

# PULSE

A look at what keeps ISDH ticking

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### FUN FACT

Research from Indiana University found that to remember something, you should hand-write notes, rather than type them. Writing is thought to boost your memory, as note-taking by hand requires different cognitive processes than typing.



Indiana State  
Department of Health

#### Mission:

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

## ARE YOU READY FOR DISASTER?

An event like Hurricane Florence is a good reminder for us to appreciate the importance of being prepared for possible disaster.

The ISDH Division of Emergency Preparedness is always ready to respond to an emerging health threat, such as lead exposure, the spread of HIV and the need for mass prophylaxis, and yes, even floods.

September is National Preparedness Month, so that's another reason that now is a good time to learn how you can be your own preparedness division at home by making sure you're ready when disaster strikes.

The theme of this year's awareness campaign is "Disasters Happen. Prepare Now. Learn How."

The National Preparedness



[website](#) is full of information on steps you can take now to get ready in case of future disaster.

**Make and practice your plan.** The first step is to sign up for alerts and warnings in your area.

Next, learn your evacuation zone and make an evacuation plan. Make a graphic of the plan if necessary and practice evacuation so you'll know what to do if the time comes.

**Learn life-saving skills.** One step you can take to keep your family safe is to know how to turn off the utilities in your home, such as the natural gas. Test your smoke alarms and know the best places to shelter in case of a tornado or other natural disaster. Make sure you have batteries and flashlights in case you lose power. You may also want to consider learning CPR.

**Check your coverage.** Make sure that you have adequate insurance so you can recover more quickly and completely from a catastrophe that may



impact your health, or destroy your home or other possessions.

**Save for an emergency.** Having a financial emergency kit is almost as important as disaster supplies, such as food and water. Make sure you have digital copies of important documents you may need in the case of an emergency and some funds in savings because disasters also bring added expenses or missed work time.

I hope that you'll never be met with disaster, but I encourage you to put these plans in place to protect yourself and your family, just in case.

Yours in health,  
Kris

## ISDH PLANTS SEEDS FOR HELP ME GROW

By Greta Sanderson

ISDH, in collaboration with the Indiana Department of Child Services (DCS), has been working for more than a year to launch Help Me Grow (HMG) Indiana. ISDH and DCS often work together, so bringing HMG to Indiana in partnership was a natural next step, said ISDH Maternal and Child Health (MCH) Children's Program Director Shannon Garrity.

The hard work is about to bear fruit, as the pilot program is set to launch next month.

HMG is a system for connecting children from



birth to age 8 to care coordination and outreach services that support early detection of and intervention for developmental needs. The program will be introduced in nine pilot counties: Delaware, Elkhart, Grant, Lake, LaPorte, Madison, Marion, Scott and St. Joseph.

► Continue to GROW, page 5

# TO HERE FROM AFRICA

By Chris Grimes

As part of its ongoing collaboration with the American Society for Microbiology/CDC Global Fellowship program, the ISDH Labs hosted three guests from Africa:

- Dr. Gifty Boateng is the deputy director, National Public Health and Research Laboratory (NPHRL) in Ghana.
- John Ayivase is the deputy chief biomedical scientist and deputy head, Clinical Laboratories Unit, Ghana Health Services.
- Neema Saul is the microbiologist in charge of the national quality assurance plan at the National Health Lab Quality Assurance and Training Center in Tanzania.

The fellows were here earlier this month to see the workings of a public health lab system with linkages to clinical laboratories that run a robust disease surveillance system.

They focused on understanding the different roles of clinical and public health laboratories in disease detection and surveillance, understanding antimicrobial resistance and priority disease reporting for surveillance, and defining collaboration mechanisms between different laboratory systems.

To better understand how clinical labs and public health labs operate in the United States, they toured the IU Health Pathology Laboratory in Indianapolis, the Mid America Clinical Laboratory, the Marion County Public Health Laboratory and the Hancock Regional Hospital Laboratory in Greenfield.

They also spent a day with various ISDH epidemiologists discussing how the data flows from front-line clinics, hospitals and



**ABOVE:** Clinical Microbiology Supervisor Elizabeth Rempala demonstrates one of the traditional methods the ISDH Lab performs for antimicrobial susceptibility testing to (from left) Dr. Gifty Boateng, John Ayivase and Neema Saul  
**RIGHT:** From left, Ayivase, Janet Strauch (director of laboratory services at Hancock Regional Hospital), Saul and Boateng.



labs to ISDH.

