

MATTERS



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Thanks, everyone

As 2017 comes to a close, I want to thank so many of you who've reached out in my first two months as state health commissioner. Your input has been extremely valuable in helping me understand the challenges we face in improving Hoosiers' health, and I look forward to meeting more of our partners, especially those in our local health departments, in 2018.



Dr. Kris Box

There is no question that we face many challenges that impact the health of our state, from infant mortality and obesity to smoking and the opioid epidemic. Yet I believe it's important that we celebrate our successes, even as we acknowledge the work yet to be done.

This year, ISDH awarded \$11 million in Safety PIN grants to groups working to attack our stubborn infant mortality rate and hosted our fifth annual Labor of Love summit, which drew nearly 1,300 people committed to ensuring that Indiana babies survive to their first birthday and beyond. We launched Liv, a new mobile application, to help connect women to resources to help them have healthy pregnancies.

We provided funding to add treatment beds for people with HIV and substance use disorder in Fayette County

and received \$26 million from the U.S. Health Resources and Services Administration to provide HIV services to Hoosiers. Although e-cigarette use is a big concern, we saw declines in the number of youths who smoke cigarettes.

Our WIC program launched a mobile application that improves the WIC experience for clients. And we continue to advocate for Hoosiers to eat less and move more, knowing that small steps can add up to big successes over time.

When I first started as health commissioner, my vision for the job was simple: Help Hoosiers get healthier. That vision is evolving the more that I learn from our partners across the state.

Today, I would add that I want Indiana to be the best at getting better. I've learned that no single agency can do that alone. That is why I'm so grateful for your partnerships. I believe that we are stronger together than we are individually and am confident that, through our continued partnerships, we will add to our list of accomplishments in 2018.

I hope you find time to celebrate your own successes as we bid farewell to 2017. See you next year!

**Yours in health,
Kris Box, MD, FACOG
Indiana State Health
Commissioner**

Naloxone kits are working

By Greta Sanderson

The impact of 13,720 naloxone kits distributed this year by the Indiana State Department of Health (ISDH) is being felt throughout the state.

Katie Hokanson, director of the ISDH Division of Trauma and Injury Prevention, said prescription and illicit drug-related overdoses are the leading injury-related death. In 2015, Indiana ranked 17th nationally in the rate of drug overdose fatalities, and the rate of unintentional drug poisoning deaths soared 895 percent between 1999 and 2015.

"Naloxone distribution is one tool that we have in our public health toolbox to help combat the opioid epidemic," Hokanson said.

In 2016, Indiana reported 1,518 Hoosier deaths from drug poisoning, most of them from opioids. ISDH has received more than \$1.3 million in grants from state and federal sources to fund naloxone distribution into 2018 to help prevent opioid overdose deaths.

"We still have reports of overdoses, but the deaths from them are not nearly as many, so I know it's working," said Paula Maupin, public health nurse for the Fayette County Health Department, which has received 158 naloxone kits from ISDH.

Maupin recorded 22 deaths due to overdose for Fayette County in 2016, either listing drugs specifically or stating multiple drug intoxication. So far in 2017, Maupin has confirmed 13 similar deaths, with at least one more case pending.

She said Fayette County wouldn't have had the life-saving tool without the kits received in each of the three ISDH grant cycles this year.

Maupin knows firsthand how the kits have been used to save lives in her community. One participant, a woman who received naloxone kits "a couple of times," is now in recovery. A few weeks later, she asked for another kit because she had used one to save her brother's life.

"They were on their way to the hospital, and he was blue," Maupin said. "They lived out in the country, and he wouldn't have made it were it not for the Narcan."

Narcan is the brand name for naloxone that, if administered in time, reverses the effect of an opioid overdose that can cause respiratory failure.

"Every single person is worth saving," Maupin said. "I think it's making some impact in our community. It may get worse



Katie Hokanson

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ISDH lab studies antibiotic resistance

By Greta Sanderson

Indiana State Department of Health Laboratories (ISDHL) are launching a pilot study to help uncover how some microorganisms develop resistance to antibiotics.

Sara Blosser, Ph.D., ISDH director of clinical microbiology, said two sites will be chosen in January to participate in the four-month pilot study. All bacteria tested at local labs that don't respond to antibiotics are sent to ISDHL as part of infection control best practices; however, this practice is not widespread across the United States. The goal of the pilot is to determine whether the bacteria developed the resistance on its own or if it "caught" the resistance from another bacteria through plasmids, which transfer genes from one bacterial cell to another, sort of like a Frisbee, Blosser explained.

Blosser indicated that a great deal of focus has been placed on three major Carbapenem-Resistant Enterobacteriaceae (CREs), known as the "Big Three." But other bacteria in the same family haven't been as thoroughly studied yet, and that is the subject of the pilot study.

"We want to know what proportion of organisms in the CRE are resistant versus how many became resistant by other mechanisms," Blosser said. "Infections with these germs are very difficult to treat and can be deadly."

