

NOVEMBER 2018

PULSE

A look at what keeps ISDH ticking

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FUN FACT

Studies have found that optimism is beneficial to your overall health. It's linked to a healthy heart and can even help ward off diseases.



Indiana State Department of Health

Mission:

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

STEPPING UP THE PACE

Each year for the last six years, the ISDH Labor of Love Infant Mortality Summit has brought together people who care about Indiana moms and babies to learn how we can care for them better.

This year's summit on Nov. 14 was an amazing and informative event that brought together more than 1,300 people to join us in the "Race to 2024," the target date Governor Holcomb has set for Indiana to have the lowest infant mortality rate in the Midwest.

In issuing his challenge back in January, Governor Holcomb put infant mortality at the top of his agenda. He gave that agenda a big boost at this year's summit by announcing two initiatives that will create pathways for more Indiana babies to reach their first birthdays. Click [here](#) to view the video announcement.

First, Indiana will take steps to connect an obstetrical navigator to every high-risk Medicaid OB patient in the counties associated with the 13 highest-risk ZIP codes as early in their pregnancies as possible.

With our partners at the Family and Social Services Administration, we will link pregnant women in need with OB navigators to help more moms receive prenatal care in their first trimester; identify and treat other medical problems that can threaten both mother and baby, such as high blood pressure, diabetes and smoking; and break

down social and economic factors that may prevent them from seeking care.

The OB navigators are community-based healthcare providers who can meet patients where they are, at home in their community, to increase access to care in our more rural areas and improve connectivity to care already available in our more urban areas.

The governor also is calling for legislation that would require providers to use a standardized verbal screening tool to identify pregnant women with substance use disorder as early in pregnancy as possible.

We know that the opioid epidemic contributes to Indiana's high infant mortality and maternal mortality rates and that it can impact all women, regardless of their circumstances.

Legislation will be proposed in the 2019 General Assembly that would establish this universal verbal screening, making Indiana one of the first states to take such a step. Pregnancy provides us an important opportunity to identify and treat women with substance use disorder and prevent more babies from being born exposed to drugs.

You'll hear more about these initiatives and how you can help as they move forward. I'm confident that by wrapping our arms around more women during and after their pregnancies, we'll celebrate more first birthdays in Indiana.

Thank you to everyone who made this year's summit a resounding success!

Yours in health,
Kris



Kris Box, MD, FACOG

NBS GOES LIVE JAN. 1

By Charles Clark

ISDH uses several systems to conduct surveillance of infectious diseases. On Jan. 1, the Infectious Disease Epidemiology, Tuberculosis, Sexually Transmitted Diseases and Viral Hepatitis programs plan to tran-

sition their individual electronic disease surveillance and monitoring systems to the centralized National Electronic Disease Surveillance System (NEDSS) Base System (NBS).

NBS is a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention-developed integrated infor-

mation system that helps local, state and territorial public health departments manage reportable disease data and send disease data to CDC. The system supports the public health investigation workflow by processing,

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TB'S WHITE JOINS SKYPE WITH A SCIENTIST

By Kelly White

Skype a Scientist is a program that matches scientists with classrooms around the world, allowing students to get to know a real scientist. Started by a graduate student at the University of Connecticut, the program pairs scientists and classrooms based on topic, age range and availability. Scientists in the program Skype with a classroom for a 30- to-60-minute question-and-answer session to give a first-hand look into what it's like to be a scientist.

Introduced to this program by my husband, an educator, I decided to volunteer as a scientist to bring my background in mathematics and epidemiology to students. I was paired with three classrooms spanning from New Hampshire to Arizona for the fall 2018 semester.

I recently completed a session with Ms. Olivo's fifth grade classroom from Nathanael Greene Elementary School in Pawtucket, R.I. I discussed how I became a scientist, what kind of science I do at ISDH and a brief introduction to disease types and infectious disease transmission. The students prepared questions in advance, including, "How did you become a scientist?," "How do people catch colds from other people's germs?," and "Have you ever gotten any of the diseases that you study?"

