

ISDH Long Term Care
Newsletter Issue # 10-16
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In Today's Issue:

- ISDH Updates
- Death Registration System
- Preparing for Respiratory Illness
- ISDH Staffing Update
- Coming Events

ISDH Updates

Newsletters

For our regular readers, you likely noticed that there has not been a newsletter for the past couple of months. It certainly was not for the lack of news and events. In fact, part of the problem was numerous events that were scheduled during this period that took up time normally allocated to preparing newsletters. A second major issue was that the ISDH has been reviewing expenditures to identify potential cost savings to the state. Our contract with the newsletter vendor expired so it was a timely opportunity to review options. During the review and approval process, our account became deactivated so we were unable to send newsletters. We now have a new agreement in place so you should once again begin to see regular newsletters.

ISDH Report Card Scores Update

The ISDH report card system was recently rewritten in order to access new databases. Data is now extracted from the federal database instead of the State of Indiana database. During the rewrite effort to change field names and fields used in calculations it was discovered that the old system did not calculate the scores as the web page description explained. Upon review the ISDH determined that one of the grid levels was previously assigning an incorrect value. The system was therefore updated to correct the calculation process.

The ISDH believes the scores produced at this time are correct for the description on the web page. Resulting from this update, a very few individual facility scores may have changed without the facility having had a recent survey. As stated in the disclaimer on the web site any error in calculation will be adjusted and reposted when brought to our attention. Scores we have checked to date have matched with a manual calculation of the facility's survey history according to the scoring methodology stated on the web site.

Indiana To Modernize Death Records

November 16, 2010

INDIANAPOLIS—In January 2011, the Indiana State Department of Health will be taking the lead in improving the efficiency of the state's death records by launching an electronic, Web-based system for

recording death, the Indiana Death Registration System (IDRS). Approximately 56,000 death records are filed in Indiana every year.

"Hoosiers will benefit from the modernization of the death registration process in many ways, but perhaps the one most obvious to the general public will be a faster turnaround time for death certificates, from an average of 21 or more days to seven days," said State Registrar Erin Kellam, Esq.

According to Kellam, the goal of the Indiana Death Registration System is to enable the participants of the death registration process to electronically file death records with local and state registrars. Registration facilities will access the system online so decedent fact-of-death and cause-of-death information can be registered electronically without the time delay to move the paper record to each person in the process. For more information, go online at: <https://myweb.in.gov/ISDH/IDRSThin>.

"This system's ability to report cause of death with increased accuracy and timeliness will improve cause-of-death data for disease surveillance, which will help public health in its efforts to identify concerning trends," said Kellam.

The Indiana General Assembly passed legislation in 2009 to require all funeral directors, physicians, and coroners (if it is a coroner's case) to complete all their portions of a death certificate by using the new system. (See Indiana Code 16-37-1-3.1.)

The State Registrar and the Office of Vital Records at the Indiana State Department of Health have been working since April 2009 to provide education and training to local health officers, private physicians, coroners, and funeral directors about the Indiana Death Registration System.

According to Kellam, "The Indiana Death Registration System is up and running and we are accepting fully electronic records every day."

However, to date, only 993 of 1,757 funeral directors; 44 of 92 coroners, and 1,807 of an estimated 3,000 physicians who file death certificates in Indiana have registered as users of the Indiana Death Registration System, despite the fact paper death certificates will no longer be accepted starting January 1, 2011.

"We are concerned everyone is waiting until the last minute to register for the system," said Kellam. "I urge all funeral directors, coroners, and physicians who handle death certificates get registered as soon as possible and start using the IDRS to avoid delays in death records being processed. Such a delay would be unnecessary and unfair to the family members who need the death certificate for the "business side" such as collecting life insurance funds, receiving pension or other benefits, of losing a loved one."

Kellam says additional trainings will be offered in the coming months, including in-person trainings on November 18 at Wishard Hospital and the Indiana Veterans' Hospital and a Webinar training on December 15 at 7 a.m., Noon, and 6 p.m. (EST). Participants can view it by logging on to <http://media.ihets.org/isdh>

Hoosiers Urged To Prepare For Respiratory Illnesses

INDIANAPOLIS— Winter is just around the corner. Hoosiers are being urged to take preventative steps to prepare for the cold weather, when respiratory diseases will be circulating the most.

"It is a good time to think about preparing for the coming cold weather by taking steps to prevent respiratory diseases," said State Health Commissioner Gregory N. Larkin, M.D.

