



FSSA UPDATE

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Sitting down with Dr. Dan

FSSA Update spends time with our new secretary, Dan Rusyniak, M.D.

Last month, Gov. Eric J. Holcomb appointed the 18th FSSA secretary in the agency’s history, Dan Rusyniak, M.D. “Dr. Dan,” as he’s known to many, has been with FSSA since 2018 as chief medical officer.

FSSA Update recently sat down with Dan to talk about his transition into his new role.

Why did you say “yes” to taking the job?

Really, the thing for me was the people who work here and what they do. Jen (FSSA’s previous secretary Jennifer Sullivan, M.D., MPH) built an amazing culture. Throughout the agency, we have so many committed public servants and amazing leaders. What person wouldn’t want a leadership job where you’ve already got an amazing group of folks committed to a mission that you’re already on board with?

I loved my job as chief medical officer. It really connected me to what our agency does. In that role I got to work across FSSA divisions and across government agencies. I got to see how the services we provide help individuals. Right now, during the pandemic, we are providing needed services to 2,000,000 Hoosiers. That is 2 million lives we are helping to make better at a time

when people need the help more than ever. So when asked to be secretary, it was really easy from a mission standpoint [to say “yes”]. One of the things that was nice in my previous role and this role: you never go home thinking, *Those decisions we did today... the things that we’re doing... do those things matter? Are we really motivated by the right outcomes?*



How will you be similar to our past secretaries? And what differences might we notice?

Everyone is different. Just as people are different, leadership styles are different. While Jen and I are different leaders with different styles, we share commitment to what we as agency are doing and what we value—those things won’t change. What will be different is perhaps our focus. Because I’m coming into this job as somebody who had been here for three years, I think my internal focus may be different from previous secretaries. I want to focus internally. How do we use data and collaboration to simplify and improve how we are doing things. How do we make it easier for those who rely on us to get and maintain the services they need? And how do we make the folks in our agency more aware of the importance of what they do?

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You were FSSA's first chief medical officer, so, therefore, the first person to transition from CMO to secretary. How will that help you in your new position?

Having worked with all the medical directors throughout the agency for three years, I understand how we want to improve health outcomes through our various programs, such as getting more people in sustained recovery, lowering infant and maternal mortality, decreasing the number of people with intellectual disabilities who become hospitalized for behavioral health problems or, even worse, institutionalized; for those, decreasing the number of individuals who feel like the nursing home is the only choice they have. I think, having been immersed in the medical side of things, I have a pretty good understanding of what we need to improve and how, through our programs, we might do that.

Has anything surprised you about the job so far?

Yes! I am always surprised by the complexity of our systems and how complicated a problem is when you

really start dissecting the issues. Our systems have evolved over decades, and the problem is always far more complex than meets the eye. That doesn't mean we don't have opportunities to improve and to simplify. That's a key I would like us to focus on—how do we to look at these complex systems with new perspectives and ask, can we simplify some of these processes so that it is not so complicated for us to administer? But also, how do we make it simpler and easier, for those who need our services? The three themes I will reiterate are: collaboration; data or evidence; and simplicity. If you do the first two well, you can often achieve the third.

You've already established a new theme for sharing stories about the work of individual FSSA colleagues: "Moments that Matter." Why is this important to you?

When I came into this job, I was really struggling to think about how I would follow Dr. Sullivan's "Broken Pieces." These were so heartfelt and motivating. But I also knew that I

needed something that was true to my style. I kept saying, *How do I let individuals know the importance of what they do?* Then I got an email about how one of our staff really positively impacted a family, and it hit me. The best way to let people know that what they do matters is to share their stories. We do such amazing things. We help so many people. I think it's important for people to know we're all really part of something that matters.

You might feel that some days you're just pushing papers, running numbers or filling out forms, but ultimately for those who depend on us, for the people that we help, that doesn't happen if we don't have all the different parts of the system working. All the different and unique facets of our work are required for us to help make someone's life better. And if we don't have all those different parts of it, the end result doesn't happen. And it's hard sometimes for people to understand where their particular role sits, but they're all critical and really necessary.



September is National Recovery Month

September is National Recovery Month, a national observance held each year to educate others about substance use disorders and co-occurring disorders, the effectiveness of treatment and recovery services, and that recovery is possible. Each year, Recovery Month selects a new focus and theme to spread the message and share success stories of treatment and recovery. The 2021 National Recovery Month theme, “Recovery is For Everyone: Every Person, Every Family, Every Community,” reminds people in recovery and those who support them that no one is alone in the journey through recovery. Everyone’s journey is different, but we are all in this together.

The Indiana Family and Social Services Administration is dedicated to providing information and reducing stigma around substance use disorder through its [Know the Facts campaign](#). This National Recovery Month, Know the Facts is taking its new photo booth (pictured on page 2) on the road to events across the state to raise awareness of the many faces and facets of the drug epidemic, offer support to Hoosiers battling substance use disorders and their family members, and share stories of hope and recovery.

