

April 2021

PULSE

A look at what keeps IDOH ticking

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FUN FACT

During your lifetime, you will eat enough food to equal the weight of about six African elephants.



Mission:

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

Celebrating public health warriors

Public health has long been the unsung hero. I've heard repeatedly that you never hear about public health until something goes wrong. We quietly go about the business of investigating outbreaks, administering vaccines, providing testing, educating new moms about safe sleep, working to prevent disease and so much more. And we all know that those tasks kept us plenty busy even before the pandemic.



Kris Box, MD, FACOG

But the past 14 months have changed all of that. People now know what public health is — or at least they think they do. They see us putting on testing in their communities and now vaccinating people against this disease that has impacted so many Hoosiers.

What they don't see, however, is the incredible amount of work that has occurred to make all of this possible. The long days and longer weeks. The sleepless nights. The time away from family. The trouble-shooting and problem-solving when supplies don't arrive or glitches occur.

We make a lot of sausage in public health these days, but most of the time, the public just sees the finished product. And despite all the challenges we have faced — both pre-pandemic and in the past 14 months — that product is simply amazing.

As we celebrate National Public Health Week, I want to give a shout out to our incredible public health workers. You are the reason that more than 1.2 million Hoosiers are fully vaccinated, the reason

that Hoosiers can get tested for COVID at nearly 300 sites around the state, and the reason that we have a light at the end of this long, dark pandemic tunnel.

You're also the reason Hoosiers can rest assured that their food is safe, that we will act swiftly to shut down outbreaks and prevent further cases of disease, and that we will do everything in our power to improve Hoosiers' health and wellbeing. You are a big part of why our infant mortality rate has dropped and why we are making strides in reducing maternal mortality.

Public health isn't glamorous work. The scales between praise and criticism often tilt heavily toward the negative, especially this past year. I know that our feet, our backs and our souls are weary. While public health is more visible than ever, it is also more embattled than ever.

Throughout this pandemic, half of the population has been with us, and the other half has been against us. The simple act of promoting the science has sometimes turned into personal attacks. Each of us can attest that public health work in a pandemic is not for the faint of heart.

But every day I receive emails or messages that thank the Indiana Department of Health for the work we are doing. Those are the messages that keep me going, because it means we have made a difference in someone's life, and that this incredible team's heart is being seen.

At the end of the day, there is little that is more satisfying.

Thank you for being such a blessing to Hoosiers, to the Indiana Department of Health, and to me personally.

**Yours in health,
Kris**

Spotlight

Antoniette Holt recognized with IU Bicentennial Medal

Congratulations to our own Antoniette Holt, who was awarded Indiana University's Bicentennial Medal recently.

The Bicentennial Medal is awarded to organizations and individuals who, through their personal, professional, artistic or philanthropic efforts, have broadened the reach of Indiana University around the state, nation and world. The medals themselves are unique, made from materials salvaged from the old bells that hung in the Student Building on the IU Bloomington campus. The medal was designed by IU artist and professor Jeeyea Kim to signify the impact and outward trajectory of Indiana University.

Antoniette, director of the Office of Minority Health, is a champion of efforts to elevate minority health, eliminate health disparities and in-

crease health equity. She organizes the annual Black & Minority Health Fair, which serves an average of 16,000 people each year over a four-day period.

She was nominated for the award by Devina J. Jani, MSW, LSW, director of career services in the IU School of Social Work. The award was presented on March 16 by Tamara Davis, Ph.D., dean of the school.



Office of Minority Health Director Antoniette Holt is a 2021 recipient of Indiana University's prestigious Bicentennial Medal.

More than 30 people attended the virtual ceremony to celebrate Antoniette's accomplishments, including family and friends, local, state and national partners and IDOH Chief of Staff Shane Hatchett, Assistant Commissioner Dr. Shirley Payne, Deputy Health Commissioner and State Epidemiologist Pam Pontones and OMH staff members Adrienne Durham and Dr. Kimberly Bentley-Walton.

"I am humbled and appreciative of this great award," Antoniette said. "I have been very fortunate to be able to have wonderful support from family, friends, partners at IU and in the state and abroad. I desire to continue to serve those communities who are at most need and ensure that we empower, change and forge ahead with everyone being equitable in the health they get to live."