The fellows spent the bulk of the rest of their time meeting with various ISDH Lab personnel to witness how testing is performed

and how each lab area collaborates with private clinical labs. These meetings covered serology, bacteriology, TB, virology and enterics.

## HOOSIER S.T.A.R.T. HELP IS AVAILABLE

Do you have questions about your HOOSIER S.T.A.R.T. Retirement Account? Kimberley Rumple will be available at ISDH Central Office (2 N. Meridian St.) on Oct. 15, for individual meetings to answer your questions.

To schedule a meeting with Rumple at ISDH Central Office, please email her at [Kimberley.Rumple@empower-retirement.com](mailto:Kimberley.Rumple@empower-retirement.com).



## FAMILY FRIGHT NIGHT

FRI., OCT. 5

6 to 9 p.m.

\$10/member, \$16/non-member,  
free for children age 3 and younger

Dress in your Halloween best for a night of spooky fun! Join our mad scientist in his lab to help conduct experiments, discover monsters that call Indiana home and create your own monster mask in the Cardboard Engineering experience. Then, strut your ghoulish stuff in a costume contest for a chance to win prizes in different categories. It's sure to be a SPOOKtacular time!

Tickets can be purchased online or at the door.



INDIANA STATE  
MUSEUM  
AND HISTORIC SITES

[indianamuseum.org](http://indianamuseum.org)

## ISDH RECOGNIZED IN PUBLICATIONS

## ISDH study published in national journal

A study by the ISDH Division of HIV/STD/Viral Hepatitis and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention was published in the July 2018 issue of the Journal of the American Sexually Transmitted Disease Association.

The [study](#), “Social Vulnerability in Congenital Syphilis Case Mothers: Qualitative Assessment of Cases in Indiana, 2014 to 2016,” was conducted to gain a better understanding of maternal, in addition to provider, factors implicated in congenital syphilis (CS) transmission so ISDH can better tailor interventions to mitigate these factors.

The study of 23 cases determined the most effective method of ensuring CS prevention is for women to have regular prenatal care visits so that appropriate screening, diagnosis and treatment may occur.

Amara Ross, ISDH STD epidemiologist, co-authored the study.

### Lab featured in publication

The ISDH Laboratories were recognized in the [Summer 2018](#) Lab Matters magazine released by the Association of Public Health Laboratories.

The article “Indiana and Wisconsin Respond to Synthetic Cannabinoid Contamination” can be found on page 14 and highlights how the Indiana and Wisconsin public health labs helped in the investigation of synthetic cannabinoids as the source of a spring 2018 outbreak of unexplained bleeding.

ISDH warned Hoosiers in March about the dangers of synthetic cannabinoids after receiving reports of severe bleeding in people using the substances that tested positive for brodifacoum (rat poison).



## STAFFING UPDATES

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

Hannah Henry, viral hepatitis epidemiologist, HIV/STD/Viral Hepatitis; Brittany Gross viral hepatitis epidemiologist, HIV/STD/Viral Hepatitis; Greta Sanderson, communications project manager, Office of Public Affairs; Michael Galloway, logistics section chief, Emergency Preparedness; Anne McGuinness, litigation chief attorney, Legal Affairs; Jack Kennedy, enrollment specialist, HIV/STD/Viral Hepatitis; Tung Ho, chemist, Laboratory; Courtney Leeper, perinatal breastfeeding coordinator (chief nurse consultant), Maternal & Child Health; and Jonathan Morgan, HIV services program manager, HIV/STD/Viral Hepatitis.

Also Mary Roberts, public health administrator, HIV/STD, Viral Hepatitis; Naima Gardner, nutrition coordinator, Nutrition & Physical Activity; Cyndy Fohrman, field epidemiologist, Epidemiology Resource Center (ERC); Paige Corning, qualified

intellectual disabilities professional, Long Term Care; Allison Forkner, Indiana Birth Defects Registry, Maternal & Child Health; and Kristen Dietz, surge and countermeasures manager, Emergency Preparedness.