To show your support for Hoosiers in recovery, please consider attending one of the [upcoming in-person and virtual events](#). You can also follow and share Know the Facts’ [posts on Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) to show your support and educate others.



Know the Facts, DMHA’s campaign to reduce stigma around substance abuse disorder, is [introducing a new video](#) introducing Lori, our latest featured hero of recovery.

Annual FSSA all-staff survey is now available

Created to determine how well employees understand FSSA’s strategic plan

The annual FSSA all-staff survey is now available. The survey was created by the FSSA Office of Communications and Media to help determine how well employees understand FSSA’s strategic plan and the role each of us plays in addressing the key issues facing our agency. The results of this survey help us in our efforts to communicate with and engage employees.

Please [click here to launch the survey](#), which will only take a few minutes of your time. Your answers will be anonymous.

FSSA 2021 Staff Survey

Note: This is an anonymous survey.

*** 1. Do you understand the strategic direction in which FSSA is headed?**

Yes

No

Unsure

Additional comments

*** 2. Do you understand your role in helping FSSA meet its strategic goals?**

Yes

No

Unsure

Additional comments

*** 3. Do you understand what results you are being measured on individually?**

Yes

No

Unsure

FSSA Charity of Choice: You Yes You! Project

SECC is now underway and will end on Oct. 29

The 2021–2022 State Employees’ Community Campaign is underway and will end on Oct. 29, 2021. The SECC is a convenient and cost-effective method to donate through the ease of a payroll deduction, electronic check or credit/debit card. The charity database has over 1,500 charities eligible for donations.

For the past several years of the SECC campaign, FSSA has designated a charity of choice to promote whose work or services overlap, connect or support the same individuals we serve. This year’s FSSA charity of choice is the [You Yes You! Project](#) (EIN 47-3760453).

The You Yes You! Project was launched in 2014 when Ericka Sanders organized the first father-daughter dance to take place inside an Indiana correctional facility at the now-closed Indianapolis Re-Entry Educational Facility. The mission has since grown to build relationships between incarcerated fathers and their children.

You Yes You! also helps in the following ways:

- ▶ **Bringing organizations that focus on re-entry services inside the prison facility for two-hour workshops.** Organizations including PACE, Goodwill of Central Indiana, EmployIndy, CareSource and Community Alliance of the Far Eastside are all partners and help our fathers prepare to re-enter society prior to release.
- ▶ **Organize father/child activities including a father daughter dance, Halloween party and a back-to-school celebration.**
- ▶ **Require the fathers to stay free of conduct violations and communicate or attempt to communicate with their children at least twice a week to take part in YYY programs.**
- ▶ **Offer free books as part of our book club that encourage, inspire and offer tools to become better fathers.**
- ▶ **Serve as a connector of resources for caregivers.**

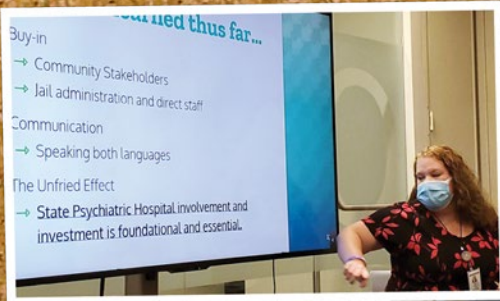
To learn more on how to donate, please visit [the SECC Hub page](#) or review the [“How to give online” document](#). Contract employees can make one-time donations and designate to a charity using the [2021 Indiana SECC One-Time Giving Site](#). If you have any questions, please email SECC@fssa.in.gov.



YOU YES YOU!
P R O J E C T



WHAT'S HAPPENING AROUND FSSA!!



In August, the Indiana State Psychiatric Hospital Network conducted a one-and-a-half-day summer retreat at the NeuroDiagnostic Institute to road map its future as an integrated network. Attendees included Dr. Dan Rusyniak, Jay Chaudhary, all superintendents and assistant superintendents, the DMHA central office team, Kelli Jensen and the Office of General Counsel.

NeuroDiagnostic Institute assistant superintendent Patti Clift and new superintendent Matt Foster.



Logansport State Hospital's Angela Edwards became a 2-gallon donor during LSH's June blood drive. The 35 units of blood collected in support of the Red Cross exceeded the goal by five units!



The Paddle Battle is one of the events held to support the State Employees' Community Campaign. Team FSSA consisted of DMHA's Rachel Johnson-Yates, Michelle Bulington, Bethany Ecklor and Steven Holland took fifth place overall in the annual event on the White River Canal in downtown Indianapolis.



Katrina Norris with Tyrone Davis, stores clerk, at the NDI, welcoming new superintendent Matt Foster.



