

February 2021

# PULSE

A look at what keeps IDOH ticking

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### FUN FACT

**"There are more bacteria in your mouth than there are people in the world."**

**-[University of Queensland](#)**



**Indiana  
Department  
of  
Health**

#### Mission:

*To promote, protect,  
and improve the health  
and safety of all Hoosiers.*

## An optimistic Spring approaches

A year ago, we were on the brink of a life-changing event. Our daily routines were still normal. We were gathering in large groups, hugging our loved ones, coming into the office every day, and going about our daily business. Even then, we knew the pandemic was lurking, and that it wasn't a matter of IF it would come to Indiana, but WHEN.



**Kris Box,  
MD, FACOG**

What a difference a year makes.

It's easy to focus on the lives lost both here and nationally, on the number of cases, on the disrupted routines or countless hours our team has logged to keep Hoosiers safe. But as we approach the March 6 anniversary of Indiana's first case, I want to focus, instead, on the signs of hope that are emerging.

Like the first glimpses of spring, they might not be immediately apparent. But they are sprinkled throughout our daily work, and with the proper nourishment, they will bloom and provide our weary souls a welcome relief.

Many of those signs relate to the pandemic response: Nearly 400 vaccine clinics, almost 1 million shots in arms in just over two months, declining cases and deaths, and another vaccine on the way.

But there is hope outside the pandemic response, too.

I personally have found time to re-engage on non-COVID issues, and it has been gratifying to participate more in things like Levels of Care discussions, to hear the latest updates on our OB navigator program, My Healthy Baby, and to see the incredible progress that's been

made in resolving the issues with our new DRIVE system.

While we have months of pandemic response still ahead of us, these glimpses of the "new normal" are what we all should be preparing for, both at home and here in the agency.

We don't know exactly what that looks like, or when that will happen. But we do know it will mean more people back in the building and more of the in-person collaboration we're accustomed to – though I doubt we will ever let go of Teams now that we've seen how well it can work.

My hope is that by this summer, the new normal will mean that Pam and I can start making the rounds again, visiting with program areas and resuming those conversations that are so valuable.

We are still several months away from that day, and new variants of the virus make it hard to predict what the future will look like.

But I know that many of the habits we've adopted during this pandemic will benefit us long after we've moved past this chapter in history. We've seen how wearing masks and washing hands has dramatically reduced incidence of flu in all ages and RSV in children. You might see me continue to wear a mask in the grocery store during flu season long after we put this pandemic to bed.

Until then, I encourage you to look for the signs of hope around you and embrace them.

**Yours in health,  
Kris**

# Spotlight

## One of Our Own: Jamie Black selected for CSTE Pilot Program

"If I had to compare it to anything, it's like being picked for the All-Star team.

That's how Jamie Black describes her selection to the LEAD program (Leading Epidemiologists, Advancing Data). It's an apropos analogy for this former softball player.

Jamie is one of 13 epidemiologists selected for the program, hosted by the Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists (CSTE.) Candidates from every state and US territory applied.

"Over the next 18 months, the cohort will become a network of peer leaders and impact the field of applied epidemiology through their project work. It is clear that her commitment to helping others and vision for program success is rooted in using data to improve the health of

Indiana residents," says Jessica Arrazola, senior program analyst with CSTE.

Jamie acted quickly when she learned of the opportunity.

"Being the eldest, I learned years ago if I want something, I have to go out and get it," she says.

A Fort Wayne native and Purdue grad, she moved to Brooklyn, NY, where she obtained her Master of Public Health with Honors in Epidemiology from the State University of New York (SUNY) Downstate Medical Center.

Jamie recently had her orientation with the other participants and leaders.

"My first impression was that there are a lot of knowledgeable people involved, epidemiologists and doctors alike, with really strong

backgrounds," she said. "So many people with an incredible wealth of knowledge to learn from."

During the 18-month program, participants will hone their leadership skills, where everything from good communication to executive presence and approachability will be explored.

What exactly does "Advancing Data" mean to Jamie?

"Data-driven decisions are so important in our field today. But you must understand the data you have first. I can run a report or show you a graph, but do people understand it? Advancing data to me means striving for quality and being the type of leader that advocates for data-driven programs and decisions. Especially when it comes to overcoming health inequalities that we face in public health today."

