

## Welcome from the State Health Commissioner



State Health Commissioner  
Jerome Adams, M.D., M.P.H.

**H**ello to all my fellow Hoosiers! Hope you all are having an enjoyable summer.

As I'm sure you are aware, Indiana has been experiencing an unprecedented outbreak of HIV in southeastern Indiana. More information about the outbreak is in the special section of this newsletter, starting on page 3.

I want to take this opportunity to thank each and every individual and organization involved in the response. We would not have been able to succeed without everyone's assistance, including the Scott County Health Department staff, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and countless others. I also want to thank my colleagues at the Indiana State Department of Health. Many individuals worked tirelessly, through holidays, evenings and 18 hour days on this response and we wouldn't have been able to succeed without all of their help.

Such tireless individuals include Disease Intervention Specialists, who are on the forefront of public health and this outbreak. More information about these key individuals is on page 5.

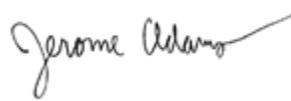
Save the date this summer for the INShape Indiana Black and Minority Health Fair in Indianapolis. Now in its 30th year, this

year's theme is "30 Years of Building Healthy People." The health fair will take place on Thursday, July 16 to Sunday, July 19 during the annual Indiana Black Expo Summer Celebration. See page 2 for more details.

Earlier this summer, I joined my colleagues at the Indiana State Lab and participated in the *Public Health's Pit Crew: A Look inside the State Health Department Public Health Laboratory*. Parents and students from grades 6-8 participated in fun activities at the lab and were encouraged to pursue health and science as careers. It was fun spending time with the kids and encouraging our next generation of scientists. Read page 2 for more information about the event.

Our staff never ceases to amaze me, both at work and personally. Kelsey Gurganus, epidemiologist for the Maternal and Child Health Division, ran the Boston Marathon for the second time this year. Check out her story on page 7.

Regards,



Jerome Adams, M.D., M.P.H.,  
State Health Commissioner

**Stay Connected with the State Health Department...**



## Save the Date for the Health Fair

The 2015 INShape Indiana Black and Minority Health Fair will take place from Thursday, July 16 to Sunday, July 19 during the annual Indiana Black Expo Summer Celebration. One of the largest events of its kind, the INShape Indiana Black and Minority Health serves more than 20,000 people each year.

Now in its 30th year, this year's theme is "30 Years of Building Healthy People." Attendees will receive more than \$1,500 worth of free health screenings, health education, and health resources. These include blood pressure, glucose, A1C, full lipid panel, creatinine (kidney function), HIV testing, body mass index, hearing screening, foot screening, vision screening, addiction, joint assessment, prostate and dental just to name a few. There will be special guest speakers, cooking demonstrations, healthy entertainment, a healthy activities area and so much more. You don't want to miss this grand event!

The event is organized by the State Health Department and sponsored by Community Health Network, Eli Lilly, WISH-TV and many other valued and dedicated sponsors. The goal of the health fair is to improve the health of underserved and racial and ethnic minority populations of the region.

**30  
YEARS  
BUILDING  
healthy  
PEOPLE**

For more information about the State Health Department office of Minority Health, visit [www.minorityhealth.isdh.in.gov](http://www.minorityhealth.isdh.in.gov).

## Students Explore the State Health Department Lab

*By Erica Vecchio, Microbiologist*



On May 17, the Indiana State Public Health Lab hosted *Public Health's Pit Crew: A Look inside the State Health Department Public Health Laboratory*. This event, which was co-sponsored by the Association of Public Health Laboratories (APHL), invited students in grades 6-8 to explore the laboratory, perform experiments, conduct scientific investigations and ask questions about public health science and career options.

Forty-one State Health Department and APHL volunteers led student attendees through the activities, while their parents, who were also welcomed to the event, toured the facility, observed students at work through the laboratory windows and

watched documentary films related to public health. Forty-one children from schools across the state and 29 parents participated in the program.

Dr. Adams opened up the event with remarks to the parents where he discussed the vital role of public health and the impact that the State Health Department has on the lives of Hoosiers. After the children enjoyed lunch, Dr. Adams spoke with them about the importance of public health and the potential opportunities for careers in public health and science. The day consisted of a variety of hands-on activities supervised by lab employees. Microbiologists explained and demonstrated various testing methods. Students dressed up in personal protective equipment such as gloves, masks and gowns, while performing diagnostic tests.

