

May 2021

PULSE

A look at what keeps IDOH ticking

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

◆ Celebrating the team	2
◆ New state registrar	2
◆ Emmy nomination	3
◆ Hepatitis Awareness Month	3
◆ CDHHE mobile unit	4
◆ New agency name	4
◆ SHA/SHIP & HR updates	5
◆ Nutrition guidelines & staff updates	6



FUN FACT

Pound for pound, your bones are stronger than steel. A block of bone the size of a matchbox can support up to 18,000 pounds of weight.



Mission:

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

Embracing a season of transition

"April showers bring May flowers" is a reminder that even the most unpleasant things can bring about positive change. It's a lesson about patience, and one that we can all relate to after the past 15 months.

We most definitely are seeing the blooms of spring emerge, in our gardens at home and more metaphorically in the change that comes with our current transition out of heightened COVID-19 response mode.

That means that many of our staff who have been pulled from their regular jobs to help lead the COVID response will begin returning to their old work lives. It means that we will outsource some of the work we've been doing to build vaccination clinic schedules so that our staff can focus back on their own program areas. It means getting back to a work life that more closely resembles what we left on March 12, 2020. And it means taking a deep dive into what sustainability means for our COVID-19 efforts, such as getting vaccines into the offices of healthcare providers and getting out of the mass vaccination clinic business.

Like any transition, there will be adjustments. Many of our COVID response staffers have been running on adrenaline and caffeine for months; adjusting to a more manageable pace may leave folks feeling like they aren't doing anything. Our bodies that have carried us through for many stressful months may suddenly demand attention; it's a phenomenon known as the let-down effect.

For many other staffers, it may mean meeting new colleagues or a more regular return to the office. That, too, can be an unsettling adjustment.

In any period of transition, it's important to recognize that change can be hard and to extend grace to yourself and to others. We need to acknowledge that there will be bumps along the way and that every member of our staff will have an experience and thought process that is unique to that individual. Most importantly, we have to remember that it's OK to feel some

uncertainty.

We have worked through what arguably is the most stressful, prolonged period that public health has ever experienced. But like those May flowers, we are resilient, and we are emerging from this difficult season.

That allows us to begin turning our attention to other things, like celebrating our national accreditation by the Public Health Accreditation Board. This is an achievement that has been years in the making, and it would not be possible without the dedication of our entire accreditation team, but especially accreditation coordinator Patricia Truelove, who has worn multiple hats throughout the pandemic but never let us lose sight of our goal. We are now the fourth health department in the state to earn PHAB accreditation, and my hope is that more will follow. Thank you to everyone who played a role in helping us reach this incredible milestone!

Other signs that we are returning to more normal operations include planning for our annual Labor of Love summit, restarting our amazing Leadership at All Levels training, implementing our new Strategic Plan, and planning for the Indiana Black and Minority Health Fair. Watch for more details soon!

While the pandemic is not over, it's important that we spotlight these efforts. Public health was never designed to focus on just one priority, even though it has seemed that way for the past 15 months. It's about improving the overall health and wellbeing of our population and ensuring that every Hoosier has equal access to the resources needed to live a long, healthy life.

One blessing of this pandemic has been the ability to work with people we might never have crossed paths with in an agency this size. I am constantly amazed by the collaboration across agencies and with private business.

I hope the relationships we have built internally and externally are like perennial plants. With proper nourishment, they will return year after year and grace us with their presence.

Yours in health,
Kris



Kris Box, MD, FACOG

Spotlight

May offers moments to recognize IDOH team's work



May marked Public Service Recognition Week, which celebrates the work that all state employees do each day to help Hoosiers. Chief of Staff Shane Hatchett and Deputy Health Commissioner Pam Pontones greeted staff, many of whom were returning to the building for the first time, with snacks to serve as a token of the agency's appreciation. The Indiana Pacers also shared their thanks for the work done in the COVID-19 response by honoring Dr. Box, Dr. Weaver, FSSA Secretary Dr. Jennifer Sullivan and Marion County Health Officer Dr. Virginia Caine during a recent game.

Alpa Mistry leads Vital Records as new state registrar

New state registrar Alpa Mistry has had an exciting first month on the job as she leads the Division of Vital Records.

Mistry has spent her first few weeks learning the functionality of each unit in the department, better understanding how we transmit data to CDC, and promoting collaboration among the Vital Records team, including celebrating birthdays and playing Bingo during team meetings.

Mistry, a Carmel resident, earned a master's in public health and epidemiology

from the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey's School of Public Health and joined IDOH in 2020, where she worked as a data quality team project manager, assisting with the implementation of the new DRIVE system and a variety of data requests.