The pilot is being conducted in con-

NEW COMMITTEE CREATED

The Indiana State Department of Health (ISDH) has created the Indiana Antibiotic Resistance Steering Committee, a statewide collaborative effort to stop the spread of these resistant organisms. The 12-member group will have its first meeting Jan. 10.

The steering committee will make recommendations on policy, resource utilization and needs assessment to give feedback to ISDH.

Members include three representatives of ISDH and nine others from throughout Indiana's healthcare community, including pharmacies, labs, long-term care facilities and others.

junction with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, which started an Antibiotic Resistance (AR) Laboratory Network last year. The AR Laboratory Network includes seven labs throughout the country working to rapidly detect antibiotic resistance in healthcare, food and the community to help local agencies respond faster to and contain outbreaks.

In the United States each year, Blosser said, at least 2 million people become infected with bacteria that are resistant to antibiotics and at least 23,000 die each year from those infections. CRE infections are more common among patients in hospitals, nursing homes and other healthcare settings where patients' care require devices, including ventilators and catheters, or in patients who receive antibiotics for a long time.

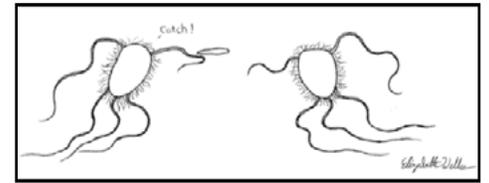
According to the ISDHL, Indiana had 354 reported CP-CRE cases in 2016, and preliminary numbers show 220 cases as

of Dec. 5 of this year.

Nine other states — Arizona, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Nebraska, North Carolina, Tennessee, Washington and Wisconsin — are also participating in the pilot.

"It's nice to be at the table with these other nine states that are already pretty big labs," Blosser said.

ISDHL has been testing for CREs for two years, she said, adding that the lab provides training sessions twice a year.



This illustration by Elizabeth Wells of ISDH shows how Carbapenemase genes are usually found on plasmids, which can be transferred from one bacterial cell to another, like a Frisbee.

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before it gets better, but it's going to get better."

Hendricks County Health Department (HCHD) public health education specialist Jenna Prihoda said the kits have "meant a lot" to the community.

"A lot of these laypersons who are in need have other things on their minds," Prihoda said. "It's a very scary thing to have a loved one with addiction."

She said HCHD has created partnerships throughout the community, including school corporations and three hotels with a high number of overdose incidents. Law enforcement also tells the health department where overdoses are happening so those areas can be targeted for naloxone distribution.

Prihoda said schools are a great place to keep naloxone kits because between

school hours and extracurricular events, including sports, they are community gathering places.

"It's an emergency tool like an AED [automated external defibrillator] or EpiPen," Prihoda said. "We want them to have another tool that they can use."

HCHD also partners with law enforcement, which distributes flyers at the scene of an overdose to let people know about the free naloxone kits.

Every naloxone kit includes two survey postcards, one to be returned when the kit is distributed, the other to send in after the naloxone is administered.

Dennis P. Watson, Ph.D., associate professor at the Richard M. Fairbanks School of Public Health, is collecting the postcards and studying the data. He said about 1,940 cards have been returned by those who received a kit and 94 from people who used the naloxone, exceeding

his expectations so far.

One of the cards was returned by a woman who said the naloxone was used to save her on the same day she picked it up. She wrote "thank you" on the card, Watson said.

Information from the postcards will be used to better understand and address the state's opioid epidemic.

The next naloxone distribution program will award grants to first responders in 49 rural counties. Those rescue kits will be provided in 2018 and distributed based on geographic location and need. Applications for those grants are due Jan. 12. Click [here](#) for more information and a grant application.

"We look forward to quickly reviewing applications so that we can distribute naloxone to as many rural first responders as we can," Hokanson said.

Two new ways ISDH tackles the flu

It may be the holiday season, but for those who focus on public health, it's also flu season.

The best way to avoid illness is to receive a flu shot, so the Indiana State Department of Health (ISDH) has two new programs this year to promote vaccination. ISDH has joined in a vaccination challenge for college students and created an Indianapolis Colts contest to encourage more Hoosiers to protect themselves against influenza.

College challenge

Indiana has joined 10 other states in this year's College & University Flu Vaccination Challenge. The challenge was first created in 2014 as a partnership of Alana's Foundation and the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services. Alana's Foundation works to educate the public about the importance of yearly influenza vaccinations and to support families who have lost a child to the flu. It is named for 5-year-old Alana Yaksich, who died from the flu in 2003. She had not been vaccinated.

The challenge is a friendly competition where students are asked to self-report their vaccination status online. The institutions with the most surveys completed will win the traveling trophy from Alana's Foundation. Participating schools are also eligible to submit grant requests to the foundation to receive funds for flu vaccines.

ISDH recruited Butler University; Valparaiso University; Indiana University, South Bend; and Indiana Wesleyan University into the challenge.

"We wanted to be involved because an annual flu vaccine is the best way to prevent influenza infection, and college students fall within the age group of those who have the lowest rates of influenza



vaccination coverage," ISDH Respiratory Epidemiologist Sara Hallyburton said.

Survey results will help ISDH identify barriers that keep young adults from getting a flu shot.