It's important to Jamie that data serves a purpose. "I recently developed a data dashboard for a syphilis outbreak that I presented at a national conference. I incorporated feedback from people who were not "data people" to make sure they understood it and could use the tool effectively. We can't build reports for people who can't use them."

Her ideal job? Overseeing a project on a national level.

"I feel like I could make the most impact in every state, in that capacity," she said. She advises anyone wanting to advance their career to be cognizant of opportunities for professional development. Be looking out for yourself. Be open to opportunities. "You may think you don't have time for it," says Jamie. "But take chances."



Jamie Black, epidemiologist and project coordinator, Division of HIV, STD and Viral Hepatitis, was selected by the Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists for their Leading Epidemiologists, Advancing Data (LEAD) program.



LEARNING

**Check out courses to aid in your professional development!**  
**Have you accessed LinkedIn Learning yet?**  
 If not, check out this easy-to-follow [login guide](#).

## IDOH works to address health disparities among Hoosier minorities

Ensuring that we address health disparities within Indiana is one of many key goals in accomplishing health equity and improving health outcomes for Hoosiers. It is essentially a focused effort to make sure underserved populations are not left behind and that all populations in Indiana communities have access to the same essential health resources as everyone else.

Addressing disparities is important to the public health of everyone. According to Minority Health Director Antoniette Holt, "When we address populations who are underserved, underrepresented and experience the most barriers such as access, we create inroads into a better system that will improve quality of life."

The Indiana Department of Health has been enacting several systematic changes to build health equity. This includes leveraging partnerships and relationships with local organizations in underserved communities.

"The relationships shape how we address barriers that exist among different populations," said Holt. Examples of this have recently included IDOH working with statewide community-based organizations, coalitions, and other entities to identify, develop and distribute information regarding COVID-19 vaccination.

IDOH invited these partner organizations and others to be part of the Vaccine Review Advisory Group and the Equitable Distribution and Communication Advisory Group. These two groups are key in giving guidance and insight on how Indiana can equitably distribute the vaccine throughout the state. IDOH is also establishing alternative vaccination sites that will make vaccine more accessible to vulnerable populations, pending federal allocation of vaccine.

Even with the recent reiteration of the CARES Act and ELC financial resources, proposals have been offered to address minority health and health equity in vaccine distribution. Through a combination of these efforts, IDOH hopes to achieve the very definition of health equity that we have derived from Robert Woods Johnson — to ensure "Everyone has a fair and just opportunity to be as healthy as possible!"

## 67% response rate on Culture & Climate Survey!

During the summer of 2020, the Office of Public Health Performance Management administered the agency's annual Culture and Climate Survey. This year we had a 67% response rate, which is the highest response rate for any all-agency survey OPHPM has ever administered! With this response rate, we were able to have a highly representative sample of the Agency. Thank you for trusting us with your feedback.

IDOH staff continue to report very high levels of trust, respect, and communication between coworkers and between staff and their supervisors. In fact, despite the pandemic, supervisors showed an increase from 2019 to 2020 on key measures of trust, respect and communication.

However, there was an increase in staff who reported "workplace environment (i.e., social, emotional, workplace culture)" as one of the top reasons they are considering leaving the agency. Measures of communication among managers and executives were also down from 2019.

Other positive takeaways include the positive impact of telework on the employee experience, staff's satisfaction with their job and staff's understanding of how their work relates to the agency's goals and priorities. Without a doubt, 2020 was a challenging year for staff, and this is reflected in the results. Staff report significant impacts of COVID-19 on the agency and themselves personally. As in 2019, more than 1 in 4 staff report considering leaving in the next year, with "pay" and "opportunities to advance" remaining the top two reasons for considering a move.

**81% of staff report being satisfied with their job**

OPHPM will release a full executive summary of the survey in the coming weeks, as well as an interactive, de-identified data set that will allow staff to compare responses by a variety of demographics. OPHPM remains committed to the anonymity of this data and will never use responses to identify any staff member. For more information about the survey and its analyses, please contact Workforce Development Coordinator Eric Beers at [ebeers@isdh.in.gov](mailto:ebeers@isdh.in.gov).



# Be Well Indiana

## Big things coming to OPHPM in 2021!

While the day-to-day looks a little different throughout the agency right now, the Office of Public Health Performance Management is in full swing to ensure that we continue to roll out the new agency strategic plan, share annual reports from our plans that retired at the end of 2020, and implement new agency and state plans.

