



Welcome from the State Health Commissioner



State Health Commissioner
William C. VanNess, M.D.

Indiana consistently ranks low among states in the areas of obesity, tobacco use, infant mortality and early childhood immunizations. We must move the needle on these issues. At the Indiana State Department of Health, we will be working diligently to improve Hoosier health in these areas and will keep you updated about our efforts and progress.

This year, National Public Health Week focuses on the “Return on Investment” (ROI) of public health efforts. As the public health entity for the State, the State Health Department is responsible for monitoring outbreaks, preventing chronic disease, making sure new moms and babies are healthy, enforcing food safety rules, disaster response, vaccine availability, making sure our long term care facilities are safe and so much more. Please read the article *Celebrate National Public Health Week in April* (page 7) to learn more about what public health does and how you can participate.

I have seen firsthand the improved quality of life and tremendous savings in healthcare costs that come as a result of making healthy lifestyle choices. Prior to becoming State Health Commissioner, I was president and CEO of Community Hospital in Anderson for 16 years. While there, I implemented a wellness program for employees that allowed them to save

Hello! I am very pleased to be greeting you for the first time as Indiana State Health Commissioner. Since being appointed by Governor Pence on January 14, it has been my mission to gain a thorough understanding of the health challenges we face in Indiana and, building on past successes, look for innovative new ways to tackle those issues and improve the health of all Hoosiers. The challenges we face are significant.

money on their insurance premiums by meeting certain health criteria related to levels of blood pressure and cholesterol, body mass index, etc. The result was that our workforce was happier, healthier and saving \$500,000 to \$750,000 a year! It’s amazing the impact making a few small changes to your daily routine can have. I encourage you to check out the article *Making Healthy Eating a Priority* (page 4) to give you an idea of some small, achievable nutrition goals you can set for yourself.

Health and helping people have long been passions of mine. My interest in the health field developed when I was a boy growing up in Summitville, Indiana. My dad was the town doctor and my mom was his nurse. We would have sick people on our porch and in our home at all hours of the night. Needless to say, I saw a lot! It was then I decided I wanted to be a physician. In the years since, I have worked in several capacities to that end. I was a board-certified family physician for 24 years, I have owned and operated nursing homes, and have served on the Executive Board for the State Health Department, as well as President of the Indiana State Medical Association.

Our health in Indiana can only change with the combined efforts of State government, local health departments, workplaces, schools, faith-based organizations, community organizations and, of course, each individual. I am issuing a challenge right now to all Hoosiers to consider the people you interact with every day and ask yourself, “What can I do to help myself and my employees, congregation, students, etc., become healthier?” I am confident that together, we can make great strides toward a happier and healthier state.

Regards,

William C. VanNess II, M.D.
State Health Commissioner

About Dr. VanNess

Dr. VanNess served as a member of the Executive Board for the State Health Department from 2006 to 2012. Prior to his appointment, Dr. VanNess served as president and CEO of Community Hospital of Anderson and Madison County from 1997 until January 2013. Dr. VanNess has 39

years of health care experience in Indiana, including 24 years in active practice as a board certified family physician. He also has experience in owning and managing nursing homes. Dr. VanNess holds a bachelors degree from Butler University and a medical degree from Indiana University School of Medicine.



Get to Know Jim Huston, Chief of Staff



Jim Huston was appointed as Chief of Staff on January 28, 2013, by State Health Commissioner William C. VanNess II, M.D.

Prior to this appointment, Jim served as the Executive Director for the Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives.

He brings extensive knowledge from both the private and public sectors to the State Health Department. Jim began his career working for Governor Rob-

ert Orr in several capacities. He has served as Deputy Commissioner at the Bureau of Motor Vehicles and as Legislative Liaison for the Department of Education.

Jim also served as District Director for three members of Congress. In this capacity, he worked with community leadership and constituents in need of service with the federal government.

Jim received his Bachelor of Science degree in Political Science from Ball State University.

