched the Bitter Pill website at the Indiana State Fair on August 16. Indiana Attorney General Greg Zoeller (back) and State Health Department Chief Medical Officer Dr. Duwve (front) spoke at the event.

In addition to learning more about the efforts of Indiana Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention Task Force, the top five features of the website, www.BitterPill.IN.gov include:

- **Knowing the dangers:** Learn about the consequences of misuse and abuse of prescription drugs and what impact this epidemic has had on Indiana.
- **Dealing with addiction:** Familiarize yourself with the signs and symptoms of prescription drug abuse in all ages. Access talking points to use when speaking with family or friends when you suspect a problem, and obtain information about treatment resources and referrals.
- **Proper prescription disposal:** Learn how to dispose of your unwanted or expired medications in way that protects the environment and ensures they don't wind up in the wrong hands;
- **Clinical resources:** Access information written by Hoosier physicians which can help ensure optimal treatment with regards to commonly misused and abuse medications.
- **Reporting illegal activities:** Learn how to report illegal activities whether it involves a physician, friend or someone else you know.

For more information, visit www.BitterPill.IN.gov.



Awards

David McSwane, received the State Health Commissioner's award for his dedication to public health. In June, he retired from Richard M. Fairbanks School of Public Health after 42 years.

Starting in June, the State Health Department introduced an employee of the month program, called H.E.R.O., which stands for Helping Employees Recognize One another. This

peer-nominated program recognizes employees for outstanding achievement and an employee is selected monthly.

The State Health Department H.E.R.O.'s are:

- **Shelley Matheson**, for her communication and outreach for the Sentinel Laboratories (September).
- **Veenay Malpeddi**, for his leadership on the Agency Claims Administration and Processing System (August).
- **Phil Wages**, for his work on the 2 North building consolidation (July).
- **Jyl Madlem**, for developing and implementing training for public health nurses (June).



Public Health Happenings

*(For more information about a specific event,
please use the specific email address listed).*

October

- 7 South Central Association for Clinical Microbiology (SCACM) Indiana Fall Meeting, isdh-lab-info@isdh.in.gov
- 11 Association for Professionals in Infection Control (APIC) Fall Conference, jsvendsen@isdh.in.gov
- 21 Packaging and Shipping Training for Sentinel Laboratories (State Health Department Laboratories) isdh-lab-info@isdh.in.gov
- 22 Packaging and Shipping Training for Sentinel Laboratories (State Health Department Laboratories) isdh-lab-info@isdh.in.gov
- 23 Midwestern Hospital District Infant Mortality meeting with the State Health Commissioner, tbarrett@isdh.in.gov
- 24 Packaging and Shipping Training for Sentinel Laboratories (Batesville), isdh-lab-info@isdh.in.gov
- 31 Southwestern Hospital District Infant Mortality meeting with the State Health Commissioner, tbarrett@isdh.in.gov

November

- 1 Infant Mortality Summit, bobbowman@isdh.in.gov
- 7 Central Southwestern Hospital District Infant Mortality meeting with State Health Commissioner tbarrett@isdh.in.gov
- 7-8 Foodborne Outbreak Response Tabletop Exercise, isdh-lab-info@isdh.in.gov
- 13 State Health Department Executive Board meeting, tbarrett@isdh.in.gov

For more information on these and other state events, visit the State of Indiana events calendar at <http://www.in.gov/core/calendar.html>



**Indiana State
Department of Health**

The Indiana State Department of Health promotes and provides essential public health services.

Public Health Matters is a free publication that is published electronically every quarter by the State Health Department Office of Public Affairs. For questions, to submit an article or topic, contact Amanda Turney at aturney@isdh.in.gov.

To subscribe or unsubscribe to the newsletter, visit <http://bit.ly/publichealthmatters>. For more information about the State Health Department, visit www.statehealth.in.gov.

