

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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### **NEW HIV CASES IN SOUTHEASTERN INDIANA OUTBREAK**

INDIANAPOLIS—The HIV outbreak announced by State health officials Wednesday continues to grow, now reaching 27 confirmed cases and 10 preliminary HIV positive cases. All cases are linked to injection drug abuse of the prescription drug, opana, with some individuals also reporting sexual intercourse as a possible mode of transmission. Opana is a powerful opioid painkiller containing oxycodone. State and local health officials are following up on known contacts in Scott, Clark, Jackson, Perry and Washington counties.

“This is a complex and fast moving outbreak that requires a comprehensive response,” said Deputy State Health Commissioner Jennifer Walthall, M.D., M.P.H. “There are many moving parts to address, including addiction, barriers to care such as lack of transportation and homelessness, as well as prostitution and the close proximity to interstate 65. We are exploring every possible response mechanism and are working closely with local health officials and others to get people the treatment and care they need and to stop the spread of HIV in the area.”

Disease intervention specialists are in the area interviewing each newly identified HIV positive individual to obtain information about needle sharing and sex partners, as well as recommending care coordination services, medical care and HIV prevention information.

State health officials recommend that all Hoosiers know their HIV status. The best way for an individual to learn their HIV status is by getting tested by a health care professional. Hoosiers in the southeastern portion of the state, especially individuals who have engaged in high-risk behavior such as needle sharing and unprotected sex, are advised to get tested and then re-tested after about two to three months because HIV can take up to

three months to appear in a person's system.

To help reduce risk of HIV infection, avoid:

- injection drug use;
- sharing or re-using needles;
- engaging in unprotected sex; and,
- engaging in sex with commercial sex workers.

*For HIV testing locations and information about HIV Care Coordination, individuals are encouraged to call the ISDH HIV Services Hotline at (866) 588-4948.*

*Individuals seeking help with substance abuse should call the national 24-hour addiction hotline at 1-800-662-HELP (4357). This hotline provides confidential, free, 24-hour-a-day, 365-day-a-year, information service, in English and Spanish, for individuals and family members facing mental health and/or substance use disorders. This service provides referrals to local treatment facilities, support groups, and community-based organizations. Callers can also order free publications and other information.*

To learn more about the link between HIV infection and drug abuse, visit the National Institute on Drug Abuse at <http://hiv.drugabuse.gov/index.html>.

Visit the Indiana State Department of Health at [www.StateHealth.in.gov](http://www.StateHealth.in.gov). Follow the Indiana State Department of Health on Twitter at [@StateHealthIN](https://twitter.com/StateHealthIN) and on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/isdh1](https://www.facebook.com/isdh1).

Hoosiers who do not have health care coverage or access to a doctor are encouraged to check availability for the new Healthy Indiana Plan—HIP 2.0—by visiting [www.HIP.IN.gov](http://www.HIP.IN.gov) or calling 1-877-GET-HIP-9.

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