Two employees came to ISDH from other state departments: Chauna Holder-Edmond moved from the Indiana School for the Deaf to HIV/STD/Viral Hepatitis as a nurse, and Bridget McIntyre joined ISDH as a program coordinator in Vital Records from the Indiana Bureau of Motor Vehicles.

Within ISDH, Crystal Sinnott transferred from Long Term Care to Acute Care as a public health nurse specialist.

Promotions were awarded to: Olivia Ridgeway, STD operations manager, HIV/STD/Viral Hepatitis; Christina Pease, public health administrator, Women Infants & Children; Monica DuHack, public health administrator, Women Infants & Children; and Laura Banter, chemist, Laboratory.

Congratulations to all!

## PREPARE FOR OPEN ENROLLMENT

Open enrollment is just around the corner. Take time now to carefully review each plan offering and determine which options best meet your family's health care needs.

### Review this year's medical, vision and dental expenses

How much did you spend on medical, vision and dental needs this year? You can view your expenses and estimate future expenses online with Anthem and CVS Caremark.

**Review your dependents and beneficiaries.** It's important to review your dependent and beneficiary information each year, particularly if your family situation has changed. Make sure addresses and phone numbers are updated and that all dependents are still eligible.

**If you are married, compare your coverage against your spouse's.** If you and your spouse have different company benefits, make sure to weigh the pros and cons of each health insurance plan and overall benefits package. Compare the list of doctors in your plan to your spouse's plan. The state medical plans use Anthem's National PPO (BlueCard PPO). If your spouse's open enrollment period and effective dates differ from the state plans, plan ahead, because you won't be able to change state coverage or plans later based on your spouse's open enrollment.

If you have any questions about your benefits or have a unique situation and require some guidance, please contact the [INSPD Benefits Hotline](#) at 317-232-1167 (within Indianapolis) or toll-free at 877-248-0007 (outside Indianapolis).

## WAY TO GO, HALLIE!

Hallie, a 10-year-old standard poodle owned by ISDH OTC Project Manager Robyn Porter, recently earned Honor Scout recognition at Dog Scout camp. Yes, Hallie is a Dog Scout!

To achieve Honor Scout status, Hallie first earned a number of Dog Scouts of America (DSA) merit badges in a variety of disciplines, including agility, distance control, carting, fundraising, scent work, community service, backpack/hiking and water skills.

Once the honor scout application was completed and accepted, Hallie was tested at camp in June. These tests included travel safety, obedience skills and other tests, including temptation with food.

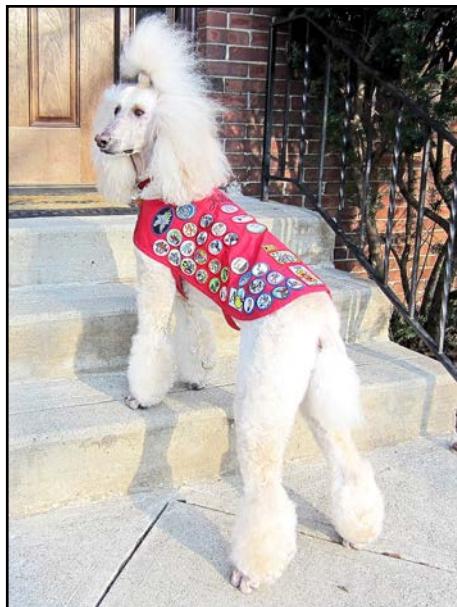
"You can practice and train, but you never know what's going to happen when someone is waving pizza or placing a sandwich on the floor in front of your dog," Porter said. "I'm so proud she earned Honor Scout."

Porter and Hallie completed the Community Service II badge at the end of 2017. Requirements included fundraising and 500 hours of volunteer and community service. From 2015-17, Hallie raised \$1,848.17 for the Salvation Army. She also donated blood for four years until she "aged out" of the program. Porter and Hallie are a certified pet therapy team, volunteering through Paws and Think at various Indianapolis venues. They regularly visit Community Hospital and a skilled-care facility. They visit Marion County libraries, where children read aloud to Hallie to improve their reading skills.