Lab personnel stressed the importance of several laboratory techniques and guided students through numerous activities. One technique demonstrated to the students was homogenization of samples, by mixing food coloring with milk and through smashing tomatoes in plastic bags to the proper consistency. While rotating between activities, participants explored the Analytical Laboratory System, a mobile lab used by the Indiana National Guard for emergency assessments in the field. Volunteers, students and parents all seemed to enjoy this day of scientific discovery.





## Health Officials Respond to HIV Outbreak

In February, State health officials announced a quickly spreading outbreak of HIV in the southeastern portion of the state. As of June 23, there have been 170 confirmed HIV positive cases. The large majority of cases are linked through injection drug abuse of the prescription drug, opana, in addition to a small number of cases linked through sexual transmission.

On May 21, State Health Commissioner Jerome Adams, M.D., M.P.H., declared a public health emergency in Scott County for the period May 25, 2015 through May 24, 2016. The declaration was made following a request from the Scott County Health Department for a needle exchange program, permitted under Senate Enrolled Act 461 in the case of public health emergencies.

The declaration came in advance of the expiration of Governor Pence's Executive Order declaring a public health emergency in Scott County.

This order permitted the Scott County Health Department to design and administer a limited and focused short-term needle exchange program as part of a comprehensive effort to combat HIV. Senate Enrolled Act 461, which the Governor signed into law on May 5, provides the legal framework under which this program will continue uninterrupted.

The Executive Order by the Governor also authorized local officials and state officials to coordinate a multi-agency response and provided additional resources and tools to tackle the outbreak.

The State Health Department continues to work closely with local health officials, the Centers for Disease Control and Pre-

vention (CDC), drug treatment facilities, academic and local medical providers, other state agencies and other partners to contain the outbreak and get HIV positive individuals treatment.

State health officials recommend that all Hoosiers know their HIV status. The best way for an individual to learn their HIV status is by getting tested by a health care professional. Hoosiers who have engaged in high-risk behavior such as needle sharing and unprotected sex, are advised to get tested and then re-tested after about two to three months because HIV can take up to three months to appear in a person's system.



To help reduce risk of HIV infection, avoid injection drug use; sharing or re-using needles; engaging in unprotected sex; and engaging in sex with commercial sex workers.

For HIV testing locations and information about HIV Care Coordination, individuals are encouraged to call the State Health Department HIV Services Hotline at (866) 588-4948.

Individuals seeking help with substance abuse should call the national 24-hour addiction hotline at 1-800-662-HELP (4357).

For more information about HIV and the outbreak, visit [www.statehealth.in.gov](http://www.statehealth.in.gov).



**with Andrea Perez**  
 Director,  
 HIV/STD/Viral Hepatitis Division  
 Indiana State Department of Health

**What is HIV?**

HIV, which stands for human immunodeficiency virus, is the virus that can lead to AIDS (acquired immunodeficiency syndrome). The human body cannot get rid of HIV. Once you have HIV, you have it for life.

**How can I tell if I'm infected with HIV?**

The only way to know if you are infected with HIV is to be tested. You cannot rely on symptoms to know whether you have HIV. Many people who are infected with HIV do not have any symptoms at all for 10 years or more.

**How is HIV passed from one person to another?**

HIV is spread by:

- Sharing needles, syringes, rinse water, or other equipment (works) used to prepare injection drugs with someone who has HIV.
- Sexual contact (oral, vaginal or anal) with someone who has HIV.
- Mother-to-baby transmission during pregnancy, birth or breastfeeding.

**Can I get HIV from casual contact?**

No. HIV is not spread by day-to-day contact in the workplace, schools, or social settings. HIV is not spread through shaking hands, hugging, or a casual kiss. You cannot become infected from a toilet seat, a drinking fountain, a door knob, dishes, drinking glasses, food, cigarettes, pets, or insects. HIV is not spread through the air, and it does not live long outside the body.

**How can I prevent HIV?**

In addition to never sharing needles, you can reduce your risk of getting HIV by limiting your number of sex partners and using condoms correctly every time you have sex.

**Where can I get tested for HIV?**

Call the HIV Services hotline at 1(866) 588-4948 or visit [www.statehealth.in.gov](http://www.statehealth.in.gov)

**HELP PREVENT HIV**  
**DON'T SHARE THESE.**  
**DON'T ABUSE THESE.**

Any drug can be abused. If you or a friend are abusing drugs, get help. Never share needles. It increases your risk of getting HIV.