By using a videoconferencing platform, I was not only able to answer these questions and present material verbally, but was also



ABOVE: The screen view via Skype of a fifth-grade classroom on Kelly White's computer.

RIGHT: Kelly White talks to a classroom of fifth-graders in Rhode Island via Skype.



able to show examples of graphs and data as well as photos of bacteria taken by ISDH Laboratories.

The Skype a Scientist program is a great way to promote the importance of STEM fields for students and show them the connection between their education and future careers. I greatly enjoyed being able to share my knowledge with these classrooms

and being able to serve as a role model for young women interested in science.

More information about the program can be found at www.skypeascientist.com.

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analyzing and sharing disease-related health information. NBS is used by 22 other states and provides reporting jurisdictions with a compatible information system to transfer epidemiologic, laboratory and clinical data efficiently and securely over the Internet. NBS will enable ISDH to meet updated requirements from the CDC and improve functionality for our users.

All updates regarding the new system can be found on the ISDH NBS website [here](#). This includes general information about the NBS system, ISDH plans for rollout and training, and other information for users. Check the website for more resources and training videos.

LHD Training Plan

The Epidemiology Resource Center hosted general training webinars for local health departments in October. A recording of that webinar is available on the [website](#). Field epidemiologists also are conducting in-person trainings with local health departments.

Additionally, the ERC will be hosting subject matter-specific NBS trainings. Notifications of these meetings will be emailed by field epidemiologists. Recordings of disease-specific trainings will be made available on the ISDH NBS website.

Hospital Training Plan

A training video was created for infection preventionists and other reporters and can be accessed on the ISDH NBS website. If infection preventionists or other reporters would like additional training, please contact your field epidemiologist.

Recorded Webinars

- [Local Health Department Training Video](#)
- [Reporter Training Video \(Infection preventionists and others\)](#)
- [Animal Bite and Zoonotic Disease Investigations in NBS video](#)

Training Documents

- [NBS User Guide](#)
- [NBS Glossary](#)
- [NBS FAQ](#)
- [Field Epidemiology Map](#)

NBS Questions by Program

If you have additional questions about NBS, please contact one of the following individuals.

ERC: Field epidemiologists or Charlie Clark –

cclark1@isdh.in.gov

TB: Kelly White – Kewhite@isdh.in.gov

Viral Hepatitis: Brittany Gross - bgross@isdh.in.gov

PUMPKINS ON PARADE

The Epidemiology Resource Center (ERC) celebrated Halloween with a pumpkin decorating contest. Eight decorated pumpkins were on display Oct. 31 in the Selig 7 conference room. The winners in six categories were selected by a Survey Monkey vote.

The ERC's WEIRD (Wild?! Wonderful?! Epidemiologists Interested in Recreation and Diversion) Committee started the contest last year.

The winners are pictured here. Pumpkins were also submitted by field epidemiology, data analysis/GIS and public health informatics.

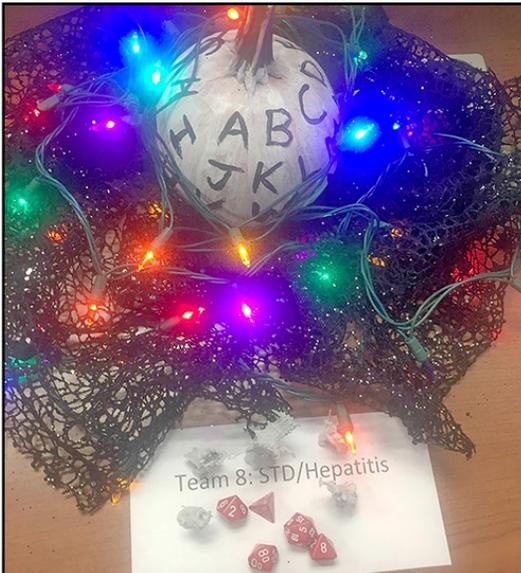
Congratulations to all! The ERC is planning another competition next year.



