

Health Standards Compliance

Mission

To ensure that health services providers and establishments comply with health and safety regulations, providing safe, clean and healthy services for Hoosiers.

Summary of Activities

Health standards compliance activities are overseen by the **Indiana State Department of Health (ISDH)**, by way of the Health Care Regulatory Services Commission. This commission is comprised of five divisions. The Acute Care and Long Term Care divisions are responsible for the licensure and certification of 5,022 acute care and 625 long-term care providers, respectively. These divisions provide directories, pamphlets, profiles, reports, and other reference information relating to acute care and long-term care issues such as nursing homes, hospitals, hospices, home health agencies, and blood centers. They also evaluate complaints regarding hospitals, nursing homes, home health care providers, or hospice care providers, conducting investigations when necessary.

The Food Protection division is charged with ensuring the safety and sanitation of food, the accurate representation of regulated products, and the compliance of food and food products with state laws and regulations. This division works with the retail and wholesale food industry to ensure that food provided to the consumer is safe and does not become a vehicle in a disease outbreak or in the transmission of communicable disease.



The Indoor and Radiological Health division regulates all sources of radiation in Indiana, providing guidance and assistance regarding radiation and indoor air quality. Technical assistance is provided on radiological emergency response, proper use of radioactive materials, and X-ray and radon machine training and compliance.



The Weights and Measures division regulates commercial weighting and measuring instruments, ensuring the accuracy of weights and measures in the distribution and sale of necessities such as food and fuel.

External Factors

A number of significant external factors affect health standards compliance:



- ◆ A growing senior citizen population has increased the number of acute and long term care facilities that require licensure and certification.
- ◆ Many acute and long-term care providers are consolidating services to reduce overall operating costs, which may result in fewer options for those in need of care.
- ◆ Acute or long-term care providers are faced with decreased reimbursement rates and labor shortages, which places financial constraints on these care facilities.
- ◆ New certification laws for retail food handlers were adopted to increase the safety level of retail food consumers

Evaluation and Accomplishments

The ISDH Acute Care division has experienced a 22% increase in the number of surveys and complaint investigations since 1998. These investigations have been focusing on patient outcomes and enforcement criteria that can include both fines and the denial or suspension of licenses. In addition, the Acute Care division implemented the Critical Access Hospital (CAH) application process with the initial certification of four CAH hospitals in Indiana.



The Long Term Care division recently implemented the federal Health Care Financing Administration enforcement system, which includes the imposition of civil monetary penalties, denial of payment for new admissions, directed in-service, and directed plan of corrections. The division also revised its complaint intake and survey system to include a toll-free telephone number, hired professional intake staff and survey staff, formalized complaint handling protocols, and improved the process that provides notification to the person who filed the complaint.

The Food Protection Division established an enforcement policy to address critical food violations. The division also provided training and technical assistance to local health departments on implementing the revised food protection rules.

Plans for the Biennium

ISDH will expand the consumer information available at the ISDH website, www.state.in.us/isdh. Information now available on the web site includes data regarding inpatient and outpatient providers, food protection, sanitary engineering, and weights and measures.