State Health Department Administrative Updates



Eric Miller became the Deputy Chief of Staff and Chief Financial Officer in January. He received his Master of Public Administration (MPA) from the University of Kentucky with a concentration in Public Financial Management, a Master of Business Administration from the University of Indianapolis and a Bachelor of Science in

Financial Planning from Purdue University. While earning his MPA degree, Eric served an internship with the White House's Office of Management and Budget office in Washington, D.C. He has experience working in the Indiana Governor's budget office as a Budget Analyst, as Deputy Controller at the Indiana Department of Correction, and as both Controller and Budget Director of the State Health Department.



Ann Alley became the Director of Chronic Disease Prevention and Control in January. She previously worked as the Director of the Office of Primary Care and Rural Health and continues these responsibilities as part of her new position. Prior to joining the State Health Department in 2006, Ann served as Director of the Indiana's

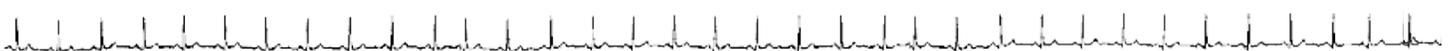
Children's Health Insurance Program and Medicaid Provider Relations, Communications and Policy for the Office of Medicaid Policy and Planning of the Family and Social Services Administration. She has experience in program design and management in the areas of community, economic and housing development. Ann has a Bachelor of Arts degree from Indiana University.



David Baize became the State Registrar in January. He previously worked as the Financial Operations Manager, Laboratory Operations Director and Operations Manager for Vital Records. Before joining the State Health Department in 2010, David worked for the Bureau of Motor Vehicles where he was the Director of Licensing Operations and Director of Document Management. He received his Bachelor of Science, with a major in Operations and Decision Technology from Indiana University's Kelley School of Business. David is a lean six sigma certified green belt.

**Would you like
to work for the
State Health Department?**
Search for employment opportunities
at www.in.gov/spd

Stay Connected ...



Talk to your Teen: What Parents Have to Say Matters

By Jeena Siela, Interim Director, Life Course Health Systems, Maternal and Child Health



Research shows that teens wish their parents would talk to them more about topics like sex.

Parents often think that teens don't listen and what a parent has to say doesn't matter. However, research confirms what young people already know: what their parents have to say does in fact matter and teens are listening. Nearly four in 10 teens (39 percent) say they wish their parents would talk to them more about topics like relationships and sex.

Parents play a powerful role in helping adolescents make healthy decisions. If talking to your son or daughter about tough issues makes you nervous, know that you're not alone. Many other parents agree. One way to help you feel less nervous is to gain more knowledge on the topic and the skills on how to begin and maintain two-way communication with your child.

Visit the free online resource, [Talking with Teens](#), by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of Adolescent Health. You will find tips for getting the conversation started and information on important topics to help you feel ready to talk.

The site provides information on several topics including healthy relationships, AIDS/HIV, sexual behavior, physical health, puberty and more. Each topic lists conversation starters, examples of how to answer questions, frequently asked questions and links to more information. One tip from the site suggests that if your teen asks you a question that you don't know the answer, don't be afraid to admit that and look up the answer together.

It's important to remember that this should not be a one-time conversation. The conversations should be often and should start early, before your child starts dating. Try to keep the lines of communication open with your kids, even if the topics are tough to talk about. Let them know they can come to you for support and information because what you say really does matter.

Public Health Legislative Update

By Scott Zarazee, Director, Legislative Affairs

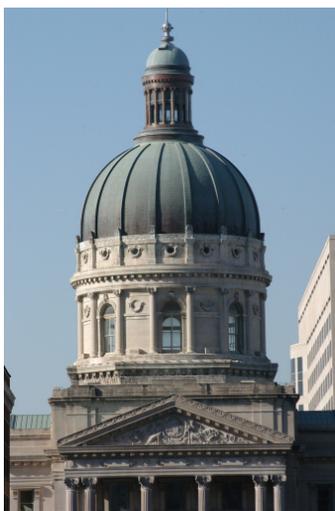
The State Health Department is supporting one bill during this legislative session. Authored by Senator Patricia Miller, Senate Bill 415 has two components. One component will make mandatory entry of all Indiana immunizations into the Children and Hoosiers Immunization Registry Program (CHIRP) for all health care providers, starting in 2015. Currently, all entries into CHIRP are voluntary.