HIV Services Hotline 1-866-588-4948  
 Addiction Hotline 1-800-662-HELP(4357)  
[www.StateHealth.IN.gov](http://www.StateHealth.IN.gov)

**YOU ARE NOT ALONE**  
 Indiana State Department of Health

Campaign materials originally developed by the New York State Department of Health, 2010



## Spotlight on...

## Disease Intervention Specialists

By *Jeremy Roseberry, Interim STD Prevention Program Manager*

Most people are not aware that there is a job in Indiana where one has the ability to stop disease transmission in its track and protect the community's health. They are Disease Intervention Specialists (DIS) and they are the frontline of sexually transmitted disease (STD) and HIV prevention. This is a colossal endeavor for the folks who fill these positions, considering the disease burden of STDs and HIV in Indiana. In 2014, the two most reported conditions to the State Health Department were chlamydia and gonorrhea.

Department within 72 hours of diagnosis. Once a DIS receives the confidential report, they begin their investigations (case management) by reaching out to health care providers. The DIS will attempt to confirm treatment for curable STDs like chlamydia, gonorrhea and syphilis. If the resident was not treated at their provider, this person will become high priority for the DIS to confidentially contact via mail, phone calls, field work and/or social media.

DIS are thoroughly trained to conduct HIV and STD testing and may be the first person to inform an individual that they are positive for a condition that is often thought of as stigmatizing and socially unacceptable. They speak to individuals about sex and needle sharing partners, and others in their lives who they feel may benefit from testing.

They then confidentially notify, test and treat all those who were exposed to HIV and/or STDs and offer testing to those at risk or who may benefit from exams. Talking to someone you just met about this type of information can be very challenging, however, all Indiana DIS receive specialized training.

DIS must maintain the patient's confidentiality and privacy at all times, especially when speaking to family members or close friends. Along with maintaining confidentiality, the substantial number of partners identified by DIS in southeastern Indiana was also challenging. Needle sharing individuals may have shared with upwards of eight people (average number of partners discovered in the outbreak response) and those people may have shared with another 10 and so on. It is the important job of DIS to confidentially seek out each person connected to the investigation and insure they are notified and tested.

For more information about DIS and the HIV outbreak response, visit [www.statehealth.in.gov](http://www.statehealth.in.gov).



Indiana is experiencing the worst HIV outbreak in state history and health officials continue to work closely with many partners to contain the spread of HIV in southeastern Indiana. DIS have been in the area, interviewing each newly identified HIV positive individual to assist in managing their infection. This includes obtaining information about needle sharing and sex partners, counseling patients on ways to reduce their risk for transmission and STDs, as well as recommending care coordination services, medical care and HIV prevention information. The Indiana DIS was instrumental in identifying an increase in HIV cases in this area, as it typically has less than five cases per year.

In Indiana, health care providers and laboratories are required to confidentially report STDs and HIV to the State Health



# HIV Outbreak *in Indiana*



## Scott County Health Department

*by Erika Chapman, HIV Surveillance Coordinator*

**I**n January 2015, the State Health Department Division of HIV/STD/Viral Hepatitis, in cooperation with local partners, identified a cluster of new HIV infections in southeastern Indiana. In the days and weeks that followed, it became evident that the cluster was an epidemic among people who inject drugs and a large scale response was necessary in order to support those impacted and the community around them. There has been a tremendous effort from partners across the state in support of the outbreak response, reinforcing the generosity and care for others that is a hallmark of Hoosiers.

At the core of this response and continued efforts, are the people of Scott County and the Scott County Health Department (SCHD). Working with the State Health Department, the SCHD received technical guidance from other states to establish, implement and evaluate the first legal needle exchange program in Indiana. This was in response to Governor Pence's Executive Order allowing for a limited, targeted needle exchange program as one of several tools to be used in the

HIV outbreak response to prevent additional infections. The Executive Order was declared on March 26 and the needle exchange program was open on April 4.

The needle exchange program operates routinely out of the Community Outreach Center and a mobile unit in the afternoon, weather and staff permitting. Participating individuals receive enough needles for one week. When in need of additional needles, participants are asked to bring their used needles to exchange. Needle exchange program staff provide information about substance abuse treatment, as well as information on HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment.

"The goal is a clean syringe for each injection use," said Britany Combs, Scott County Public Health Nurse.

Since the needle exchange program began, more than 180 individuals from Scott County have been served with care, compassion and respect. This has helped to encourage a number of participants to reduce substance use, enter substance abuse treatment and access other services to improve their health and that of their families and the community at large.

On May 21, State Health Commissioner Dr. Adams declared a public health emergency in Scott County for the period May 25, 2015 through May 24, 2016. The declaration allows the SCHD to continue the needle exchange program for the time period specified.