Alpa Mistry

In addition to her public health work, Mistry had seven years of classical dance training in India and founded a dance academy on Indianapolis' south side that offered a variety of Indian dance forms, including Bollywood Fusion, Bhangra and Indian Hip-Hop. Her students performed at various events across Indianapolis, including India's Independence Day celebration and the International Festival.

Mistry can be reached at 317-233.7523 or amistry@isdh.in.gov.

Anthem EAP is here to help!



Access eight free face-to-face counseling sessions. Call (800) 223-7723 (24/7 support) and select option 1 to be connected to a trained EAP representative who will help you find a therapist who fits your specific situation.

Website: AnthemEAP.com (Enter **State of Indiana** to log in)



Harm reduction program film collaboration nominated for regional Emmy Award

In mid-2018, the Indiana Department of Health (IDOH) received a federal grant to address the ongoing opioid crisis. A portion of those grant funds was awarded to the Harm Reduction Program to expand service delivery and increase engagement with syringe and non-syringe harm reduction programs statewide.

The service expansion funds were used to purchase mobile units for seven of the nine syringe service programs (SSP) in the state. In an effort to use the remaining funds as efficiently as possible to educate the general public about harm reduction, reduce stigma, and increase engagement with SSPs, the Harm Reduction Program partnered with The Health Foundation of Indianapolis (THFGI) and WFYI Productions, the Indianapolis affiliate of the Public Broadcasting Service, to develop a series of videos telling different aspects of the harm reduction story in Indiana. The series, titled "No Harm: The Battle to Save IV Drug Users," was filmed throughout the state in 2019 and early 2020 and was released in late December. It is being used as an educational resource that will be able to reach large numbers of people for years to come.

In late April, the collaborators were notified that the video series had been nominated for a National Academy of Television Arts & Sciences Lower Great Lakes Chapter Emmy Award for Documentary - Societal Concerns. Winners will be announced later this year. In addition, the series is being re-edited as a feature-length documentary that will be broadcast on PBS stations statewide and available nationally later this year. You can watch, and share, the series at <https://www.in.gov/isdh/27356.htm>

Harm Reduction Program Manager Erika Chapman said the documentary helps increase understanding of the program and its benefits.

"As a result of the intense stigma around and SUD, people using substances often isolate themselves and may feel shame when attempting to access services," she said. "Harm reduction programs offer low-barrier, judgment-free access points to supplies, services and referrals that empower people to care for their own health and that of their communities."

National Hepatitis Awareness Month focuses on hepatitis elimination

May is designated as National Hepatitis Awareness Month. More than half of persons living with viral hepatitis are unaware of their status. Did you know Indiana ranked number #1 in the country in 2018 for the number of newly reported cases of acute hepatitis C? IDOH's Division of HIV, STD and Viral Hepatitis has been hard at work to address this troubling trend.

In 2020, Indiana Medicaid lifted its final restriction for hepatitis C treatment, providing all prescribers the ability to treat hepatitis C; this has allowed Indiana to receive an A+ rating from the [National Viral hepatitis Roundtable](#)

The [Viral Hepatitis Services Program](#) can help you or someone you know with treatment navigation for hepatitis C. Two media campaigns have been released to help promote awareness for hepatitis C called [Ask + Act](#) and [Check, Care, Cure](#).

Beginning May 1, 2021, Indiana received a five-year federal funding award for Viral Hepatitis Integrated Surveillance Prevention and was one of 14 states to receive funding for Harm Reduction as part of this funding award.

The Division of HIV, STD, and Viral Hepatitis announced the official launch of the statewide elimination plan, *Zero is Possible – Indiana's Plan to End HIV and Hepatitis C (ZIP-IN Plan)*. The ZIP-IN plan positions community-based coalitions as key partners in the effort to end HIV and hepatitis C and emphasizes the importance of evidence-based, data-driven interventions, as well as the engagement and leadership of people living with HIV and hepatitis C. Check out the ZIP-IN Plan and get engaged at: <https://www.zipindiana.org/>.

During National Hepatitis Awareness Month, it is important to realize that reducing the spread of viral hepatitis in Indiana is achievable through promoting education, vaccination, testing, treatment and increasing awareness among healthcare and community partners. So what can you do?

Get tested! CDC recommends everyone between the ages of 18 and 79 get screened for hepatitis C.

Get engaged! Join a ZIP Coalition.

Help reduce the stigma surrounding substance use disorder and viral hepatitis.

If your division or program is interested in receiving Hep 101 information, please reach out to Seth Thomas at sethom-as@isdh.in.gov.



CDHHE mobile unit hits the road to bring services where needed



CDHHE's new mobile van is bringing services to the deaf and hard of hearing community

The **Center for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Education** has launched a mobile unit to better reach Indiana children who are deaf or hard of hearing and in need of services and support.