CHIRP was started in 2002 and has expanded to include over 12,000 facilities that have contributed over four million individual records, recording over 36 million vaccinations. All of this has been accomplished on a voluntary basis.

By making vaccine entry into the system mandatory, it is anticipated it will expand exponentially and allow the State Health Department to target areas and allocate resources to underserved areas.

The registry will also serve as a valuable tool in preventing individuals from being over-immunized and for providers to verify

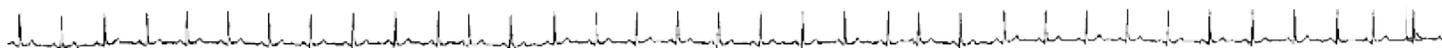
immunization history during outbreaks, for school entrance, travel and employment.



The State Health Department has been working with the health care provider community to answer questions about the proposed bill.

The second part of Senate Bill 415 involves the Indiana Local Health Department Trust Fund. The fund is currently distributed by the Auditor's office and the money is released directly to local health departments. The bill would change the administration of the fund to the State Health Department instead of the Auditor's office. The State Health Department approves the budget allotted to each local health department and this administrative change would allow the program to run more efficiently.

Senate Bill 415 is working its way through the legislative process and is anticipated to become law.





Spotlight on...

Office of Minority Health

By Antoniette Holt, Director, Office of Minority Health

The Office of Minority Health (OMH) was established in 1991 and focuses its efforts on increasing awareness, partnerships, and development and promotion of effective health policies and programs that help to reduce minority health disparities. The OMH serves the Hispanic/Latino, Black, Asian, Pacific Islanders, Native American Indians and other racial and ethnic populations, which comprise approximately 16 percent of Indiana's population. The OMH also coordinates, facilitates and monitors community-based programs tailored to meet the needs of these populations across Indiana.

April is Minority Health Month and OMH will be partnering with organizations around the state to increase awareness of minority health issues. An event calendar that details events around the state will be published in late March at www.minorityhealth.isdh.in.gov.

OMH is responsible for the annual INShape Indiana Black and Minority Health Fair, which takes place during Black Expo in July in Indianapolis. The health fair offers a multitude of free screenings, health information and activities. Last year's fair offered attendees more than \$1,000 worth of health screenings, including blood pressure, glucose, cholesterol, syphilis, body mass index, addiction, prostate and dental. Approximately 24,000 attendees attended the 2012 fair. This year, the fair will take place on July 18-21. Stay tuned for more information!



An attendee at the 2012 INShape Indiana Black and Minority Health Fair gets her blood pressure checked.

Throughout the year, OMH participates in events, presentations, cultural competency trainings and other programs that help encourage the elimination of health disparities. The OMH works with partners locally, within the state and nationally to ensure good health and healthy outcomes are being created for everyone.

For more information about minority health, contact the OMH at inomh@isdh.in.gov or (317) 233-8499. Follow OMH on Twitter at [@INMinorityHth](https://twitter.com/INMinorityHth).

Make Healthy Eating a Priority

By Melissa Dexter, Communications and Outreach Director, INShape Indiana

March is National Nutrition Month and there's no better time to start making healthy eating a priority. INShape Indiana challenges you to examine what you're eating, identify areas for improvement and make healthy changes.

First, take one day to examine what you are eating. What did you eat for breakfast, lunch or dinner? Did you snack throughout the day? What did you drink? Use the INShape Indiana [Nutrition Log](#) to track your intake. At the end of the day, look at your list.