They have presented to Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts and elementary school classrooms on Dog Safety and Bite Prevention, Canine Roles on Farms and Ranches and the difference between a pet therapy dog and a service dog.

Porter completed training in August so the pair are now qualified to visit a crisis situation with Paws and Think.

"Hallie was turned in to a rescue at the young age of four weeks with her mother and two littermates. They were full of intestinal worms and had fleas and lice. She has grown up to bring joy to a lot of lives, including mine," Porter said.



**Hallie in her red Scout vest adorned with merit badges.**

## SCHOLARSHIP WINNER



**ISDH's Billy Brewer receives a scholarship from Gov. Eric Holcomb during a Sept. 12 ceremony.**

Congratulations to Billy Brewer director of operations for the Division of Emergency Preparedness, who was one of 10 state employees who received scholarships to Western Governors University to continue their educations.

Brewer is no stranger to the classroom. He earned dual bachelor's degrees and dual master's degrees at the same time. He earned a Bachelor of Science in biology and a Bachelor of Arts in anthropology with a minor in chemistry, followed by a Master of Public Affairs and a Master of Science in criminal justice and public safety. He also holds graduate certificates in public management and public health.

As if that weren't enough, Brewer has been an emergency medical technician-basic/firefighter since 2004, and he completed the advanced training last spring.

Brewer started at WGU Sept. 1 and is pursuing a Bachelor of Science degree in nursing through the university's pre-licensure program, which includes online coursework and in-person clinical work in Indianapolis.

## PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATES GIVE ISDH A BOOST

By Greta Sanderson

It's been two years since ISDH was awarded its first Public Health Associate Program (PHAP) participants. As the last of the inaugural group prepares to move on after making her mark on ISDH, three new PHAPs are getting ready to join our agency.

PHAP is a two-year early career development program from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The CDC sets the curriculum, which includes completing projects for the host site under the guidance of a local mentor.

PHAPs can come from anywhere in the United States and be placed anywhere in the country.

The competitive application process is only open for a week, and a few hundred candidates are selected to write personal statements, followed by interviews and finally an offer. Fewer than 200 PHAPs are selected from more than 3,000 applicants.

Outbreak Supervisor Shawn Richards and Overdose Surveillance Educator Epidemiologist Mandy Billman mentored PHAP Sonia Berdahl, an interesting match since Berdahl's bachelor's degree is in nutrition.

"You know you're going to get specific experiences, you just don't know what it's going to be," said Berdahl, who is from Minnesota. "I like to learn new things."

Some of her ISDH projects included developing a toolkit and survey for influenza vaccination, creating a pertussis infographic for the vaccine-hesitant population and building case investigation forms for the Epidemiology Resource Center's new database system. Her favorite was working on the "Join Blue, Prevent the Flu" campaign.

Richards said it's rewarding to serve as a mentor and watch PHAPs like Berdahl develop professionally.

"It's amazing how well she integrated into the team," she said.

When Berdahl leaves ISDH on Oct. 5, she will take on a one-year assignment as the special assistant to CDC Director of Preparedness Dr. Stephen Redd.

"She has so much experience, she could go anywhere," Billman said.

Two other PHAPs were among the first group with Berdahl, Rudith Laine in Immunizations and Dawn Smith in Trauma



Berdahl

and Injury Prevention.

Laine analyzed vaccine management practices to make them more cost efficient. Smith helped establish the naloxone kit distribution program, created the Interpersonal Violence repository and researched stroke systems in other states.

"Several of Dawn's projects were critical to the operations of the agency," said Division of Trauma and Injury Prevention Director Katie Hokanson, who was Smith's mentor. Smith now works in the ISDH lab.

"Over the two years I spent in PHAP, I learned a lot about developing data collection and reporting systems and communicating with community stakeholders in order to develop quality products to serve the needs of the local communities in Indiana," Smith said. "PHAP was an incredible experience in which I had the opportunity to serve the communities in Indiana and grow as a professional."

On Oct. 1, three new PHAPs will begin their assignments at ISDH. Alexis Marie will join Immunizations, Nyehla Irsheid will help in the Epidemiology Resource Center and Dominique Matthews will work in Vital Records.

### ► GROW, continued from page 1

"The purpose is to link families to resources and services that already exist within their community," Garrity said. "This is for anyone who touches the life of a child at any point, not just families, but also providers."