"The mobile unit approach allows us to reach more children, families and professionals within their communities, without the requirement to come to one of our locations," said CDHHE Executive Director Bethany Colson. "While a family may have to come to a school or other community location, such as a local health department, they are not having to travel a distance that many were having to travel to reach one of our office locations."

The center is piloting a program in which the mobile unit visits school districts around the state that have needs for their staff and students who are deaf and hard of hearing. Services can include hearing screening follow-up, educational audiology services and professional development training for speech language pathologists.

Colson said the mobile unit allows for more seamless connections with professionals already serving a child or family. When a school requests the mobile unit, CDHHE gets a direct connection to the child's teachers and service providers, which allows the CDHHE team to better assess the child's needs by seeing him or her in an everyday environment and make direct recommendations.

The needs of the community and school determine which of the center's specialized professionals staff the mobile unit each trip. Staff may include an accommodations specialist, an audiologist, an early intervention specialist, an educational psychologist, a teacher of deaf and hard of hearing and a speech-language pathologist.

The wheelchair-accessible vehicle is equipped with a full hearing sound booth and equipment appropriate for testing children of all ages, as well as hearing aid test equipment to fit and evaluate amplification, including hearing assistive technology. There is also a consultation area for counseling families and professionals and facilitate completion of communication and academic assessments. You can take a virtual tour of the unit at <https://www.in.gov/isdh/28727.htm>.



New agency name official on July 1

This legislative session saw a number of bills pass impacting the Indiana Department of Health, one of which formalizes our new branding.

Effective July 1, our agency will officially be known as the Indiana Department of Health, and our acronym will be IDOH. It's always preferable to refer to the health department or state Department of Health, but use IDOH when circumstances require it.

As part of the rebranding, the Office of Technology Compliance is working with the Indiana Office of Technology to update our website and emails. The url www.health.in.gov has been created to redirect to our existing www.in.gov/isdh page. Please begin incorporating this into your communications.

We also will be working with the Access Indiana team to identify references on our website to Indiana State Department of Health so that they can be updated. You can assist with this project by beginning an audit of your program's websites and making the appropriate changes.

In the meantime, please ensure that all communications reference the Indiana Department of Health, not ISDH. This includes letters of support and other documents.

A longer-term project involves updating email addresses to reflect the health.in.gov branding. Because our emails are used for both internal and external purposes, including logging in to national databases, the OTC team plans to identify staff members across the agency to serve as testers for a 60- to 90-day pilot program before migrating all emails to the health.in.gov brand. Watch for more information soon!

Members sought for SHA/SHIP panel

Our current State Health Assessment and State Health Improvement Plan (SHA/SHIP) will sunset at the end of 2021. The Office of Public Health Performance Management is in the beginning stages of creating the next State Health Assessment and State Health Improvement Plan, which will span from 2022-2026.

OPHPM has been actively recruiting internal and external stakeholders to serve on the SHA/SHIP committee to participate in the data review process and ultimately inform the plan.

The first committee meeting was hosted on May 20, but there is still time to join and participate in the conversation. If you are interested in contributing to this work, know a partner who you think should be at the table, or even if you just would like to be kept updated on the process, you can still sign up to participate [here](#)!



Health coaching deadline looms

The last day to start your health coaching program to qualify for your 2022 Premium Discount is July 1. Don't wait! This is an amazing opportunity to work with a qualified professional (such as certified health coach, registered dietitian, exercise physiologist, certified diabetes instructor, and more) to reach your wellness goals.

Call ActiveHealth at 855-202-4219 to get started. Completing four in-person or telephonic health coaching sessions by Sept. 30, 2021 is one way to earn a Premium Discount for 2022.



Important PeopleSoft changes are coming soon

The State of Indiana is giving its HR and Payroll system (PeopleSoft) a make-over, and it's happening in just a few short months.

Major changes are coming to how we request the use of accrued leave and how we submit our time. Get in the habit now of submitting and approving time before the deadline. Delays to this process could mean delays to your paycheck. Other changes include easy-to-use self-service features for forms, W2 delivery, benefits updates and more.

Mandatory training is being developed by the project team, which is led by the Office of the Auditor of State. Shane Hatchett (Agency Sponsor), Adam Novotney and Heather Whitaker will be leading the charge here to help guide you through this change. Together we can ensure a smooth transition toward a much more functional and modern method for your HR and Payroll-related transactions that will provide for greater efficiency and security. For more information, you can find resources on the statewide project portal by clicking [here](#). Curious but strapped for

Upcoming skills-building session

In June, the Office of Public Health Performance Management will be restarting the Skills Building Sessions offered to all staff in the agency. Our first topic will cover Appreciative Inquiry, which is a strengths-based tool that can be used at the individual, team and organizational level. Eric Beers, our workforce development coordinator, will be facilitating this session. This session will be held via Microsoft Teams. Be on the lookout for more information about Appreciative Inquiry and the calendar hold for the event!

