

FEBRUARY 2019

PULSE

A look at what keeps ISDH ticking

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FUN FACT

While awake, your brain produces enough electricity to light a lightbulb.



Indiana State
Department of Health

Mission:

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

CONTINUE TO CELEBRATE SUCCESS

As public health professionals, we are conditioned to be the “helpers.” We help prevent or stop outbreaks, we respond in a crisis and we educate Hoosiers about how to keep their families safe and healthy. In all that work, we often neglect to celebrate our own successes or toot our own horn, and that’s something I’d like to change.

Recently, several of our programs had successes that might have gone unnoticed if a supervisor hadn’t highlighted them to the leadership team. I’d like to encourage every program area to look for those successes and elevate them so that as an agency, we can recognize a job well done.

Here are just a few recent examples that I’d like to celebrate:

Lab scores 100 percent

The ISDH Laboratories recently completed its surveillance desk assessment, an off-site review of documents and phone interviews that assesses compliance to the International Standardization Organization (ISO 17025:2005) with the ANSI National Accreditation Board (ANAB). The ISO standard sets general requirements for the quality management and competence of testing and calibration laboratories.

ANAB assessors found zero nonconformities, meaning the ISDH Laboratories was one of only a few labs to meet 100 percent of the standard requirements. The assessment covered food microbiology, food chemistry (which includes metals testing in food), environmental lead, rabies and media preparation.

The ISDH Laboratories teams deserve a big congratulations for a job well done! Their hard work, diligence, attention to detail and talent contributed to this impressive assessment report. I want to give special thanks to our quality assurance folks for making this a smooth and successful review.



**Kris Box,
MD, FACOG**

Legal earns scholarships

The ISDH Office of Legal Affairs got some good news when Rebecca Brelage, Manda Clevenger and Chris Kulik received scholarships to attend the 2019 Council of State & Territorial Epidemiologists Annual Conference June 2-6 in Raleigh, N.C. Their scholarships will cover registration and travel expenses. They will participate in roundtable discussions about the key legal challenges of public health emergencies.

Angela Rinehart and Erika Steuerwald received scholarships covering half the cost of attending the Trial Advocacy Skills College Course sponsored by the Indiana Continuing Legal Education Forum from March 13-16 in Indianapolis. They will polish their litigation skills by practicing under the guidance of experienced lawyers and judges, viewing faculty demonstrations and watching videotaped critiques of their performance.

Both scholarships give staff more training at minimal expense.

TPC selected for program

Indiana is one of only two states selected this year for a Leadership Academy for Wellness and Tobacco Free Recovery and designated as a CDC State Strategy Session to address disparities in the behavioral health population.

The Smoking Cessation Leadership Center will lead the support of Indiana’s invitation-only summit on June 27 and 28 in Indianapolis.

The goal of the academy is to create statewide collaboration among public health, tobacco control, mental health and addiction treatment departments to produce a strategic action plan to reduce the smoking rates among behavioral health consumers and staff. Indiana is positioned to enhance state capacity to address tobacco dependence in one of our most underserved populations. Approximately 39 percent of adults with a mental illness diagnosis smoke cigarettes.

Thank you to each of these divisions and to all of you for the great work you’re doing for the residents of our state.

Yours in health,
Kris

GIVING REFUGEES A HEALTHY START

By Greta Sanderson

Every refugee who comes to Indiana has to go through Alicia Earnest.

Earnest is the ISDH Indiana refugee health coordinator. She is the program's only employee, and her job includes making sure all incoming refugees to Indiana receive a comprehensive health screening within 90 days of arriving in the United States.



Alicia Earnest

That screening is one of the last steps in a long road for refugees, hundreds of whom ultimately arrive in Indiana each year to restart their lives in the United States. This year, nearly 800 of the estimated 30,000 refugees expected to arrive in the United States could eventually call Indiana home.

A refugee is someone who is unable or unwilling to return to their country of origin due to a fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion.