On June 30, Ivy Tech Community College Richmond hosted a table talk and panel discussion for their practical nursing students. Sommer McDaniel, DON, and Jessica Guth, community services director, represented Richmond State Hospital at this event.



Senior transportation was provided by the Division of Aging to the IDOH Minority Health Fair July 16.

FSSA launches the Indiana Pregnancy Promise Program

Program is available to pregnant individuals in the state of Indiana

This summer, FSSA launched the Indiana Pregnancy Promise Program, a free, voluntary program for pregnant Medicaid members who use opioids or have used opioids in the past. The program provides support during the prenatal period and for 12 months after the end of pregnancy. Individuals who participate in the Pregnancy Promise Program will be connected to prenatal and postpartum care, other physical and mental health care, and treatment for opioid use disorder.

The goals of the Pregnancy Promise Program are to enter prenatal care, access opioid treatment to achieve sustained recovery, receive ongoing support and follow-up care for the individual and infant. Through these supports and relationships, the Pregnancy Promise Program provides hope to parents and babies and sets a strong foundation for their future.

The Pregnancy Promise Program is available to pregnant individuals in the state of Indiana. To be eligible, participants must meet the following criteria:



- ▶ **Pregnant or within the 90 days of the end of pregnancy**
- ▶ **Identify as having current or previous opioid use**
- ▶ **Be eligible for or receive Medicaid health coverage**

By connecting pregnant individuals with health care, mental health care and treatment as early as possible, the Pregnancy Promise Program aims to reduce and prevent the negative impacts of opioid use disorders have on the parent and child.

Please [click here to learn more about the Pregnancy Promise Program.](#)



Indiana Pregnancy Promise Program

**Promoting Recovery from Opioid use:
Maternal Infant Support and Engagement**

Division of Aging caregiver survey

Have you helped care for someone over age 55? The Division of Aging wants to hear from Indiana caregivers about what you need. This research will help us provide you with better assistance and information.

We would like to survey or interview adults who have assisted (unpaid) someone age 55 or older at least once a month for the past 12 months with any of the following:

- ▶ **Companionship or communicating by phone or in person or doing activities with them**
- ▶ **Household tasks like cooking, cleaning, shopping or yardwork**
- ▶ **Transportation**
- ▶ **Personal care like dressing or grooming**
- ▶ **Managing bills, insurance or legal matters**
- ▶ **Responding to medical or other emergencies**

You can complete the survey online or by speaking with one of our professional telephone interviewers. The Center for Survey Research at Indiana University is conducting the interviews over the phone. The interview lasts about 25 minutes and is confidential. To schedule an interview, to learn more about the study, or if you prefer to speak with a Spanish-speaking interviewer, please call 800-258-7691.

Or, if you would prefer, [click here to provide feedback](#) through a 20-minute web survey.

Build, Learn, Grow scholarship extended through March 2022!

FSSA employees, regardless of income, are likely to qualify

FSSA recently announced that it is extending the Build, Learn, Grow scholarship program—which pays a portion of before- or after-school care or early childhood education for qualified families—through March of 2022.

FSSA employees—regardless of income—are likely to qualify, as this agency’s work is considered essential.

Scholarships cover up to 80% of a child’s early care and education, summer learning or before- and after-school care, ensuring families can connect to the care and education children need. The amount of assistance provided will be based on the family’s income. Learn more and find an application at [Families.BuildLearnGrow.org](https://families.buildlearngrow.org). There are more than 40,000 scholarships which are still available for children ranging from birth through age 12 and who have a family member who works in an essential industry.



FIVE QUESTIONS



Name: Corey Laughlin

Title: Service line manager, Richmond State Hospital

Education: Bachelor's of science in recreation from Indiana University (emphasis in therapeutic recreation and psychology)

Career Highlights: I have worked in every patient area of RSH over 28 years. I started as an entry-level rehabilitation therapist and moved up into a supervision position. I am now a service line manager. Being a part of helping people from all over the state as well as supporting our staff is a highlight to me.

1 What attracted you to a career here at FSSA?

After a fantastic therapeutic recreation internship here, I found RSH to be a great place to start my career as I am driven to help people. Starting in the Activity Therapy Service Department was a great foundation for me to learn how to bring out the best in the patients and co-workers.

2 What gives you a sense of accomplishment professionally?

Seeing patients improve with their symptoms and get themselves discharged as well as helping staff improve in their efforts to support our patients.

3 What do you want FSSA workers to know about the work you're doing?

We are serving a very vulnerable and misunderstood population that can be very rewarding to work with as well as very challenging for those providing direct care.

4 What is the best advice you can offer, based on your years of experience?

Take the job seriously, but yourself not so much. Working with the mentally ill is a constant learning process for the patients, front line staff and administrators. Be open to it.

5 What about your background might your co-workers find surprising?

That the people on both my service line treatment teams are all fans of leopard print.