With our current State Health Assessment and State Health Improvement Plan slated to sunset at the end of 2021, the OPHPM team will be looking for internal stakeholders to help us collect data, create themes and strategies, and plan creation.

Many thanks to our partners, both internally and externally, who have already expressed interest in helping OPHPM with the SHA and SHIP. If you would like to participate in any capacity, please [use this link](#) to select your level of involvement and get signed up for our communication listing. Please feel free to share this link with any stakeholders or partners you may have that are also interested in participating.

Once you are in the survey, our communication listing will allow you to select the following options:

- Notifications regarding upcoming committee meetings
- Participate in the data review and analysis
- Volunteer to assist in the development of goals, objectives, and strategies.
- Volunteer to assist with meeting facilitation.
- Request updates on the plan after publishing and implementation

For questions on the Strategic Plan, State Health Assessment, State Health Improvement Plan or Agency plans, please contact OPHPM at [OPHPM@isdh.in.gov](mailto:OPHPM@isdh.in.gov).

## IDOH Policies: New look & content

Our agency-wide policies have received a fresh new look for 2021 and are now updated with new content. All Staff policies are managed by various document administrators throughout the agency through MediaLab, our agency document management system. These policies are accessible by everyone on the Nerve Center using [this link](#).

Every employee, contractor, volunteer, or individual performing services on IDOH's behalf is accountable for reading, understanding and abiding by IDOH All Staff policies. Please allow yourself adequate time to read and understand these policies. Remember that your division or program may also have its policies and procedures for which you are accountable.

IDOH policies are meant to ensure compliance with laws and regulations, appropriate stewardship of state and federal funds, and to support meaningful, equitable access to public health services by all Hoosiers.

Here is a list of IDOH's "All Staff" policies that currently exist on the Nerve Center:

### Personnel Policies

Agency Policy Management	Subpoena or Summons Policy	Bloodborne Pathogen Exposure Control Plan Policy
Cigarette & Tobacco Use	Visitor Policy	Indiana School for the Deaf Preparedness & Safety Manual
Confidentiality	COOP Policy	Limited Personal Use of State Property/Resources
Dress Code Guidelines Policy	Email Use and Retention Policy	Document Release Agency-Wide SOP
Emergency Action Plan	Employee Use of Weapons	HIPAA Policies
Work Schedules	Media and Communications Policy	Outside Activities
PC Life Cycle & Relocation	Public Records Request Policy	Health Equity
State Issued Identification Badges	Indiana Archives and Records Administration Policies	Responding to Allegations of Research Misconduct
Presentation Policy		

For questions on policies, compliance, or MediaLab, contact Barb Killian, regulatory compliance and policy liaison, at [bkillian@isdh.in.gov](mailto:bkillian@isdh.in.gov).

Be on the lookout throughout 2021 for the big reveals of the agency...

- Workforce Development Plan
- Performance Management Plan
- Quality Improvement Plan
- State Health Assessment
- State Health Improvement Plan





Don't miss out on the 2021 Premium Discount!

Employees and spouses enrolled in coverage must fully complete one of the following three activity options:

- Health Coaching – Complete four health coaching sessions (in-person or by phone) through ActiveHealth. Get started today by calling 855-202-4219.
- Online Health Education – Reach Level 5 in ActiveHealth's online health education. Visit [www.myactivehealth.com/stateofindiana](http://www.myactivehealth.com/stateofindiana) to get started today.
- Physical Activity – Meet the physical activity goal of 10,000 daily steps or 30 minutes of physical activity through a synced device on at least 200 separate days. Reminder: In order for ActiveHealth to recognize your physical activity, you must first sync a fitness device with your ActiveHealth account. Only activity that occurs after you have synced your fitness device will be tracked and credited.

Your chosen activity must be completed by Sept. 30, 2021, to qualify for the 2022 health premium discount. Track your progress toward completing an activity in your Rewards Center on the ActiveHealth portal, [www.myactivehealth.com/stateofindiana](http://www.myactivehealth.com/stateofindiana).

Check out the [ActiveHealth FAQs](#) for answers to common questions.



### Employee Assistance Program

Phone: (800) 223-7723 (24/7 support)

The Anthem EAP is a free service for all full-time state employees and those in their household and can be a beneficial tool to improve your overall well-being. These tools and resources are available 24/7 and are completely confidential.

