

# PULSE

A look at what keeps ISDH ticking

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### FUN FACT

Wearing headphones for just an hour could increase the bacteria in your ear by 700 times.

## GETTING BETTER FROM THE INSIDE OUT

I shared last month that I had completed my goal of visiting all 93 local health departments in Indiana. That odyssey was so important to my understanding of public health in Indiana. I learned that the same health problem can have many different causes across our state, so it requires many different solutions.



Kris Box, MD, FACOG

So for the year ahead, I'm turning my focus inward to hear from all of you about how you are working to address ISDH's public health priorities, including infant mortality, the opioid epidemic, obesity and smoking, to name a few. To do that, we need strong internal and external partnerships. We need good data and evidence-based practices. We need to be ready for new public health threats, and we need to make sure that everyone has the opportunity to be healthy.

To accomplish those goals, we also need to improve the health of our own organization. That means a culture that demands and rewards excellence, values teamwork and has the most-talented individuals for the job.

One way we'll work to accomplish that is with more engagement from the executive team in each division and commission so that we can recognize your successes and understand your challenges. Look for us to sit in on a meeting or walk the floors to learn more about what's going well and what you need help with. We might not be able to address every concern, but I can promise that we will be good listeners who are open to changing what we can.

ISDH is also launching an engagement team of 24 staff members from throughout the agency. These individuals represent a wide range of pro-

### 2019 ISDH Engagement Team Members

- Afra Hussain — Office of Women's Health
- Fatma Yousif — Maternal and Child Health
- Lakeisha Brown — Acute Care
- Harold Gil — Epidemiology Resource Center
- Jeremy Turner — HIV/STD/Viral Hepatitis
- Mike Sutton — Environmental Public Health Division
- Kelsey Barrick — Division of Nutrition and Physical Activity
- Heather Whitaker — SPD
- Rashmi Fansler — Acute Care
- Calvin R. Knight-Nellis — Division of HIV/STD/HCV
- Tori Harvey — WIC
- Shannon Ford-Fiest — Acute Care
- Ramzi Nimry — Trauma and Injury Prevention
- Diana Feliciano — MCH MOMS Helpline
- Barbara Fowler — ISDH PHNS
- Ayriane Bailey — Division of HIV/STD/Viral Hepatitis
- Jamie Yeadon-Fagbohun — Environmental Microbiology
- Curtis Warfield — OTC
- Dave McCormick — Immunizations
- Steven Allen — Food Protection Program
- Pam Pontones — Office of the Commissioner
- Mary Ann Hurtle — Chronic Disease
- Cindy Lawrence — Center for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Education
- Eden Bezy — OPHPM

gram areas, length of tenure at the health department and experience in public health.

The team will help us develop ideas and strategies to fulfill goal No. 5 in our strategic plan: improve organizational health and be an employer of choice by focusing on culture, employee satisfaction and retention. Monthly meetings start Feb. 13.

I'm looking forward to hearing and implementing their ideas to ensure that, even internally, we become the best at getting better.

Yours in health,  
Kris



### Mission:

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

## CONRAD TO LEAD NATIONAL GROUP

By Greta Sanderson

ISDH's Caitlin Conrad has a role on a larger stage as incoming chairwoman of the National Coalition of STD Directors

(NCSD).

Conrad is director of the Sexually Transmitted Disease (STD) Prevention Program in the division of HIV/STD/Viral Hepatitis. She has been a member of

NCSD for a year serving on the board of directors, and she is the chair-elect for 2019, using the year to learn her new role before becoming board chairwoman in

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## FIGHT THE FLU

**Kristi Hawkins from Indianapolis (center) was the winner of this year’s Join Blue and Prevent the Flu Register-to-Win contest by ISDH and the Indianapolis Colts. Hawkins was selected from among those who completed the flu vaccination survey to win three tickets to see the Indianapolis Colts take on the New York Giants and a football autographed by Andrew Luck. A record 8,012 people took the survey, which asked for opinions on what would make someone more or less likely to get a flu shot.**

► **CONRAD, continued from page 1**

2020. She’ll then become an ex officio member in 2021, ensuring a smooth NCSd leadership transition by being a non-voting member to advise the new board chair and chair-elect in the transition.

NCSd is an organization that helps all 50 states manage their STD prevention programs by offering technical assistance, education and capacity building. It also advocates for state directors with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and Congress, pushing for national changes that directors couldn’t do individually.

All reportable STDs, chlamydia, gonorrhea and syphilis, have been increasing for three consecutive years nationally. “There has never been a greater need for this coalition like there is now with rates continuing to climb everywhere,” Conrad said. “They have their work cut out for them.”

As board chairwoman in 2020, Conrad will help with the internal workings of the organization, run board meetings and field needs and CDC requirements.