Butler University is the top Indiana school so far, in fourth place out of the 17 participants in the small schools category. Click [here](#) for current standings.

Visit <http://www.alanasfoundation.org/national-challenge> to learn more.

Blue is back

The ISDH has also expanded this season's partnership with the Indianapolis Colts to promote flu shots.

As part of the Join Blue Prevent the Flu campaign, ISDH is giving away a football autographed by Andrew Luck and two tickets to see the Colts on Dec. 31, when they take on the Houston Texans. The

THIS YEAR'S FLU

SEASON

Check out the ISDH Weekly Flu Reports page <https://www.in.gov/isdh/22104.htm> or national flu activity with CDC's FluView <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/weekly/index.htm> for updates on this year's flu season.

Through week 48, Indiana's flu season is ramping up, as expected, but cases are still at average levels, although one death was reported.

Remember the three Cs:

Clean — wash your hands regularly

Cover — cover your coughs and sneezes

Contain — stay home when you are sick

entry deadline was Dec. 18.

"We have more than 3,000 responses so far, way beyond what we expected," said Sonia Berdahl, the Epidemiology Resource Center public health associate who organized the contest. She said promoting the survey to Colts fans was good because they match the age group that typically has a low flu vaccination rate.

The survey is designed to help identify what keeps people from getting vaccinated. Based on the results, Berdahl will look for ways to adjust flu shot promotion and awareness efforts. For example, if there are specific reasons some young adults don't get flu shots, messages can be targeted to that specific age group.

This is the fourth year of the ISDH partnership with the Colts. The partnership also has been used to promote food safety, the proper use of antibiotics, information on prescription misuse and preparedness, also new this year.

First summit is a success

The Indiana State Department of Health hosted its first-ever infectious disease summit Nov. 29 and 30 at the JW Marriott in Indianapolis. The summit hosted 300 participants and brought together public health, healthcare providers, animal health and preparedness agencies to learn about mitigating and preventing the transmission of infectious pathogens. Among the events were several panels of experts on the theme "Emerging Infectious Disease at Your Doorstep." One of the presenters was David Daigle, right, of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, who spoke about crisis communication.



LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

ISDH seeks permanent oversight of meth lab cleanup

The Indiana State Department of Health (ISDH) will pursue a change to state law in the upcoming short session of the Indiana General Assembly that would officially bring oversight of the decontamination of controlled substance sites to ISDH.

Under Indiana code, ISDH and the Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM) share responsibilities regarding the cleanup of sites contaminated with controlled substances, including homes with former meth labs. IDEM oversees the training and certification of qualified inspectors who decontaminate these sites, while ISDH provides training to local health departments.

In July, ISDH and IDEM agreed that the cleanup oversight would be handled by ISDH. The proposed change to Indiana code would make that agreement permanent. The new legislation, if adopted, would take effect July 1.

Mike Mettler, director of the ISDH environmental and public health division, said ISDH has already drastically reduced the number of properties on the cleanup list from 12,000 to 4,000. Mettler said some sites were listed in error, but the division has also been visiting some counties to manage the list.

“We feel this is a health hazard that needs to be taken care of,” Mettler said.

It’s more efficient for ISDH to oversee this program because the work is done by local health departments ISDH already has relationships with, said Amy Kent, ISDH director of legislative affairs.



Amy Kent

Rep. Cindy Kirchhofer (R-Dist. 89), chairwoman of the Public Health Committee, is sponsoring the bill.



Cindy Kirchhofer

The goal is to streamline the process and make sure that Hoosiers are living in safe, healthy homes that are clean before they are occupied.

For more information, email ISDH at DrugLabCleanup@ISDH.in.gov or visit <http://www.in.gov/isdh/27487.htm>.



ISDH Injury Prevention Program Coordinator Preston Harness talks about the importance of using car seats correctly.

Labor of Love sets a record

The Indiana State Department of Health’s fifth annual Labor of Love Infant Mortality Summit was Nov. 15 at the Indianapolis Marriott Downtown.

Attendance was the highest yet at more than 1,200. This year, the summit focused on the effect of opioids on moms and babies, featuring Indiana’s community organizations that focus on this epidemic.

“We are grateful to have heard from not only industry leaders and healthcare professionals, but also community voices sharing their personal stories,” said ISDH Maternal & Child Health Director Martha Allen. “Having the ability to share the various programs and personal stories was a true testament to the impact we can have when a community comes together to serve the population.”



ISDH Commissioner Kris Box, MD, FACOG, presents at the annual conference.

ISDH IN THE NEWS

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

- [INDIANA RECORDS FIRST FLU-RELATED DEATH OF SEASON](#)
- [STATE HEALTH DEPARTMENT MARKS WORLD AIDS DAY](#)
- [HEALTH DEPARTMENT RELEASES MOBILE PREGNANCY APPLICATION](#)
- [HEALTH OFFICIALS RAISE AWARENESS OF SELDOM-DIAGNOSED ACOS](#)
- [HEALTH DEPARTMENT CALLS ATTENTION TO RISING DIABETES RATES](#)

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Indiana State
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