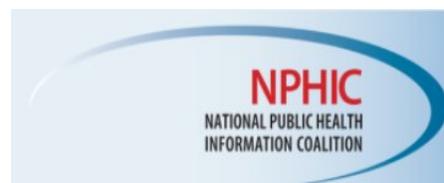
Jeni O'Malley named president of NPHIC executive board

Deputy Chief of Staff and Chief Communications Officer Jeni O'Malley has been named president of the executive board for the National Public Health Information Coalition (NPHIC), a CDC-funded group representing public health communicators around the country.



Jeni O'Malley

NPHIC's mission is to "make public health public" by sharing knowledge, expertise and resources to communi-



cate about the health issues of the day. That work has been invaluable over the past year as states have shared tips and best practices for educating people about the pandemic and now the vaccine.

"NPHIC has been a lifeline as we have tried to navigate the uncertainty

and distrust that the pandemic has brought," Jeni said. "Just knowing that other people are dealing with the same communication challenges has been a comfort, and their experience has been invaluable as we've shaped our own strategies."

NPHIC is promoting participation in the [survey](#) about public health workers' mental health and stress that was recently shared with the IDOH staff. We encourage you to participate so that NPHIC and the CDC can identify resources to help colleagues across the country.



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](#).

Spring trainings set for MediaLab

IDOH's use of MediaLab has increased, and we want to take your team's understanding to the next level.

We now have 275 users in the system and 1,783 documents that are being managed, reviewed and approved on an ongoing basis. MediaLab has allowed IDOH to better track renewal dates and regulatory compliance issues, as well as to ensure accessibility and security relating to our most important documents. For example, MediaLab was extremely helpful in performing our annual, agency-wide review and approval of All Staff policies.

You can find All Staff policies on the Nerve Center at <https://www.in.gov/isdh/thenervecenter/2458.htm> and can be confident that you are seeing only the current and fully-approved documents.

The Office of Public Health Performance Management (OPHPM) is offering workshops for existing and new users. These sessions are perfect for honing your skills and learning about new features within MediaLab. OPHPM can help you add documents, create approval chains, develop periodic review workflows and create reports. The OPHPM team can also help your division or program with ideas on organizing your documents to mirror or improve your document management processes.

Please see below for upcoming workshop dates. If you are interested in attending, please email Barb Killian at bkillian@isdh.in.gov.

MediaLab Workshop Dates:

April 13, 2021

April 22, 2021

May 4, 2021

May 13, 2021



Final accreditation documents have been submitted to PHAB!

The year 2020 made us work like no other year before, and 2021 is amounting to be much of the same. Many of our staff assumed additional duties, learned to work together in new ways, and changed the way we communicate.

Even though COVID-19 has been our main priority, our regular activities have not stopped. This includes our journey to accreditation.

For those who are new to the agency, IDOH submitted our initial application to become an accredited health department in September, 2018. We submitted our first set of documents to verify that our agency meets required standards and measures on June 28, 2019, and held our official site visit in February 2020. The PHAB review team asked that we further verify 10 measures and resubmit an additional 31 documents before September 2021. Our goal was never to take the full amount of time, but we wanted to ensure that we did this correctly. We are excited to announce that we submitted those documents and our final application ahead of schedule on March 31, 2021!

The PHAB review team will assess the documents and determine if they meet the requirements of the measure. Once completed, the PHAB review team will provide a report of its findings to the board. The board will then decide if IDOH functions at the level of an accredited state health department. If the team can review all of the documents and finalize its report before April 30, the board will make its decision at their May 14 meeting. If not, we will need to wait until quarter 3 of 2021 for their decision.

We want to thank everyone at IDOH who participated in this process and helped collect documents to meet the requirements. And a special thank you goes to Accreditation Coordinator Patricia Truelove, who shepherded the process through and never took her eye off the goal despite playing a critical support role in the pandemic response.

Thank you all again for your amazing work to make this possible! If you have questions about accreditation or our process, please reach out to Patricia at Ptruelove1@isdh.in.gov.



Be Well Indiana



Gift Card Rewards

There is more to ActiveHealth than just qualifying for a health insurance discount. ActiveHealth also facilitates wellness visits and health assessments. Complete a health assessment through [ActiveHealth](#) and you will earn a \$25 electronic gift card! [Complete a wellness visit](#) and you will receive a \$100 electronic gift card.

Both employees and spouses eligible for the ActiveHealth program earn a \$100 e-gift card for completing a wellness visit.

Your results must be visible in the ActiveHealth portal by November 30, 2021, to receive the e-gift card. E-gift cards are redeemed from the Rewards Center on the [ActiveHealth portal](#).