A refugee's journey begins after crossing an international border and registering with the United Nations (UN). The UN will verify the refugee's status and, depending on the situation, recommend that individual for resettlement. Earnest said fewer than 1 percent are ever resettled in a third country such as the United States. For refugees approved to come to the United States, that begins a minimum two-year process of security and medical checks by the U.S. Department of State working with other federal depart-

ments.

If all goes well, the refugee's case is referred to a not-for-profit organization that has an agreement with the State Department to place refugees through local affiliate agencies, of which Indiana has three. A refugee's placement is based on where he or she has family, existing ethnic communities and available housing and jobs.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention does some prescreening before the refugees come to the United States.

When a refugee arrives in Indiana, Earnest works with the placement organization and the local health department where the refugee will settle to make sure the refugee receives the necessary health screening, immunizations and a connection to a primary care physician. Each refugee receives a physical exam and screenings for tuberculosis, HIV, hepatitis, parasites, lead and other conditions.

Refugees even learn the difference between primary care, urgent care and the emergency department so they can access the best level of treatment.

"The idea is that they are supposed to know how to access care at the end of the initial 90-day resettlement period," she said.

Earnest, a Fort Wayne native, has been at ISDH for about five months, having most recently worked at the Minnesota Department of Health's refugee health and tuberculosis programs.

She said 533 refugees came to Indiana from 22 countries in the 2018 fiscal year. Their top five were Burma, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Eritrea, Ukraine and Sudan, and most are younger than 25 years



This is a new feature that highlights a specific program area each month. Email [Greta Sanderson](mailto:Greta.Sanderson) to suggest your area for future newsletters.

old. More than 70 percent settled in Marion County, and 20 percent settled in Allen County.

Their most common health issues are tuberculosis, intestinal parasites, nutrition and weight, elevated lead levels in children and mental health. In other ways, the refugees are healthier than Hoosiers. For example, only about 46 percent of adult refugees are overweight or obese compared to more than 67 percent of adults.

Over time, the immigrants' health risks reach the same level as the general population's, including preterm births and obesity. Earnest called that the immigrant health paradox, showing the power of social determinants and the environment in influencing health.

Earnest's goal for the program is to instill quality improvement practices and to improve communication with partners.

"These people have had a lot of trauma," she said. "I want to ensure they are treated with dignity."

GOVERNMENT CENTER CLINIC: NOW OPEN!

The Government Center Clinic by [OurHealth](#) opened Feb. 1. All members of a health plan sponsored by the State Personnel Department age 3 and older can visit the clinic. With this convenient clinic option, you can save time – and paid time off – by visiting the facility for immediate care needs. Wait times are typically only about five minutes, and primary care visits average between 20 and 40 minutes.

Clinic hours are 7 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday.

View the [Online Appointment Scheduling Guide](#) for details about how to schedule an appointment at the clinic. You can also schedule an appointment by phone at 317-537-9764. A representative will be available to answer your call from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday, and 8 a.m. to noon Saturday.

Same-day appointments are available. Walk-ins will be scheduled for the next available appointment time. Staffing levels will be continually monitored to ensure same-day appointments as often as possible. In the event of a late-day walk-in, an appointment will be scheduled for the earliest available time within clinic hours. Appointments can be made in person or over the phone.

If you aren't able to visit the clinic, you can also use your phone to see a licensed healthcare provider 24/7 through LiveHealth Online. This is a great option for field staff! With LiveHealth Online, you can see a board-certified doctor for \$49 or less via video by using your smartphone, tablet or webcam-equipped computer.

[Sign up](#) or download the free mobile app from your app store.

STRIKE TEAM JUMPS INTO ACTION

By Greta Sanderson

The ISDH hepatitis A vaccination strike team immunized hundreds of Hoosiers last month when an employee of a Bloomington restaurant was diagnosed with hepatitis A.