Ask yourself these questions: Did I eat the recommended amounts of fruits and vegetables? [Find out](#) how many fruits and vegetables you should be eating each day. How many calories did I drink (soda, tea, lemonade, etc.)? Liquid calories can really add up. Is this typically how I eat each day?

With busy schedules and convenient fast foods, it can be tough to eat healthy every day. Take the time at the beginning of

each week to plan. Create a meal plan for the week and don't forget to include snacks. If you take the time to do this early and often, it can help reduce the chance that you will visit the drive-thru for dinner later in the week.

Try setting these goals for yourself and your family:

- Eat a healthy breakfast. Try to include some fruit.
- At each meal, make at least half your plate fruits and vegetables.
- Make healthy snacks at home to carry with you throughout the day. For example, keep some at work and in your car.
- Drink water instead of tea or soda during at least one meal each day.

Do you already do these things? Great! You're on the right track! Check out [INShape Indiana](#) to get more tips on healthy eating. Follow INShape Indiana on [Twitter](#) or like us on [Facebook](#) to get news about nutrition and activities.



Ask THE EXPERT



with Joan Duwve, M.D.
Chief Medical Officer
Indiana State Department of Health

The State Health Department recently published the school immunization requirements for the 2013-14 school year, which included the requirement of two valid doses of varicella vaccine or a documented history of having chickenpox disease for Kindergarten through 12th grade.

What is chickenpox?

Chickenpox is caused by the varicella-zoster virus and is very contagious. It causes a blister-like rash, itching, tiredness and fever.

How does one get chickenpox?

The chickenpox virus spreads easily from infected people to anyone who is unprotected. Unprotected, or susceptible, peo-

ple are those who have never had chickenpox or received the chickenpox vaccine. Chickenpox spreads in the air through coughing or sneezing. It can also be spread by touching chickenpox or shingles blisters that have not scabbed over.

Why do I need the vaccine?

Chickenpox is a serious disease and can cause complications like pneumonia, and even death. If you have never had chickenpox, the best way to prevent it is to get the chickenpox vaccine. Although many people consider chickenpox to be a mild illness, its consequences are significant, even in the mildest of cases. Before the vaccine, each year in the U.S., about four million people would get chickenpox, every case resulting in a week of missed school or work. Over 10,000 people would be hospitalized with more severe disease or complications, and 100 to 150 Americans died as a result of chickenpox.

Can I still get chickenpox if I am vaccinated?

Chickenpox vaccine is very safe and effective at preventing the disease. Most people who get the vaccine will not get chickenpox. If a vaccinated person does get chickenpox, it is usually mild, with fewer blisters and low-grade or no fever. The chickenpox vaccine prevents almost all cases of severe disease.

For more information about chickenpox vaccine, visit www.cdc.gov/vaccines/vpd-vac/varicella/default.htm.

Indiana Text4Baby Wins National Contest

By Krista Spore, Program Coordinator, Maternal and Child Health

Every year in the United States, nearly one in eight children are born prematurely. In Indiana, of the approximately 86,700 babies born each year, 11.9 percent are pre-term, 8.3 percent are born at a low birth weight and almost seven per 1,000 babies die before reaching their first birthday.

In 2010, Text4Baby was launched nationwide by the National Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies Coalition to help maternal infant health. Text4Baby is a free text messaging service that provides subscribers with weekly, medically accurate information about pregnancy, childbirth and infant health topics, which come directly to the user's phone. The service takes the baby's due date and sends age appropriate messages which continue through the baby's first birthday.



In May 2012, the Indiana Minority Health Coalition, with a grant from the State Health Department, started Text4Baby in Indiana and enrolled in the 2012 Text4Baby State Enrollment Contest.

Indiana's Text4Baby won the enrollment contest by achieving a higher enrollment rate than any other state in the nation. Indiana had 13,302 Hoosiers who participated in the Text4Baby campaign.

Pregnant or know someone who is? Subscribe to the free service by texting the word baby (or bébé for Spanish messages) to 511411. For more information about Text4Baby, visit the Indiana Minority Health Coalition at www.imhc.org.