Communicating Across Cultures



To succeed in a cross-cultural business setting, it's important to understand the differences in how people communicate. Language isn't the only barrier. Pace, style and nonverbal cues all affect how messages are received. If you do business on a global scale or in a diverse environment, adapting your communication strategy is critical to workplace harmony and the bottom line.

In this course, Kelley School of Business professor and executive coach Tatiana Kolovou demonstrates simple techniques to build your cross-cultural communication skills: as a manager, peer or coworker. Learn how to adapt your communication style, overcome hidden bias and build rapport with colleagues.

Time: 32 minutes.
Click [here](#) to log in.



Employee Assistance Program

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

The Anthem Employee Assistance Program (EAP) can help by providing you with tips to become more organized at work and in life. Log on at [AnthemEAP.com](#) and enter the company code, State of Indiana, to check out this month's features:

- Planning in times of uncertainty
- Organizing skills
- How to be more organized
- Fear of success

Podcast: Check, challenge, and change your thoughts

Staffing updates

The Indiana Department of Health is pleased to welcome the following new staff members who joined the agency in March:

Nelly Chawla, epidemiologist, Vital Records; Cynthia Dowers, public health nurse surveyor, Acute Care; Rachael Curl, local emergency site coordinator for the Division of Emergency Preparedness; Christina Parks, a public health nurse surveyor for Acute Care; Debbie Saddler, a clerical assistant for Children's Special Health Care Services; Kira Richardson, an epidemiologist in the Epidemiology Resource Center; Iris Palacios, a communications supervisor for Maternal & Child Health; Stephanie Beverly, a systems program manager for Maternal & Child Health; and Hope Eck, a public health nurse surveyor for Long-Term Care.

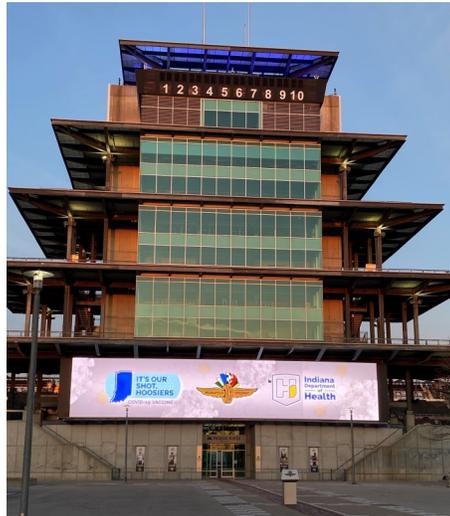


Please also welcome Sarah Blake, administrative assistance for Survey Support & Guidance; Tim Bailey, public health nurse surveyor for Long-Term Care; Kara Nemer, public health nurse surveyor in Acute Care; Courtney Schaber and Emily Coffey, public health administrators for the HIV/STD/Viral Hepatitis division; and Joseph Adama, a local emergency site coordinator for the Division of Emergency Preparedness.

In addition, please congratulate the following employees on their promotions to new roles: Holley Rose, the new healthcare preparedness program manager for the Division of Emergency Preparedness; and Jordan Young, a food scientist supervisor for the Division of Food Protection.

More than 1.2 million Hoosiers vaccinated!

One of the directives from Dr. Weaver to the COVID response team is that when the situation allows, "Do fun things." Being part of mass vaccination clinics at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway, Calumet New Tech High School in Gary, Ivy Tech in Sellersburg, the University of Notre Dame and now the Gary FEMA site is fulfilling that mission!



ABOVE: Megan Lytle directs the staff at IMS.



Ivy Tech and Calumet New Tech High School rolled out the red carpet for our vaccination teams.



Danielle Renckly

GUESS WHO I MET ON THE ELEVATOR?



Title: Planning manager, promoted recently after contracting with IDOH for three years
Brief Job Description: Pre-COVID-19, I wrote emergency plans in the Division of Emergency Preparedness. During the pandemic, I have helped with testing and vaccination logistics, including sending surveys to providers and drafting site plans for mass vaccination sites.
What do you like most about working at IDOH? I've gotten to expand my skill set this past year and work with and learn from IDOH employees from all divisions.
Quarantine hobby: I enjoy hanging with my dog, Magnus, a pit bull-border collie mix, and hiking with him in Brown County, even though he sometimes misbehaves and has chewed four cellphone chargers to date!

State agencies step up to support COVID-19 response

An emergency public health response of this nature and duration would not be possible without incredible support from a wide range of partners. Learn more [here](#) about the many roles that state agencies have taken on as they have partnered with the IDOH team to help support the COVID-19 response and protect Hoosiers.