Conrad has been working for ISDH’s STD program since 2012 when she was a disease intervention specialist (DIS). She said she’s done just about every position in the program, so she understands the challenges.

She said Indiana ranks in the middle in terms of state morbidity rates, with California having the highest rate and Rhode Island the lowest. Her goal at NCSd is to represent Indiana nationally and engage more DISs.

“The more work we do with NCSd, the more opportunity we have to grow STD prevention in the field,” she said. “The more people we bring, the more perspectives and opportunities we have.”

While Indiana has had a representative on the NCSd board, Conrad will be the first to chair the organization and looks forward to representing Indiana nationally.



Caitlin Conrad

## WELLNESS PROGRAM ENHANCEMENTS

Get started on your 2019 wellness goals and on earning a discount on 2020 health premiums by taking advantage of the numerous resources offered through [ActiveHealth](#), the state’s new wellness partner.

Personalized health coaching and more are available to all adult health plan members and covered spouses starting RIGHT NOW! ActiveHealth helps encourage and enable healthy lifestyles by providing digital, telephonic and onsite health coaching.

Three dedicated health coaches will travel throughout the state to work with employees and agency-based Wellness Champions at their work locations. ActiveHealth will also facilitate biometric screenings and health risk assessments.



Complete a health risk assessment through ActiveHealth (it only takes about 10 minutes), and you will earn a \$50 electronic gift card! Getting a biometric screening in 2019 will get you a \$100 electronic gift card. There you have it: two important health screenings completed and a cool \$150 to put toward a purchase of something you like! **You can redeem gift cards beginning Feb. 1.**

A wealth of resources is available to all participants, and you can learn about many of

the program’s great benefits — including earning eligibility for health premium discounts — by attending an ActiveHealth webinar.

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

Click [here](#) to register for an upcoming webinar where you can ask questions and interact live with ActiveHealth experts. You can learn how the program supports personal well-being, discover ways the dedicated health coach can support you and your workplace, enter to win a weekly prize drawing and much more.

[Click here](#) to learn more about other health initiatives that can help you reach your wellness goals in 2019.

# CHAVEZ RELISHES WIC OPPORTUNITY

By Greta Sanderson

Laura Chavez, who became Indiana Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) director at ISDH last month, is living the dream. Really.

“I have the best team I’ve ever worked with,” Chavez said. “They bring me joy every day I come in to work.”

Chavez has spent her entire career working with at-risk or low-income families and says her new position is the culmination of everything she’s ever wanted to do.

An Indianapolis native, Chavez started working with moms and babies in 2006, doing prenatal care coordination for an Indianapolis not-for-profit organization. She moved into a role as a social worker in a health clinic and then worked in a home-visiting program, where she gained first-hand insight into people’s needs.

“When you go into someone’s home, you can’t bring any of your judgment or assumptions,” she said. “You have to go in with the intent of helping that individual find their path.”



Laura Chavez

She said because WIC is multileveled – federally funded to the state, which supports local agencies in every county – it’s uniquely positioned to help give people access to nutritious food and healthy lifestyle education. The federal perspective helps direct funding to programs that data show are most effective. The state’s role is to build policy and collaboration using population-based practice. The local WIC agencies have the advantage of local people living in the same area as the clients they serve, so they understand the community and its resources.

“There’s really no other program like it,” Chavez said.

WIC has 600 staff statewide who serve about 144,000 clients a month through 39 agencies that operate 140 clinics. Chavez joined ISDH in May 2014 in the Office of Women’s Health. She left in 2016 but returned to ISDH in January 2017 as WIC’s deputy director before assuming the role as director in December 2018.

In recent years, WIC has expanded its technology, including a new electronic benefits transfer (EBT) card and mobile app that both changed the way services are received and used.

Chavez wants to build on those improvements and move toward a paperless

experience for clients and client education, but she also plans a new focus on identifying service needs.

A management information system was part of the new EBT system, so WIC now has a year’s worth of data showing how WIC services are used. Chavez will be delving into that data in the coming year, using what she learns to enhance WIC’s programs.

That will mean working on a strategic plan and setting goals with an eye toward improving the client’s experience.

“In the end, if it doesn’t benefit the client, why are we doing it?” Chavez said.

That goal includes making sure that everyone who qualifies for WIC receives that support, because her experience has shown her how often WIC is a family’s only food source. Chavez explained that WIC is funded by the number of people enrolled in the program, so the more people it serves, the more money it receives. People living at 185 percent of the poverty level qualify for services, a higher threshold than some other similar programs.

“That means that if you’re a young, working family at minimum wage, we can help you,” Chavez said.

“I’m dedicated to ensuring that anyone who needs or qualifies has access to it.”