Hepatitis A is a highly contagious, but highly preventable, liver disease. Symptoms include abdominal pain, fever, diarrhea and jaundice. The infected person worked at the restaurant while contagious from Jan. 2 to 6, possibly exposing more than 2,600 customers.

Foodborne and Waterborne Disease Epidemiologist Nicole Stone, Public Health Investigator Amy Winchester and Field Epidemiologist Jill Stauffer worked closely with the Monroe County Health Department (MCHD) to investigate the case and assess the risk of exposure.

Based on the circumstances of the case, it was determined that anyone who ate or drank at the restaurant during those dates was recommended to receive vaccination

within 14 days of exposure as further protection from becoming ill.

Clinics were set up in Monroe County on Jan. 14 and 15. The ISDH immunization strike team of Lisa Pearson, Tracy Burnette, Janet McCutchan and Stauffer vaccinated 610 people in eight hours on the first day. Millie Jines and Immunization Director Dave McCormick joined in on the second day when another 233 people were vaccinated. MCHD handled intakes and logistics at the clinics.

"I would like to thank the team for their outstanding effort at these clinics," McCormick said. "It was impressive to see the way the team came together to meet the need."

No additional hepatitis A cases have been reported for any of the restaurant's patrons as a result of the quick and thorough work by the ISDH response team and the MCHD.

"The entire team has worked extremely hard throughout this outbreak," said Outbreak Supervisor Shawn Richards. "Their months of ongoing focus on this case and

many others has kept this outbreak from impacting even more Hoosiers."

The strike team continues to respond to public exposures and focus on vaccinating those who are most at risk during the outbreak, including people who use illicit drugs, the homeless, those who have been incarcerated, men who have sex with men and their close contacts.

The case is part of the hepatitis A outbreak in Indiana. The outbreak began in November 2017, and now more than 1,000 outbreak-related cases have been reported. Indiana typically has 20 cases in a 12-month period. Indiana has not had any cases to date of restaurant patrons becoming infected with hepatitis A virus due to an infected food handler.

Other hepatitis A outbreak operations team members who have been working to minimize this public health threat are Eric Hawkins, Billy Brewer, Zac Jones, Charles Clark, Laurie Kidwell, Lauren Milroy, Jill King, Hailey Vest, Tracy Hawkins and Brandon Halleck.

HOW TO GET THE PREMIUM DISCOUNT FOR 2020

You and your spouse can earn a healthcare premium discount in 2020 by each doing **ONE** of the following through ActiveHealth by Sept. 30:

Complete four coaching sessions (face-to-face or over the phone). Each session lasts around 30 minutes. For more information, log on to [ActiveHealth](#), then select "Program Info" from the "Actions" menu at the top of the screen. Health coaching is available 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. Monday through Friday and 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturdays by appointment only. Call 1-855-202-4219 to get started with a coach today!

Record at least 45 minutes of physical activity three days per week by using a synced device. You'll need to do this for 11 weeks each quarter, for two out of three quarters. Qualifying quarters are January-March, April-June and July-September.

Record 10,000 steps per day for 75 days of a quarter, for two out of three quarters. Qualifying quarters are January-March, April-June and July-September.

Remember: For ActiveHealth to recognize your steps/physical activity, you must sync a fitness device with your ActiveHealth account.

Psyched About Counting Steps? Make Sure You're in Sync!

Only physical activity that occurs **after** you have synced your fitness device with ActiveHealth will be tracked and credited.



Invest In Your Health

ActiveHealth
MANAGEMENT

Reach Level 5 (9,000 hearts) by participating in digital coaching, health education and health goals on the ActiveHealth Platform.

Note: Spouses covered by a state health plan must also complete one of the above in order for the employee to earn the premium discount.

More details about the premium discount level will be shared as plan options for 2020 are developed.

TOBACCO DIVISION SUPPORTS ACCREDITATION

By Patricia Truelove

The Accreditation Team would like to highlight one of the many great documentation examples we have come across in our collection for accreditation.

