

## MATTERS



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## Grant boosts HIV services

A record \$26 million grant the ISDH received in September will begin impacting Indiana's HIV-positive community before the year is out.

The 2017 Ryan White Supplemental Award from the U.S. Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) will be used to expand community partnerships and broaden the scope of care for clients with HIV.

"Any time you get this kind of grant, you can make significant changes in the course of a disease," said Dennis Stover, director of the Division of HIV/STD/Viral Hepatitis at ISDH. "It's a defining moment for us."

A request for grant proposals was sent to partner organizations on Sept. 15. The applications were due Oct. 16, and awards were expected to be announced Nov. 1.

The subgrants will be awarded based on nine target areas focused on managing the whole person — not just the medical side — to suppress the virus and prevent it from spreading.

"This gives a push in a strategy to curb an epidemic," Stover said.

Mark Schwering, Ryan White Part B program director, said case management is key to accomplishing that goal.

Schwering said more than 12,000 Hoosiers are living

with HIV, and about 5,000 receive case management services. That means managing medical services, but also meeting other needs, including nutrition, housing and mental health.

Schwering said funds will be used to expand links to care programs within the state that will connect with those who aren't receiving case management. The grant will also be used to:

- Expand mental health services to tackle the tie between drug misuse and HIV.
- Set up outpatient drug treatment with a network of substance abuse coaches
- Create relationships that can help in other ways, including getting a patient a place to live or insurance.
- Partner with Meals on Wheels to deliver three meals a day, where available.

While grants will be available throughout Indiana, the focus will be on the 10 counties with the greatest populations of people living with HIV: Allen, Clark, Lake, Madison, Marion, Monroe, Scott, Tippecanoe, Vanderburgh and Vigo counties.

Schwering hopes this year's grant will fund the initial setup to get new programs off the ground, and that those efforts will be part of the regular funding cycle going forward.

"We're really looking at this grant as a \$26 million one-person-at-a-time opportunity," Stover said.



Dennis Stover

## Meet Dr. Kris Box

When the opportunity to become Indiana's next health commissioner arose, I viewed it with a mixture of excitement and trepidation. The trepidation, tinged with a bit of sadness, came at knowing it would mean closing the door on a career I have loved. I have devoted the past 30 years to caring for women across the continuum of their lives, with an emphasis on helping them have healthy pregnancies. But the same factors that have made leaving my practice as an OB/GYN bittersweet are what called me to my new role and the chance to impact the health of Hoosiers of all ages, genders and backgrounds.



Dr. Kris Box

For some time, I've felt called to do more to help Hoosiers. In 2015, I became the lead doctor for Community Health Network's Women's Service Line, building partnerships to help low-income women access crucial health screenings. I also have served on the Indiana State Department of Health's advisory council that is focused on reducing the tragedy of infant deaths and protecting babies from being born exposed to drugs.

I am excited that my new role will help me further influence this important work. It's heartbreaking to see the racial and socioeconomic disparities surrounding infant mortality within our state, and I look forward to partnering with you all to help address these disparities. It is equally heartbreaking to see the toll that the opioid epidemic is taking on Hoosiers of all ages. I am grateful that Governor Holcomb has made attacking this epidemic a priority of his administration.

While the opioid epidemic and infant mortality may grab the most headlines, public health in Indiana is also about decreasing tobacco use, obesity, chronic diseases and so much more. Our state has many health challenges, and we must work together creatively to make a difference in Hoosiers' health. I intend to ensure that ISDH continues to be a good partner in those efforts.

I will be spending the coming months meeting as many partners as I can. In the meantime, please don't hesitate to reach out if there is something I can help you with.

Thank you for all of the ways you're making a difference in your communities. I'm happy to be part of the team working to make Indiana a healthier state.

# Successes shared at Unity 2017

The Indiana State Health Department's division of HIV/STD/Hepatitis celebrated champions in the field and shared what's working in the fight against the diseases during a two-day event Oct. 19-20 at the Hyatt Regency in downtown Indianapolis.

Unity 2017 brought together professionals in the forefront of HIV, from HIV care coordinators and counselors to STD clinics and infectious disease professionals. It was an opportunity for everyone to share successes, reconnect with familiar colleagues and build new relationships.

This type of event hasn't been held for nearly 11 years. But medical strides to prevent and control AIDS, moving the HIV diagnosis from a death sentence to a condition that can be managed, or even prevented, prompted the revival of the conference to share the good news.

"We're on the precipice of changing HIV in big ways," said event organizer and HIV prevention program director John Nichols. "It's really important to get everyone together in the arena and get them excited and enthused about the work they're doing."

Nichols said the opioid outbreak is also bringing more awareness about HIV and hepatitis C.

About 350 people attended Unity 2017 event, which featured four-time Olympic gold medalist diver and LGBT activist Greg Louganis as a lunchtime speaker, moderated by Dr. Robert Baker.