## STAFFING UPDATES

Please welcome the following new employees who joined ISDH last month:

Justin Meyers, lead field staff - environmental scientist, Environmental Public Health; Brian Payne, environmental engineer, Environmental Public Health; Jessica Dickerson, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) education coordinator, Nutrition and Physical Activity; Lisa Pear-

son, immunization field representative, Immunizations; Tracy Brunette, immunization and registry educator, Immunizations; Emily Harrington, microbiologist, Laboratory; Mark Landers, accountant, Finance.

A special welcome to Ingrid Miller, public health nurse surveyor, Acute Care, who transferred to ISDH from the Indiana Attorney General’s Office.

## REVIEW HR POLICIES

The Indiana State Personnel Department has standardized policies that all employees must follow. It is important that employees review these periodically to ensure they are following and complying with these policies.

The policies can be easily found on the Indiana State Personnel Department website, under [Policies and Procedures](#). Within this same link, you can find the SOI Employee Handbook, Family and Medical Leave information, Performance Management information and more.

In addition to the SPD Standardized policies, ISDH has its own set of personnel policies. These policies can be found [here](#). Please read these policies, and if you have any questions, do not hesitate to reach out to the HR team.

# WHAT IS YOUR NEW YEAR RESOLUTION?

By Patricia Truelove

2019 will be an eventful year for ISDH. It will be the year the agency submits documentation for accreditation with the Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB)! Many of you have asked, "What can I do for accreditation?" Below are some ideas for ways you can incorporate accreditation standards into your work and help ISDH get ready for accreditation:

1. **Add dates (at least month and year) and a reference to ISDH on ALL documents.** Many of the supporting documents for accreditation are items such as meeting minutes with partners or local health departments, presentations and lists (such as a list of partners, tracking sheets or contact information for partners). ISDH needs to show that these are authored by, or associated with, ISDH and when they were created, published and/or updated. Adding a logo is an easy way to show ISDH affiliation on items such as memos, fact sheets, agendas, meeting minutes or presentations. When sending emails, make sure to add your professional signature.

2. **Review and update all policies (and plans).** ISDH needs to provide PHAB with a list of all policies and procedures, most of which need to be dated within the last five years. If your program develops or participates in the development of strategic plans, be sure you can show that they have been reviewed annually to track the progress and implementation.



3. **Signatures.** Make sure that all policies, plans or other documents that have a space and/or line for a signature have been signed. An official electronic signature (an option with Adobe) is acceptable for accreditation. A name typed cursive font is NOT acceptable to PHAB.

4. **Involve the community.** More than a couple of our domains have asked to provide where ISDH has interacted with the community directly for input on project and/or service changes and ideas. ISDH is great at involving partners but has struggled to find examples of public input, even though many of you do this. Look for ways you can include public input on program changes through surveys, forums and town meetings.

5. **Specifically call out your consideration of health equity and access to care.** ISDH understands the

importance of health equity and assessing access to services; however, the agency doesn't have much documentation showing where barriers to optimal health for disparate populations are addressed. Keep a written record of health equity efforts.

6. **Consider audiences that are non-English speaking and hearing or visually impaired.** Think about the target audience of your outreach effort and how they communicate. Does the information you push out to the community include non-English versions? How is your information being advertised to those with little Internet access or with hearing or visual impairment?

Please email Accreditation Coordinator [Patricia Truelove](#) for more information on what accreditation documents require or additional questions and concerns.

## MAKE AN 'ALL-YEAR' RESOLUTION

Is going to a gym one of your wellness goals in 2019? Hoping to save money at the same time? You're in luck! [Click here](#) to see a list of all current discount offers at gyms and health clubs throughout the state. In addition, employees who participate in a state health plan can enjoy great gym discounts through Anthem. Find details at [anthem.com](http://anthem.com). [Click here](#) for a list of all state employee discounts.

Invest In Your Health



## HELPING HANDS

The Tobacco Prevention and Cessation team spent some time at Gleaner's Food Bank boxing up 7,200 pounds of baby supplies as part of its holiday celebration. Pictured at left are (back row, from left) Sara Griewank, Sally Petty, Brian Busching, Rachelle Back, Miranda Spitznagle, Brandy Paul, (front row, from left) Christine Coverstone, Katelin Rupp and Anita Gaillard.



## GOODBYE, 2018!

ISDH took time to join together and mark 2018's accomplishments with a Year-end Celebration Dec. 18 in Rice Auditorium. FAR RIGHT: Clara Monroe of Acute Care sings "White Christmas" as part of the festivities. RIGHT: Connie Wright and Kristin Schwartz, Long Term Care, sing "My Grownup Christmas List." Thanks to members of the SECC committee, who did a fantastic job setting up the event and providing a variety of food and drinks for everyone. Mark your calendars for next year's event on Dec. 18.