Leading your organization on a journey of allyship



LEARNING

Join inclusion strategist, Harvard-trained lawyer, author and instructor Verna Myers to learn how to grow a more inclusive workplace and become an ally in and out of the office. Verna shows you the link between inclusion, equity and allyship and describes the importance of allyship as a business practice that starts from the top down.

Time: 28 minutes

Click [here](#) to access the program

New dietary guidelines focus on different life stages

Age is but a number! This saying can be comforting as we see birthdays come and go, but age is more than a number when it comes to nutrition. Although there are general nutritional guidelines for all people, there are specific nutritional considerations at each stage of life.

The new [2020-2025 USDA Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#) have been sectioned by life stage to encourage this perspective on meeting nutritional needs. This approach reiterates the idea that nutrition is unique to each individual and should not be considered a one-size-fits-all concept.

General recommendations for food intake at each life stage are dependent on how the body is developing. For example, consuming calcium-rich foods in adolescence is important to build bone density through dairy foods and non-dairy foods, such as fortified cereals and some leafy green vegetables. As we move into our 20s-40s, the body's need shifts to preventing chronic diseases such as type 2 diabetes and heart disease. Prioritizing fruits, vegetables, nuts, and whole grains by making substitutes and additions to diets helps prevent chronic disease.

Women of child-bearing age should be incorporating folate sources such as leafy green vegetables, beans and peas to promote healthy fetal development. Vitamins, minerals and antioxi-

dants can be used to supplement nutrients that you are unable to consume through your diet. Individuals in their 40s-50s are encouraged to remain physically active and limit foods with added sugar and saturated fat to account for fluctuating hormones and slowed metabolism during this life stage. Finally, as we approach age 60, eating a variety of protein-rich foods becomes important to maintain bone strength. Sources of high-protein foods include seafood, eggs, beans, nuts and tofu.

The foods we eat are often influenced by our family's history and culture. Considerations when adjusting for these variables include:

- Making half of your plate fruits and vegetables (canned, frozen or fresh)
- Experimenting with different grains and substituting for whole grain when possible
- Choosing a lean meat to pair with the meal

Maintaining healthy eating patterns over time looks different for everyone. All the tips above can be combined in a way that addresses your personal and cultural preferences in addition to meeting age-specific nutritional needs.



LISA HARRISON

GUESS WHO I MET ON THE ELEVATOR?



Title: Retail food supervisor, Food Protection

Brief Job Description: I am very new to the position and just started in this role May 3. I was a retail food field staff member before that. I supervise the retail food safety inspection officers, perform inspections, oversee development of policies and procedures related to inspection of retail food establishments on state property and help train local health departments to do retail food inspections.

Time at IDOH: 17 years

What do you like most about working at IDOH? "I enjoy working with people who are experts in their field but who are also people I call friends. I have had wonderful mentors whose expertise and friendship helped me to have a real understanding of food safety. I also enjoy opportunities to be involved with national organizations we partner with, as well as FDA, to help impact food safety."

Staffing updates

This month's staffing updates include some new faces, along with familiar names of individuals who have been serving IDOH as contractors but are now joining the state employment ranks.

Please welcome the following new hires:

Jennifer Weaver, Maternal & Child Health; Sergey Smulevitch, IDOH Laboratories; Danielle Renckly, Emergency Preparedness; Vivien McCurdy, Food Protection; Charnel Forbes, Maternal and Child Health; Nicole Pador, IDOH Laboratories; Monte Bluebaum, Emergency Preparedness; Kelley Holman, HIV/STD/Viral Hepatitis; Elisabeth Wire, IDOH Laboratories; Maheswari Mariappan, Vital Records; Stacia Innamorati, Acute Care; Demarcus Sneed, Office of Minority Health; Shiloh Schwenk, IDOH Laboratories; Michael Potts, Data Analytics; Stuart Kindig, OTC; Gurpreet Dhillon, HIV/STD/Viral Hepatitis; Kimberly Fournier, Long-Term Care; Jena Rasor, HIV/STD/Viral Hepatitis; and Renee Cline, Long-Term Care.

We also want to welcome the following interns: David Chase, school data project specialist intern; Emily Ross, Drug Overdose Prevention intern; Caitlyn Short, Fatality Review intern; and Cameron Bumbleburg, who will intern with the Water Microbiology team.

indianamuseum.org



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