Other speakers included Dr. John Brooks, medical epidemiologist at the National Center for HIV/AIDS; David Harvey, executive director of the National of Coalition of STD Directors; Murray



**State Health Commissioner Kris Box, MD, FACOG, opens United 2017 Oct. 19 at the Hyatt Regency in downtown Indianapolis.**

Penner, executive director of the National Alliance of State & Territorial AIDS Directors; and Dr. Mark Thrun, infectious disease specialist.

ISDH presenters were State Health Commissioner Kris Box, MD, FACOG; Pam Pontones, deputy health commissioner and state epidemiologist; Art Logsdon, assistant commissioner; and

Dennis Stover, director of HIV/STD/Viral Hepatitis Division.

Topics covered at Unity 2017 included medical advancements and trends, viral hepatitis, marketing for prevention and connecting with youth, transgender health care, STDs among men, Narcan training, HIV care coordination, trauma care and prevention.

## GOVERNOR UNVEILS NEXT LEVEL RECOVERY WEBSITE

Indiana has a new tool in the fight against opioid misuse. Indiana's Next Level Recovery website ([IN.gov/Recovery](http://IN.gov/Recovery)) launched last month as the online entry point for all state resources on the opioid crisis.

"The Next Level Recovery website will be the front porch for Hoosiers looking for information and resources on opioid addiction," Gov. Eric Holcomb said.

The Next Level Recovery website will house an ever-evolving clearinghouse of information on Indiana's fight against the opioid epidemic, including:

- Data and facts

- Indiana initiatives
- Ways to get involved
- Information on opioid abuse prevention, treatment and enforcement
- Resources and information for healthcare professionals
- Notices and meeting minutes from Indiana's Commission to Combat Drug Abuse

The website aims to give Hoosiers easy access to information and help for substance use disorder, according to Jim McClelland, Indiana Executive Director for Drug Prevention, Treatment and Enforcement.

# ISDH steps up overdose prevention

By Greta Sanderson

In 2015, 1,236 Hoosiers died from drug poisoning, and Indiana ranked 17th in the nation in opioid-related deaths, the CDC reported.

Whether it was because of that reality or an increased focus on the opioid epidemic by Governor Eric Holcomb, the CDC took notice and in September added nearly \$800,000 to funds the ISDH receives from the Prescription Drug Overdose Prevention for States Grant.

Katie Hokanson, director of the Division of Trauma and Injury Prevention, who administers the grant, plans to use the funding to expand the department's fight against the opioid epidemic.



Katie Hokanson

## INSPECT

A computer system that allows doctors to check all of a patient's prescriptions with one click, as part of Indiana's Prescription Drug Monitoring Program

(INSPECT), is one of the first programs to be rolled out throughout the state.

The system rates the patient's risk for opioid abuse. If the risk is high, the doctor can go the next step by looking at all of that patient's prescription history.

"It's quick and easy to interpret," said Dr. Gina Huhnke, director of the emergency department and medical affairs at Deaconess Health Systems in Evansville, a pilot site for the project.

Huhnke said the click of a button replaces a process that used to take up to five minutes while she logged in to another system.

## Community outreach

Hokanson has also been working to expand the division's community outreach in 24 counties with the highest opioid death rates. ISDH will visit those counties, listen, and use information about the opioid epidemic in that county to help shape the state's efforts.

"Our goal is to come back and see if there are any things that we can follow up with," Hokanson said.

## By the numbers

One of the biggest barriers to fighting opioid overdoses is getting good information. Almost everyone agrees that data on the number of overdoses are too low.

Hokanson is addressing this issue from several angles.

The PFS grant is funding a project by the Indiana University Fairbanks School of Public Health, which has developed surveys to collect data from organizations that distribute naloxone kits.

Fairbanks is also surveying prescribers to make sure they are aware of the guidelines for prescribing opioids for pain management implemented in 2014.

The question is, "have we seen a reduction in problematic prescribing as a result of these laws?" said Dennis P. Watson, Ph.D., and associate professor for the Richard M. Fairbanks School of Public Health.

Hokanson said some of the PFS grant money will also fund an overdose fatality review pilot team to investigate overdose fatalities so more can be learned about how to prevent them.

# Summit focuses on infectious diseases

What if there is an Ebola outbreak in Indiana? How would the Indiana State Department of Health react if Zika cases began turning up across the state?

Some of the best national experts on those infectious diseases and others will be in Indianapolis in November for ISDH's "Emerging Infectious Disease at Your Doorstep" summit.

Seats are still available for the two-day conference set for Nov. 29-30 at the JW Marriott, 10 S. West St., in Indianapolis.

Shawn Richards, outbreak supervisor for the ISDH who is coordinating the event, said the summit is open to Indiana public health officials, health care providers, animal health and other preparedness agencies to learn about how to handle a public health threat

involving infectious pathogens.

The meeting will feature several presenters and opportunities for participants to share experiences and ask questions.

In one session, five members of a panel of Indiana hospital and health experts will each share their stories about real-life infectious disease events, followed by a round of questions.