Services include: Counseling, Child & Elder Care, Financial Consultation, Legal Services, Smoking Cessation and ID recovery and credit monitoring. The goal of the EAP is to help you cope with the challenges happening in your life. Whether it's concerning financial issues, emotional well-being, addiction and recovery, or other life events, the Anthem EAP services are available to you. When you call, you are paired with a clinical social worker, professional counselor, psychologist or marriage and family therapist who best fits your needs and concerns

Website: [AnthemEAP.com](http://AnthemEAP.com) (Enter State of Indiana to log in)  
Access all of the Anthem EAP online tools and resources.

### Diversity, Inclusion & Belonging



Course Summary: Conflict is inevitable—in work and in life. Managers must address performance issues, and colleagues with competing priorities must figure out how to work together. These situations call for having difficult conversations. In this course, Marlene Chism explains how to have difficult conversations, build your communication skills, and improve your relationships, teamwork, and business performance.

Time: 67 minutes

Click [here](#) to access the program



## LEARNING

### Using Inclusive Language

Establishing an inclusive team dynamic can positively impact both your team's morale and your bottom line! This short video is a great introduction to inclusive teams and not only offers recommended language, but also shares some of the benefits to your team and the organization.

Time: 4 minutes

Click [here](#) to access the program

# Walking for your heart

So, you want to stay fit, but you're not sure how to add more physical activity to your day? One simple answer may be to start walking! Like any physical activity, walking is good for your heart. It increases your heart rate, builds heart muscle and gets the blood flowing through your body. It also lowers blood pressure and helps reduce body fat and cholesterol.

You may want to get a check-up before you start walking. If you have heart problems, your doctor can tell you how much activity is safe for you. Ready to walk?

1. Start out slowly. Do a warm-up first, then pick up the pace in the middle. Finish with a cool-down at the end.
2. Try walking with friends, coworkers, or pets—and set goals that you can reach.
3. Use a pedometer or fitness device or app to keep track of your steps. The first time you use it, count how many steps you normally take in a day. Try to increase this number each day or

week.

4. Try to walk at least two and a half hours (150 minutes) each week. You can reach that mark by walking 30 minutes a day, five days a week.

If you're looking for more information to help you on your health journey, be sure to visit MyActiveHealth. There is a wealth of information on this website regarding many different health and wellness topics. Other resources:

## Health Coaching

- Call to schedule: 855-202-4219

## Login to MyActiveHealth Engagement Platform

- [www.myactivehealth.com/StateofIndiana](http://www.myactivehealth.com/StateofIndiana)

## Download the ActiveHealth Mobile App

- Located in the Apple app store and Google Play



**Jannifer Smiley**

**GUESS WHO I MET ON THE ELEVATOR?**



**Title:** Administrative assistant

**Brief Job Description:** Monitor the IDOH survey email box, make all changes to the survey schedules and notifies Life Safety Code. Make sure nursing home survey schedules are sent to ombudsman weekly, monitor complaints, run reports, complaints not investigated, certifications to be scheduled, and then run most recent staggered surveys.

**Time at IDOH:** 19 years

**What do you like most about working at IDOH?**

"My favorite part of working at IDOH is the people I work with.

**Other information:** "I like reading John Grisham novels."

# Staffing updates

Welcome to the following staff members who join the Indiana Department of Health in January:

Daniel Sterling, web and data services director, Acute Care; Amy Hall, public health administrator, HIV/STD; Tara Ariel Cheatham, epidemiologist, HIV/STD; Conner Cooper, microbiologist, IDOH Lab; Tim Zwiefelhofer, local emergency ops supervisor, Emergency Preparedness; Zachary Whitis, local emergency site coordinator, Emergency Preparedness; Jere Riggs, local emergency site coordinator, Emergency Preparedness; Melodi Greene, public health nurse surveyor, Acute Care; Tamara Lehnertz, public health nurse surveyor, Long Term Care; Brandon Wolfla, local emergency site coordinator, Emergency Preparedness; Susan Hopkins, public health nurse surveyor, Acute Care; Alex Jung, local emergency site coordinator, Emergency Preparedness.

Kelly Knoblett transferred laterally within Acute Care to be a public health nurse surveyor.

Jelisa Brown transferred from Immunizations to begin work as a local emergency site coordinator, Emergency Preparedness.

Margaret Ansty, transferred to IDOH from the Indiana State Library to be the new web and data services director, Program Performance and Development.



[Click here for information on Spring Break and Summer Camp opportunities for your children!](#)