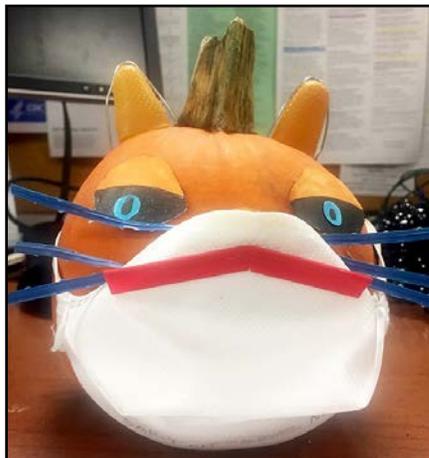
Scariest Pumpkin: Team 4: HAI/AR Team- Killer Surgeon



Cutest Pumpkin: Team 3: Zoonotic/ Vector Team- Baby Groot



Most Elaborate Pumpkin AND BEST ALL-AROUND PUMPKIN: Team 8: STD/Hepatitis- Team N. Gonorrhogon



Best Work-Themed Pumpkin: Team 7: TB/Refugee Health- Ne-Catizing Granumeowma



Most Creative Pumpkin: Team 2: Outbreak Team- Outbreak Frog: Get vaccinated so you don't croak!

EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM BENEFITS ARE EXPANDING

Employee Assistance Program (EAP) benefits are expanding.

Beginning Jan. 1, 2019, employees, their dependents and individuals living in their household will have access to **eight free face-to-face counseling sessions** with a licensed therapist per issue, per year. This is a significant increase from the current three available sessions.

Employees will now have access to an

Anthem® EAP

online 24/7 program provided by Anthem EAP called *myStrength* to support emotional well-being.

These enhancements are fundamental to our continued focus of improving

overall health among state employees and providing greater access to care.

If you have any questions about these new enhancements, please don't hesitate to call the Benefits Hotline Monday through Friday (7:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. EST) at 317-232-1167 in Indianapolis, toll-free outside Indianapolis at 1-877-248-0007, or via email at SPDBenefits@spd.in.gov.

WORKING TO MEASURE SUCCESS

By Nicole Morley

Public health performance management is the practice of using data to continuously monitor the quality of public health services we deliver.

Included in ISDH's broader [Quality Improvement Plan](#), tracking program performance and organizational health helps ISDH understand where we are meeting the goals set in our [strategic plan](#) and where we are falling short.

From the beginning of the collection process in June 2018 to now, the Office of Public Health Performance Management (OPHPM) has worked collaboratively with other program areas to collect and define 94 percent of

all measures and metrics.

Good news! There are only 80 metrics remaining to be defined, which amounts to 6 percent of measures remaining undefined. Thanks to all the program areas who have provided this important data. We will continue to reach out to help shore up other undefined metrics.

To help ISDH keep track of our goals, OPHPM has procured a cloud-based, public health performance management software called VMSG that is designed to support the development, implementation and performance management of the strategic and operational planning process.

VMSG provides avenues for documentation and reporting on ISDH's progress in

meeting the standards and targets outlined in the ISDH 2018-2020 Strategic Plan. OPHPM will utilize VMSG as an avenue to share information with the agency to celebrate wins, acknowledge areas of growth that will be conveyed to the Quality Improvement Team, and establish next steps for the agency.

Expect the first report on our strategic plan by next month.

Interested in learning more about performance management in a public agency? Interested in learning about options to help improve the quality of services we deliver? Want to get involved in QI, accreditation, leadership development or performance management? Email us at ophpm@isdh.in.gov or nmorley@isdh.in.gov.

VITAL RECORDS UPGRADE UPDATE

By Greta Sanderson

ISDH has started the first phase of a project to implement a new statewide system for recording vital records electronically.