# State Health Department Employee Runs Marathon

by Ken Severson, Media Relations Coordinator

If you enter Kelsey Gurganus' office, you will notice it on the bulletin board. While not in a prominent position, one can still see the invitation to run in the Boston Marathon held up by tacks. Kelsey has two such invites.

Kelsey, the Infant Mortality Epidemiologist at the State Health Department Division of Maternal and Child Health, recently completed her second Boston Marathon. She first ran the Boston Marathon in 2014, one year after the bombing disaster at the race. The 2013 marathon was disrupted by two consecutive explosions on the sidewalk near the finish line, killing three spectators and injuring 264 others.

Fortunately, the only barrier that Kelsey had to contend with this year was Mother Nature. The weather, though typical for Boston in the late fall or late winter, wasn't all that conducive to runners like it has been in past years. Marathoners had to contend with 20-30 mph winds, rain and a near-frigid 38 degrees.

"From the nine mile marker on to the end, it was pouring rain," Kelsey said. "When your feet get wet, they tend to get heavy and you get blisters. Your clothes also feel heavier and your muscles get tighter."

Kelsey said she just kept her head down and kept going despite the miserable conditions, knowing that when she approached Boylston Street in Boston, she was nearing the finish line. "It's the most beautiful sight you can see," Kelsey said.

Kelsey is not unfamiliar with running. She ran track in middle and high school at Perry Meridian, where she also starred in basketball. Soon, Kelsey made the move to Southern Mississippi University, but later transferred to Youngstown State in Ohio. While playing basketball, she took a break from running and picked it back up in 2010 with the Mini-Marathon in May. A knee injury thwarted Kelsey for awhile, but she soon recovered and ran her first marathon in 2012.



*Kelsey running during the 2014 Boston Marathon.*

Since then, she's run the Monumental Marathon three times, Boston twice and completed the Chicago Marathon once. Kelsey has also done more than 20 half-marathons and the occasional 10K run.

She encourages anyone to go out and run as a form of exercise, and offers a few tips about starting out.

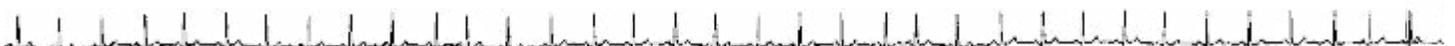
"Beginners should really start out slow and get a feel and understand the way your body feels," Kelsey said. "Know that it's okay to walk and go slow at first."

Kelsey suggests doing research online and talking to other runners about the sport. She also suggests maintaining a good diet so you will feel better when you run.

Check out [www.inshapeindiana.org](http://www.inshapeindiana.org) for more tips on exercise and nutrition.

**Would you like to work for  
the State Health Department?**

[Search for employment opportunities.](#)





# Awards

The IU Richard M. Fairbanks School of Public Health Alumni Association honored Deputy State Health Commissioner, **Jennifer Walthall**, M.D., M.P.H., with the Early Careerist Award.

## July

- 7 Trauma Tour, District 1, [khokanson@isdh.in.gov](mailto:khokanson@isdh.in.gov)
- 14 Trauma Tour, District 7, [khokanson@isdh.in.gov](mailto:khokanson@isdh.in.gov)
- 16 Trauma Tour, District 6, [khokanson@isdh.in.gov](mailto:khokanson@isdh.in.gov)
- 16-19 INShape Black and Minority Health Fair, [INOMH@isdh.in.gov](mailto:INOMH@isdh.in.gov)
- 21 Trauma Tour, District 3, [khokanson@isdh.in.gov](mailto:khokanson@isdh.in.gov)
- 23-23 Epi Ready: A Training for Public Health Personnel, Mideast District, [jmadlem@isdh.in.gov](mailto:jmadlem@isdh.in.gov)
- 27-28 Epi Ready: A Training for Public Health Personnel, Northeast District, [jmadlem@isdh.in.gov](mailto:jmadlem@isdh.in.gov)
- 28 Trauma Tour, District 9, [khokanson@isdh.in.gov](mailto:khokanson@isdh.in.gov)
- 30 Trauma Tour, District 4, [khokanson@isdh.in.gov](mailto:khokanson@isdh.in.gov)



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

## August

- 4 Trauma Tour, District 2, [khokanson@isdh.in.gov](mailto:khokanson@isdh.in.gov)
- 11 Trauma Tour, District 8, [khokanson@isdh.in.gov](mailto:khokanson@isdh.in.gov)
- 13 Trauma Tour, District 5, [khokanson@isdh.in.gov](mailto:khokanson@isdh.in.gov)

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

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



**Indiana State  
Department of Health**

*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](mailto:aturney@isdh.in.gov).*

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