Prevent Illness While Traveling Abroad

By Sue Henry, Chief Nurse Consultant, Surveillance and Investigation



In today's mobile world, more and more individuals of all ages and life stages are traveling internationally. People travel for tourism, business, study abroad, visiting friends and relatives, medical or mission work or responding to an international disaster. Not only are there more travelers moving about the world, more of them

are heading to locations that have rarely been visited in the past. Some destinations have become safer, but in others, new diseases have emerged and old ones have re-emerged.

You can prevent illness and injury during international travel by following a few simple steps before you leave home. The State Health Department [International Travel](#) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) [Travelers' Health](#) webpages contain a great deal of information, resources and suggestions to help you be "proactive, prepared and protected when it comes to your health – and the health of others – while you are traveling."

Be proactive in the preparation for your trip by learning about your destination and any health, safety and security concerns that may exist in the country you will be visiting. Seeing a doctor or health-care provider well in advance of your travel date is one of the most important proactive steps that you can take.

Before your trip, you may need to receive vaccinations and take medications for vaccine-preventable diseases and other diseases you might be at risk for at your destination. Routine and recommended vaccinations protect you from diseases that are still common in many parts of the world – even though they may rarely occur in the United States – and they prevent these infectious diseases from being brought back to your own home and community. Consideration should be taken for those individuals who have special health needs, such as babies and small children, pregnant women, people with disabilities and people with weakened immune systems. Visit the CDC [Destinations](#) web page to select the country or countries of your destination, and begin the research.

The best time to see a health-care provider is at least four to six weeks before your trip. This will allow enough time for the vaccines and medications you may be given to take effect. Some vaccines must be given in a series over a period of days or sometimes weeks. Even if you are traveling sooner than the four to six weeks, a visit to a health-care provider is still recommended.

To locate a travel medicine specialist or a health-care provider familiar with travel medicine in Indiana, visit the State Health Department [International Travel Clinics](#) web page. Planning ahead for your international trip will help your journey be an enjoyable and healthy one.

SAVE THE DATE

May 14, 2013

2013 Indiana State
Asthma Conference
Carmel, Indiana

Plan to attend Indiana's first asthma conference featuring national and state experts, who will help put medical and public health professionals in the driver's seat in the race to beat asthma.

Visit www.injac.org or call
(317) 234-7631 for more information.

MY VAX INDIANA
Keeping Hoosiers Connected & Protected

As of March 19, 2013,

3,315 individual records
have been accessed

and 24,443 PINs issued
by providers!



Learn how to access your vaccination records at www.MyVaxIndiana.in.gov



by Katie Jones, Violence Prevention Program Director

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, one in five Hoosier women will be sexually assaulted in her lifetime. In order to eliminate sexual violence, attention must be paid to changing social norms that support violence and preventing violence from occurring in the first place. The State Health Department Sexual Violence Primary Prevention Program works to move the focus toward primary prevention.

Indiana's Sexual Violence Primary Prevention Council created an outcome in the Indiana's Sexual Violence Primary Prevention State Plan to work with an agency unassociated with the Council to create a Sexual Violence Primary Prevention Policy Brief. The State Health Department solicited proposals in the Spring of 2011 and selected the [Center for Evaluation and](#)



[Education Policy](#) (CEEP) at Indiana University for the project. Over the course of several months, the State Health Department worked with CEEP staff and the Indiana Coalition Against Sexual Assault to gather data and prepare the document. In February 2012, CEEP, with funding from the State Health Department, released [Sexual Violence Prevention In Indiana: Toward Safer, Healthier Communities](#).

The Policy Brief highlights the issues surrounding sexual violence, what Indiana is doing for prevention, what other states are doing successfully and includes recommendations for improved primary prevention efforts. The Policy Brief received widespread media attention and resulted in the production of a documentary, [Shadows of Innocence: Sexual Assault Among Indiana's Youth](#), which examined Indiana's high rate of sexual assault among high school girls and the prevention efforts ongoing in the state on sexual violence among Indiana's youth.