The current Genesis system used for vital records, including birth and death certificates, has been in place since 2007. It's now outdated and expensive to maintain, and newer systems have been created that are more efficient and effective.

ISDH has selected Netsmart Technologies to create a new and improved records system. The new Indiana Electronic Vital Events Registry System (IN-EVERS) upgrade will bring several advantages:

- Death and fetal death in one place
- Incorporates burial transit permit
- Images can be uploaded within application
- Image sharing
- Documents can be attached to the record (i.e. coroner reports)
- Field edits and spellcheck to fix common errors
- A mobile app for coroners
- Print or save digital copies
- Onscreen password reset

- Secure and encrypted access with Internet connection

All existing data will be incorporated into the new system.

Work is being done on phase 1 of the project, which includes implementation of the death module and the accounting system.

Once that work is complete, more system configuration, testing, piloting and training will be done. Pilot program begins first quarter 2019, with the target go-live date of April/May 2019.

In phase 1.2, the birth module, putative father registry and adoption matching registry will be added.

This phase will take eight months followed by a two-month stabilization period, and it also includes configuration, testing, piloting and training before it goes live.

Finally, phase 2 will incorporate the fetal death module, terminated pregnancy module and health information exchange.

The final phase will take 14 months to complete with a two-month stabilization period.

As work continues to implement IN-EVERS, pilot sites are needed to help test IN-EVERS and run both systems parallel during implementation to ensure accuracy.

Frequently asked questions and project updates are posted on the ISDH website [here](#).

HOLIDAY REMINDER

The holiday season is the season of giving. However, state employees need to be sure to follow the ethics rules regarding gifts.

A state employee, special state appointee or the spouse or unemancipated child of a state employee shall not knowingly solicit, accept or receive any gifts, favors, services, entertainment, food, drink, travel expenses or registration fees from a person who has a business relationship with the employee's or special state appointee's agency or is seeking to influence an action by the employee or special state appointee in his or her official capacity.

For more information about the Gift Rule and other ethics rules, please visit the [Inspector General's Ethics Code](#).

If you have ethics questions, please contact agency ethics officer [Deana Smith](#).



LOAN PROGRAM DESIGNED TO IMPROVE MENTAL HEALTH ACCESS

By Greta Sanderson

Forty-six of the state's 48 rural counties don't have enough mental healthcare providers, and 42 of them had at least one death attributed to opioids in 2016. Seven of those counties had the highest number of opioid-related deaths in the state.

Many of those same counties or their neighbors are listed on the Health Resources and Services Administration's (HRSA's) list of the top 5 percent most vulnerable for opioid use by state.

That's why ISDH has created a state loan repayment program to increase access to services to address and prevent opioid misuse.

The program will provide an incentive for psychiatrists, alcohol and substance abuse counselors and related disciplines to practice in a targeted region of Indiana that suffers from high numbers of opioid deaths. The counties included are Blackford, Dearborn, Fayette, Franklin, Grant, Henry, Jay, Randolph, Switzerland, Union and Wayne.

The project will make grants for professional loan repayments to qualifying providers in mental health and addiction-related disciplines first, followed by primary care physicians, who are also in short supply. The plan calls for 30 awards every year for the four-

year grant period.

HRSA will match the \$300,000 ISDH is investing in the program for a total repayment pool of \$600,000. An advisory committee will be formed to help with project development and grant awards with FSSA's Division of Mental Health and Addiction and the Indiana Hospital Association as partners.

The program will be administered by the Indiana State Department of Health's Division of Chronic Disease, Primary Care, and Rural Health. Invitations will be sent directly to health care entities that are located in the area of interest to give them the first shot; then applications will be opened up to the rest of the state.

"There is a lack of primary care and mental health/addiction counselors country wide," said Ann Alley, director of Chronic Disease. "Not only are there too few providers in mental health, but it's particularly difficult to attract them to rural areas that lack urban amenities."