Help Me Grow is a nationally recognized model that began in Connecticut to identify and connect vulnerable children with the resources and services they need. Help Me Grow aims to educate parents and providers on children's developmental milestones through care coordination and build a comprehensive database that collects resources, identifies gaps in services and ensures that a family's needs are being met. The program ultimately empowers families to support their children's healthy development.

"Through our existing partnerships, we've learned from families about the gaps in services that exist around access and understanding developmental screening for their children within their communities," Garrity said. "We will be able to collect and share

county-specific data within the nine pilot sites around early childhood systems to assist in quality improvement."

Providers may refer patients to HMG, or families may connect through ISDH's MOMS Helpline at 844-624-6667, option 3. The resource information will be provided through a partnership with Indiana 211, which has an extensive database of service contacts, from prenatal care to speech therapists and much more.

Care coordinators will track all calls and follow up to see if the family was able to connect to the recommended resource and provide any needed additional support.

Two HMG care coordinators have already joined the staff.

Garrity and other members of the team have also been out promoting the program in the nine pilot counties.

The objective is to expand Help Me Grow throughout the state following the pilot implementation.

The initiative is funded by MIECHV Innovations and Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems (ECCS) grants, within the Maternal

### GET YOUR FLU SHOT

CVS pharmacists are hosting flu shot clinics at many state facilities across Indiana.

Clinics at the Indiana Government Center (IGC) campus are scheduled from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Oct. 10 and 11.

The Statehouse Atrium is scheduled from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Oct. 17.

Check [investinyourhealthindiana.com/flu-shots](http://investinyourhealthindiana.com/flu-shots) for a list of clinics statewide.

If you do not have state insurance, CVS will process other insurance providers. However, it is not guaranteed they will be accepted.

The out-of-pocket cost for the Quadrivalent Influenza vaccine (patients 64 and younger) is \$40, or \$66.99 for the HD vaccine (patients 65 and older). Checks should be payable to CVS pharmacy.

You must bring your Anthem ID card and a completed waiver prior to receiving the vaccination: [download it here](#) to save time.

Watch for information on a clinic at ISDH.

## JOURNEY TO ACCREDITATION

By Patricia Truelove

We are moving along! Accreditation Coordinator [Patricia Truelove](#) and Office of Public Health Performance Management Eden Bezy attended Accreditation Coordinator Training on Aug. 28 and 29 in Alexandria, Va., with the Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB). ISDH now has access to the electronic portal that will allow the team to start uploading documents for accreditation review. All documents must be submitted by the end of August 2019.

Until then, our domain teams will continue to collect documentation and identify gaps, with a goal of 90 percent collection by the end of 2018. A new review team has been put together to provide a fresh review prior to final documentation submission.

Email Truelove to learn more about being a part of the review team or for more information.

### Domain 8: A Competent Public Health Workforce

Domain 8 discusses how our agency maintains a competent workforce. Eric Beers, our workforce development coordinator, has been analyzing data collected from our fall 2017 Public Health Workforce Interest and Needs Survey and working with executive staff on ways to close gaps, focusing on morale and professional development opportunities.

Eric has also been working to improve ISDH's internship process. These, along with strategies from our Workforce Development Plan, are just some of the activities that PHAB will be looking for.

A copy of our Workforce Development

### Meet a member of the A-Team:

#### Eric Beers—Core Lead in Domain 8

Eric Beers is the ISDH workforce development coordinator. He joined the agency in February 2018 after more than three years working with the Indiana Healthy Weight Initiative and the Indiana Public Health Association. Prior to his work in public health, he directed a summer camp, taught English in China and was a wildland firefighter in Wyoming with the Bureau of Land Management. In his spare time, Eric loves all things soccer and spending time with his wife and fur-son, Max.

Eric leads Domain 8 and is a member of the Accreditation Review Team. Domain 8 covers the development of our state's public health workforce and public health competencies, training, professional development and the provision of a supportive work environment. Eric's professional interests align nicely with this domain. In October he will begin earning his master's in positive organizational development at Case Western Reserve's Weatherhead School of Management. Eric is passionate about organizational culture and how we can create positive and supportive work environments.