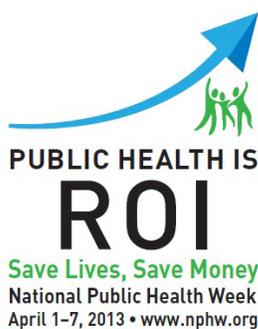
For more information on prevention efforts, visit www.in.gov/isdh/23820.htm.

Celebrate National Public Health Week in April

The first week of April is National Public Health week and aims to increase awareness about public health in the community. This year's theme, "Public Health is Return on Investment (ROI)—Save Lives, Save Money," focuses on the economic impact of health. It also focuses on the role that everyone in the community has to support public health and prevention.

The U.S. spends more money on health care than any other country and costs continue to rise. However, according to the American Public Health Association, investing just \$10 per person each year in proven, community-based public health efforts could save the nation more than \$16 billion within five years. That's a \$5.60 return for every \$1 invested. Research shows that prevention not only saves lives, it saves money.

So, what exactly is public health? Many people don't know what public health is and how it impacts them. Public health is monitoring outbreaks such as West Nile virus and implementing prevention strategies; ensuring new moms have the resources and knowledge they need to have healthy babies; enforcing food safety rules and investigating food-borne illness; responding to and preparing communities for natural disasters and emergencies; providing access to vaccines; testing the drinking water; ensuring safe long term care facilities and so much more.



Each day from April 1 to 5 will highlight a daily theme and focus on a specific prevention activity. Join the movement by:

- Monday, April 1: Ensure a safe and healthy home for your family. Create an emergency plan for your family in case of fire or severe weather.
- Tuesday, April 2: Provide a safe environment for children at school. Support school policies that support healthy children and teach healthy habits.
- Wednesday, April 3: Create a healthy workplace. Help support healthy habits at work such as taking a walk at lunch.
- Thursday, April 4: Protect yourself while on the move. Always use your seat belt and never text while driving.
- Friday, April 5: Empower a healthy community. Encourage your friends and family to keep up-to-date with vaccinations and healthy lifestyles, such as quitting smoking.

It may sound overwhelming but you don't have to do everything at once. Start with small steps as it can make a big difference. For more information and ways to get involved with National Public Health week, visit www.nphw.org.





Awards

Ellen Miller, Executive Director, University of Indianapolis Center for Aging and Community, received the State Health Commissioner Award for her efforts in health-care quality improvement.

Larry Harris, Director of HIV/STD/Viral Hepatitis, was awarded the 2013 Courage to Care award from the Indiana Minority AIDS Coalition for his commitment to the HIV



Larry Harris, Director of HIV/STD/Viral Hepatitis, received the 2013 Courage to Care award from the Indiana Minority AIDS Coalition.

community and the courage to be a leader in caring about the persons, organizations and populations within the community.

April

- 2 Indiana Joint National Public Health Week Conference, smatheson@isdh.in.gov
- 18 Indiana Environmental Health Association Spring Educational Conference, tlbarrett4898@sbcglobal.net
- 25 Indiana Cancer Consortium Annual Meeting, caleb@indianacancer.org

Public Health
Happenings

(For more information about a specific event, please use the specific email address listed).

May

- 9-10 Public Health Nurse Conference, jtrimble@isdh.in.gov
- 14 Indiana State Asthma Conference, indianaasthma@gmail.com

For more information on these and other state events, visit the State of Indiana events calendar at <http://www.in.gov/core/calendar.html>



Indiana State
Department of Health

The Indiana State Department of Health promotes and provides essential public health services.

Public Health Matters is a free publication that is published electronically every quarter by the State Health Department Office of Public Affairs. For questions, to submit an article or topic, contact Amanda Turney at aturney@isdh.in.gov.

To subscribe or unsubscribe to the newsletter, visit <http://bit.ly/publichealthmatters>. For more information about the State Health Department, visit www.statehealth.in.gov.