Potential mental health providers to receive the loan repayment grants will be found via contact with potential, qualified practice sites located in the counties. The goal is that by increasing access to mental health services that address and prevent opioid misuse, deaths will be prevented.

STAFFING UPDATES

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

Mary Crotty, local health department liaison, Vital Records; Marc Oles, public health nurse surveyor, Acute Care (AC); Arron Caquelin, public health nurse surveyor training officer, Health Care Education and Quality; Dawn Wilkins, public health nurse surveyor, Long Term Care (LTC); Julie Vicari, public health nurse surveyor, LTC; Teresa Page, public health nurse surveyor, AC; Heidi Walker, food safety farm consultant, Food Protection; Danielle Winstead, re-evaluation clerk, Children's Special Health Care; Rebekah Polite, public health nurse surveyor, AC; Briana Husband, region manager, Division of Emergency Preparedness.

Congratulations go to Anna Orozco, who was promoted to administrative assistant, Women, Infants and Children (WIC); Emily Fussell, who was promoted to STD prevention program specialist, HIV/STD/Viral Hepatitis; and Darci Haight, who was promoted from to adoptions supervisor, Vital Records.

Special recognition goes to Margaret Beymer, public health nurse surveyor, who transferred in to LTC; and Rachel Hennessey, who moved from her role as a WIC administrative assistant to a new role as WIC project coordinator.

GO365: POINTS VS. BUCKS

Did you know you can redeem your Go365 Bucks at the Go365 Mall without affecting your overall status?

Members earn Go365 Points by reaching goals and completing various activities. Each Go365 Point earns you one Go365 Buck. You accumulate Go365 Bucks to spend in the Go365 Mall, to reward yourself for your healthy decisions. Once you spend Go365 Bucks, your total bucks change, but your point total and overall status does not.

You can redeem your Go365 Bucks through the mall for cool prizes such as e-gift cards, fitness devices and much more! This could be a great way to shop for your holiday gifts this season.

If you purchase anything from the Go365 Mall, it will be taxed. In accordance with IRS Publication 15-B, Go365 Bucks purchases in the Go365 Mall are considered taxable fringe benefits that are included on the employee's W-2 and subject to federal tax withholdings, as well as Social Security and Medicare taxes. After you redeem your reward from the Go365 Mall, the retail/taxable value of that reward is added to a subsequent paycheck as additional gross income. **Payroll will withhold the appropriate amount of tax for that reward corresponding with your personal tax elections, which will result in a net reduction in your pay.** Members must have at least Bronze Status™ to be eligible for reward redemption. Only plan subscribers can spend Bucks within the Go365 Mall.



LABOR OF LOVE HIGHLIGHTS MOMS



ABOVE: ISDH Immunization Director Dave McCormick was emcee of this year’s Labor of Love summit Nov. 14 at the JW Marriott. More than 70 ISDH employees helped with the conference.



RIGHT: Drs. Kris Box and Jennifer Walthall explain two new initiatives to improve Indiana’s infant mortality rate announced at the conference.



ABOVE: Attendees at the 2018 Labor of Love summit line up to register.

LEFT: Bilingual Community Outreach Liaison Gabriela Peña-Rodriguez, Lead Community Outreach Liaison Charnel Forbes, Spanish Interpreter/Translator and Bilingual Community Outreach Liaison Reina Almanza-Guerrero and Communication and Resource Database Specialist Yordanos Gebru staff their booth at the summit “homestretch.” The summit theme was the Race to 2024.

YEAR-END CELEBRATION

The year-end celebration is scheduled for 9:30 to 10:30 a.m. Dec. 18 in Rice Auditorium at 2 North. Breakfast items will be provided. There will also be drawings for donated door prizes. This year’s celebration will feature live entertainment provided by our own ISDH talent. You won’t want to miss it!

If you sing solo or in a group, play a musical instrument and/or are in a small band, there’s still time to sign up to perform. Email [Tami Barrett](mailto:Tami.Barrett) by Nov. 30.