State health officials are identifying two respiratory illnesses as being of particular concern: influenza (flu) and pertussis (whooping cough). The 2010-2011 flu season is approaching, and the 2009 H1N1 flu virus is expected to be circulating.

In addition, the Indiana State Department of Health is reporting a rise in pertussis cases in the state, with 368 to date (compared to 392 in 2009).

"Although the 2009 H1N1 flu virus mostly caused mild disease during the 2009-2010 flu pandemic, influenza is unpredictable," said Dr. Larkin. "The current seasonal flu vaccine protects against it and two

other flu strains. The best way to ensure a mild flu season is to get vaccinated."

Unlike influenza, which is caused by viruses, pertussis is a contagious illness caused by bacteria. People of all ages can develop pertussis, but the disease tends to be more severe in infants. Adults with milder, undiagnosed symptoms can transmit the disease to infants and children. Pertussis is usually spread by contact with an infected person's nose or throat secretions.

"Despite their differences, one important thing influenza and pertussis have in common is there are safe, effective vaccines for each," said Dr. Larkin. "We urge parents get their children aged 6 months to 18 years vaccinated with the seasonal flu vaccine and to ensure their children are up to date on their diphtheria, tetanus, and pertussis (DTaP) series."

Dr. Larkin says adults should also get the seasonal flu vaccine each year and get the Tdap (tetanus, diphtheria, and pertussis) vaccine as a replacement for the every-10-year tetanus booster recommended for adults.

There are some additional steps people can take to prevent the spread of respiratory diseases, including influenza and pertussis:

- Clean - properly wash your hands frequently,
- Cover - cover your cough and sneeze, and
- Contain - contain your germs by staying home (or keep children at home from school) if sick.

"It's important to prepare for flu season by planning in advance to take care of yourself or a family member if they become ill," says IDHS Executive Director Joe Wainscott. "For instance, know how administrators will get a hold of you if your child becomes ill at school, and make sure you understand your work place policies on working from home if you need to care for an ill family member. Making these plans now can help alleviate stress during an illness."

For updates on this and other public health issues, follow the Indiana State Department of Health on Twitter at: www.twitter.com/INPublicHealth, or go online for more info at: www.statehealth.IN.gov.

ISDH Staffing Update

The Indiana State Department of Health (ISDH) would like to provide an agency staffing update for the Division of Long Term Care for September and October.

New Long Term Care Surveyors

The ISDH welcomes the following new surveyor staff to the Division of Long Term Care:

- Carol Dierks, start date September 7, 2010, assigned to LTC Area 6
- Vicki Manuwal, start date September 7, 2010, assigned to LTC Area 1
- Christi Davidson, start date October 4, 2010, assigned to LTC Area 4

Director of Emergency Preparedness

The ISDH is pleased to announce that Jennifer Pitcher has been selected to serve as ISDH's Director for the Division of Public Health Preparedness & Emergency Response (PHPER). Jennifer joined the PHPER staff in February 2009 as Deputy Director for Special Operations. She has served as the Interim PHPER Director since July 5, 2010. Before joining the Preparedness Division, Jennifer was Human Resources Director from 1996 to 2009. Before coming to ISDH Jennifer was employed by the State Personnel Department. Jennifer brings strong leadership and organizational skills with many years of experience in public health.

Coming Events

March 31, 2011: ISDH Indiana Healthcare Leadership Conference, *Improving Nutrition*, Indiana

Convention Center, Indianapolis, Indiana. The agenda and registration information will be posted closer to the event.

October 27, 2011: ISDH Indiana Healthcare Leadership Conference, topic to be determined, Indiana Convention Center, Indianapolis, Indiana.



October was a hectic but very positive month with the Alzheimer's Leadership Conference, seven regional Healthcare Associated Infection Initiative Learning Sessions, a CDC Healthcare Associated Infection (HAI) Meeting with state HAI coordinators, and a meeting with the National Quality Forum on healthcare quality metrics. The ISDH is now working with our partners to plan for the next year. We are very excited with the opportunities and look forward to continuing collaboration on healthcare quality improvement.

My apologies for our delays in sending newsletter updates. I believe that we have a distribution system back in place so I look to be doing some catch-up in the next few weeks. Best wishes to everyone.

Terry Whitson
Assistant Commissioner
Indiana State Department of Health



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Visit the ISDH Division of Long Term Care home page at <http://www.in.gov/isdh/23260.htm> for information on long term care.