The staff of the Tobacco Prevention and Cessation (TPC) Division has provided several documents in the last several months. One example that particularly comes to mind is the Indiana Tobacco Quitline Creative Focus Group. This example was used in Domain 3, which covers how ISDH creates and promotes public health education and promotions while considering and involving the community.

Here is what we were able to capture in their great work:

- Two focus groups were conducted from TPC's target audience that included 21 smokers in the Indianapolis area ranging between 30 and 59 years of age, the majority of whom started smoking at age 18.

- TPC gained knowledge of the participants' attitudes and feelings about smoking and their desire to quit smoking, which will assist in the development of materials to address misconceptions and barriers smokers have in their quitting journeys.

- TPC asked the target group what they know about the services offered through the Quitline, if they plan to use the service and the reasons for their decision. These answers will provide understanding about whether or not current advertising provides a clear message of all the services offered and if it is reaching their target audience, and help TPC staff understand what barriers prevent smokers from using the service.

- TPC gave the focus group examples of advertising materials to help determine what would be most appealing to specific individuals and why (will provide knowledge on what will make the most impact to TPCs target audience)

- The focus group reports include a

breakdown of findings, highlights key comments and findings and includes graphics for easy interpretation.

Here are some activities you can do to help meet the expectations in Domain 3:

- Consult with the community and target audience during development of educational materials or messaging
- Coordinate with local health departments and/or other community partners on unified messaging
- Create a planned approach on the development and implementation of strategies using promotional and education materials
- Identify and implement strategies that address factors that contribute to specific populations' high-health risks and poor health outcomes

Please email Accreditation Coordinator [Patricia Truelove](#) if you have questions about accreditation or would like to be a part of the review team.



**LOOK WHO I MET
ON THE ELEVATOR!**

Miriam Buffington



NAME: Miriam Buffington

TITLE: Enforcement and provider services manager, Long-Term Care

JOB DESCRIPTION: I work in Long-Term Care and oversee licensing, enforcement and provider changes for nursing homes, residential and intermediate care facilities for individuals with intellectual disabilities.

YEARS AT ISDH: 12

FAVORITE PART OF WORKING AT ISDH: The variety of things in my job.

OTHER INFORMATION: I like to spend time with my family. I enjoy hiking, reading, and watching movies and sports.

WELLNESS CHALLENGES

All state employees and their spouses are eligible to participate in wellness campaigns and challenges through the [OurHealth and Limeade Corporate Wellness App](#). Complete activities through the app for a chance each month to win a variety of prizes. The more activities you complete, the more chances you'll have to win and the more entries you'll have to win one of 10 grand prizes at the end of the year.

STAFFING UPDATES

Congratulations to the newest ISDH employees who joined the agency in January:

James Clagett, Labs intern - biosafety; Sewit Tedla, labs intern - biosafety; Angela Ryggs, ICF/IID surveyor, Long Term Care; Cynthia Mattson, public health nurse surveyor, Acute Care; Traci Johnson, Ryan White services manager, HIV/STD/Viral Hepatitis; Joshua Dowell, data integration specialist, HIV/STD/Viral Hepatitis; Brandon Moore, administrative assistant, Trauma and Injury Prevention; Shantai Pace-Johnson, clerical assistant, Vital Records; Adam Green, microbiologist, Laboratory; and Julia Brunnemer, worksite health promotion intern, Nutrition and Physical Activity.

Also Victoria Konstantinidis, Environmental intern; Lixia Liu, deputy lab director, Laboratory; Muhammad Azimi, senior database analyst, Office of Technology and Compliance; Gabrielle Carr, Office of Women's Health intern; Elaina Elliott, public health nurse surveyor, Acute Care; Hanna Van Prooyen, Maternal and Child Health intern; Sarah Leathers, educational consultant, Center for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Education.

Welcome to Mary Stiker, health physicist, Program Development and Quality Initiatives, who transferred to ISDH from the Department of Homeland Security.