Beers and Max

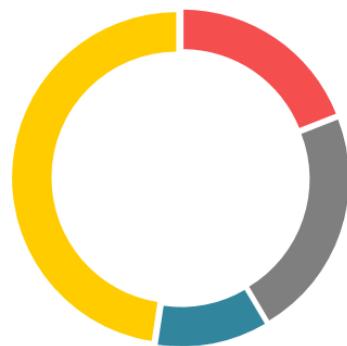


Plan can be found on the intranet, and if you wish to learn more about providing opportunities for potential interns, please email Beers at [EBeers@isdh.IN.gov](mailto:EBeers@isdh.IN.gov).

A special thank you to Domain 8 team members Beers and Katie McElroy with the State Personnel Department for all of their hard work!

### Progression of Collection

- Unidentified
- Identified
- Collected
- Reviewed



## KICKING OFF BIKE & WALK EVENT

ISDH Chief Medical Officer Dr. Melissa Collier gave the opening remarks at the 2018 Bike & Walk Summit held Aug. 29 and 30 at the Omni Severin Hotel in downtown Indianapolis. This year's theme, "Leading Locally for Active Transportation," offered representatives of cities and towns throughout the state a chance to showcase their efforts. The education and training event was designed to advance access, safety, connectivity and fun for people who walk, bike and ride transit. ISDH was an event sponsor and Pete Fritz, ISDH Healthy Communities Planner in the Division of Nutrition and Physical Activity, served on the event steering committee.



## TEAM REPRESENTS ISDH IN PADDLE BATTLE



The ISDH team of Sandi Morse, TB/Refugee Health; Payton Revolt, ERC; Sang Thao, TB/Refugee Health; and Kelly White, TB/Refugee Health, competed in the 13th Annual State Employees' Paddle Battle Sept. 14 on White River Canal.

Paddle Battle is a fundraiser for the State Employees' Community Campaign (SECC). Each team pays a \$40 fee to participate, and proceeds go to the winning team's charity of choice.

Last year's winner, Family & Social Services Administration (FSSA), defended its possession of the coveted Paddle Battle Oar, but this year the State Public Defenders Office won the event. ISDH was eliminated in the second heat by the Indiana Department of Transportation.

## TAKING ON NEW ROLES

Congratulations goes to Mohan Ambaty, Hilari Sautbline and Eldon Whetstone who each have taken on expanded agency roles.

Ambaty has been named chief information officer for ISDH.

Ambaty had been serving as interim CIO since Chris Mickens' retirement. He has worked in several different roles in the Office of Technology and Compliance for 20 years. His experience will help OTC move forward with key agency initiatives during a time of transition.

"It has been a great experience of working with OTC for the past 20 years, and I have really evolved professionally and personally. I look forward to the fresh challenges, as well as opportunities for growth that this position will offer me," Ambaty said.

He lives in Carmel with his wife, Pramela, and two daughters, Sai and Hasini. After work, he enjoys running, gardening and spending time with family and friends. His dream is to complete half marathons on



Ambaty



Sautbline



Whetstone

seven continents in his lifetime.

Sautbline has been named ISDH's director of vital records and state registrar.

Sautbline had served as interim director since June, but she is a familiar face here at ISDH. She joined the agency in 2012 as a staff attorney,

She lives in Noblesville with her husband, Kevin, and their son, Lincoln, and is the proud owner of a spunky Lab named Izzy. She enjoys Cincinnati Reds games, spending time with extended family or plotting practical jokes and ways to pass on her sarcasm

and dry sense of humor to her son.

"I am honored and excited to be named Director of Vital Records," Sautbline said. "We have a great group of people in this area, and I look forward to what we can accomplish together."

Whetstone has been named assistant commissioner of Health and Human Services at ISDH.

Whetstone joined ISDH as an attorney in 2007, and he served as director, deputy director and EBT implementation director of the Indiana WIC program.

"I am grateful and excited for the opportunity to play a role in the many new initiatives ISDH is pursuing," Whetstone said. "I have had the pleasure of working at ISDH for more than 10 years, so I have seen many changes, but the passion and commitment of the staff have remained constant. Working with tremendous people throughout the agency makes coming to work every day a rewarding experience."