

ISDH Long Term Care
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National Healthcare Decisions Day

The Fourth Annual National Healthcare Decisions Day was recently celebrated. This effort is led by the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization (NHPCO) to highlight the importance of making important health care decisions beforehand. The National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization provides information and tools for the public to talk about their end-of-life wishes with family, friends, and health care providers, and complete written advance directives. For more information or to download a free advance directive, visit the National Healthcare Decisions Day [website](#).

The Indiana State Department of Health (ISDH) has an advance directives brochure providing information on Indiana advance directives. The brochure is available on the ISDH Web site at <http://www.in.gov/isdh/files/advanceddirectives.pdf>. A Spanish version is available at <http://www.in.gov/isdh/files/advanceddirectivesspanish.pdf>. The Out of Hospital Do Not Resuscitate Declaration and Order is available at <https://forms.in.gov/Download.aspx?id=5596>

Aide Registration Process

The Indiana State Department of Health (ISDH) is changing the process regarding the certificates and pocket cards that are sent to certified nurse aides (CNA), qualified medication aides (QMA) and registered home health aides (HHA). Effective May 1, 2011, when an individual renews their certification or registration, no certificate, pocket card or confirmation will be sent in the mail. To verify the status of an aide you should visit: <http://mylicense.in.gov/everification>. The status and expiration date of the certification / registration are shown on this page and may be printed for your records.

CNAs, QMAs, and HHAs will receive a paper certificate and pocket card with their initial placement on the Nurse Aide Registry. This is the only certificate and pocket card that will be sent by the ISDH. Any request for copies of certificates or pocket cards will be directed to the website below.

If a paper certificate or pocket card is needed, it can be obtained at no cost from:
<https://mylicense.in.gov>. Follow these steps:

1. Enter login id (CNA, QMA, HHA number) and password (last 4 digits of social security number)
2. On the left side menu, click the "Order License Card" link.
3. Click the "Continue" link on the certification or registration that you want. Enter the number of copies you want in the "Quantity Requested" box.

4. Click the "Add to Shopping Cart" button.
5. Click "Next Step – Checkout" link at the bottom of the page.
6. Click the PRINT button at the bottom of the page.

Flooding Health Risk Reminder

April 25, 2011

INDIANAPOLIS—State health officials caution Hoosiers to be aware of potential health risks in flood-affected areas of the state and to take steps to protect their health and safety. People should not drink floodwater, which could be contaminated with raw sewage, and should avoid getting floodwater in the eyes, nose, and mouth. Children should never swim or play in floodwaters.

Untreated sanitary waste can end up in waterways and on streets when heavy rain overwhelms sewer systems and treatment plants. Wells and cisterns may also be affected. Wells that are located in a flooded area should be assumed to be contaminated. Health officials recommend people discontinue use of the well water until it can be inspected by a professional well contractor. Even when the water recedes, E. coli and other pathogens remain present in pools of standing water.

Other potential hazards related to flooding include slippery conditions, poor visibility, floating debris, and downed, live wires which can cause electrical shock. In addition, small cuts or scratches on the skin can make someone more susceptible to diseases like tetanus, E. coli, and other pathogens.

"It's extremely important for people in flooded areas to exercise caution with any type of injury," said State Health Commissioner Gregory Larkin, M.D. "People should thoroughly wash any cuts, scrapes, scratches, or other skin injuries with soap and water and apply an antiseptic and bandages to make sure they do not become infected. Injuries exposed to floodwater and debris should be closely watched for signs of infection like redness, swelling, pain, and drainage. If any of those symptoms develop, please see your health care provider right away."

Individuals who experience a puncture wound or a wound contaminated with feces, soil, or saliva, should visit their physician or local health department to determine whether a tetanus booster is necessary based on individual records. Specific recommendations for vaccinations should be made on a case-by-case basis.

Tetanus is an acute, often fatal disease. Symptoms of tetanus include generalized rigidity and painful spasms of skeletal muscles. The muscle stiffness usually involves the jaw (lockjaw) and neck and then becomes more generalized. Any type of wound, major or minor, could be an entry source for the tetanus organism.

Tetanus vaccines are available from your primary health care provider, local hospital, or your local health department. A complete listing of local health departments is available on the State Department of Health website at www.statehealth.in.gov by clicking on "Local Health Department Information."

Residents of flood-affected areas are reminded to disconnect electrical appliances if possible. Do not attempt to disconnect electrical appliances while wet or standing in water.

For more flood safety and sanitization recommendations, visit the Indiana State Department of Health website at <http://www.in.gov/isdh/20401.htm>.

Other helpful websites regarding flooding include.

- ISDH Division of Environmental Public Health has information on Disaster and Flood Sanitation (<http://www.in.gov/isdh/20401.htm>).
- The Indiana Department of Homeland Security has resources regarding flooding (<http://www.in.gov/dhs/2672.htm>).
- The Centers for Disease Control also has flood information on their Emergency Preparedness and

Response website (<http://www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters/floods/>) and Vaccine Information Sheet on Tetanus in multiple languages (http://www.immunize.org/vis/vis_td-tdap.asp).



Indiana is expected to continue to experience very wet weather over the next few days. The ISDH is monitoring conditions in coordination with the Indiana Department of Homeland Security. Please advise the ISDH of any weather-related issues affecting health care facilities.

Please use extreme caution around flood waters and keep safe.

Terry Whitson
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