"We just wanted to make it very centralized for Indiana and actual things that have happened here," Richards said.

And during a tabletop exercise, participants will go through a mock infectious disease crisis that will include the state's response and how ISDH would communicate with local health departments.

"We will be doing a sce-

## CLICK TO REGISTER

Click [here](#) to register for the "Emerging Infectious Disease at Your Doorstep" summit.

nario and going through step-by-step to see what the other agencies would be doing and how we'd be interacting together," Richards explained. Participants would earn credit for the Homeland Security Exercise Evaluation Program.

Summit presenters include:

- Dr. Holly Biggs from the national Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), speaking on emerging infectious disease and the implications for the public health and medical communities.

- David Daigle from the CDC, speaking on crisis communication during an infectious disease event.

- Dr. Christopher Perkins

from the Dallas County Health Department, sharing the local health officer's perspective and involvement in the 2014 Ebola response in North Texas.

Registration is \$30 for one day or \$50 for both days. Parking is free at the Indianapolis Zoo, 1200 W. Washington St. Shuttles will run throughout the day, or attendees can opt instead to receive a \$10 discount on parking at the JW Marriott.

Check in opens at 7 a.m. each morning, program begins at 8 a.m.

Click [here](#) for more information.

## ISDH ramps up battle against cervical cancer

A strategic plan to identify and reduce the state's number of cervical cancer cases and deaths is in the works. Public health experts, medical professionals, researchers and others across the state met in late September to discuss ways to protect Hoosiers from this disease.

“Cervical cancer is nearly 100 percent preventable, yet every year, Indiana women die from this terrible disease,” said Deputy State Health Commissioner Pamela Pontones. “By convening key leaders from all corners of our state, we can work together to reduce the burden of cervical cancer and save lives.”

In Indiana, 1,283 new cases of cervical cancer were diagnosed and 446 cervical cancer-related deaths occurred from 2011–2015, according to the Indiana State Cancer Registry.

HPV is the single greatest risk factor for cervical cancer. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, American Academy of Pediatrics, American Academy of Family Physicians and the American College of Physicians, all boys and girls ages 11 or 12 should get vaccinated against HPV. Older teens and young adults can receive the vaccine through age 26, but studies have shown that the vaccine produces a better immune response at earlier ages.

Click [here](#) to visit the Indiana Cancer Consortium (ICC) for more information.

## WIC launches mobile app

The Indiana Women, Infants and Children (WIC) program has a new mobile application to make it easier for clients to access the nutritious food and other benefits they need to be healthy.

The app is a convenient way for WIC clients to:

- Find the nearest WIC clinic
  - Access WIC appointment information
  - View current and future food benefit balances
  - Receive notifications about expiring benefits and upcoming appointments
  - Get reminders about what to bring to the appointment
  - Scan UPC codes while shopping to see if the item is WIC-approved
  - Locate the nearest grocery store or pharmacy where benefits are accepted
- “We know the WIC shopping experi-



ence can be challenging for our clients, but we believe the INWIC app will eliminate many of those challenges,” Indiana WIC Director Eldon Whetstone said.

The Indiana WIC program served an average of 145,000 Hoosiers each month in fiscal year 2017. The program provides

nutrition education, breastfeeding promotion and support, healthy foods and referrals to other services.

## Vital Records receives grant

The Division of Vital Records recognized a gap in the monitoring of death records for overdose deaths in Indiana. To address this gap, the division applied for a grant from the Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists (CSTE) for “State, Territorial, Local and Tribal Based Projects to Assess Emerging Surveillance Issues in Substance Use and Mental Health.”

The CSTE awarded Vital Records \$50,000 to improve the ways that opioid overdose deaths are identified and to ensure the information is entered accurately into the Indiana Death Registration System (IDRS) database. The goal of the project is to identify overdose deaths faster so the data are available more quickly and consistently. The project extends from December to June.

“With this funding, Vital Records aims to improve the identification of overdose deaths by expanding data analysis techniques and utilizing near real-time data available in the IDRS,” said Vital Records Epidemiologist Anne Reynolds, MPH.

Reducing opioid-related deaths has become a priority for Indiana, and better identification is key to making an impact on the opioid epidemic.

Indiana is one of five states to receive the CSTE funding, which was awarded Oct. 20.

## ISDH IN THE NEWS

Click on any of the links below to see recent ISDH press releases:

[Health officials say knowing stroke signs and risk factors could help save lives.](#)

[ISDH awards \\$11 million in grants to fight infant mortality.](#)

[Indiana WIC launches mobile app.](#)

[Health Department raising awareness of need for lead testing.](#)

[Celebrate World Heart Day by getting heart healthy.](#)

[Health department ramps up fight against cervical cancer.](#)

[Health officials: Talk to children about making healthy choices.](#)

[Health officials urge homeowners to maintain septic systems.](#)

[Health department receives record \\$26 million for HIV services.](#)



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