

# Live Well

*For Your Physical, Spiritual, Mental  
and Financial Well-being*

February 2020

Comet Drop  
Super Nova

- Ideas to keep kids active this winter
- Understanding the body-mind connection is vital
- Programs can help farmers cope with stress
- Many activities at Oldenburg center

The  
Herald-Tribune

DAILY NEWS

RUSHVILLE  
REPUBLICAN



# Ideas to keep kids active this winter

**W**e're all aware that regular physical activity is important and has many health benefits. But even some very active kids have a difficult time keeping the exercise going during the winter months. We get it – it's cold, it's dark earlier, and the couch is so inviting.

But despite the weather, it's important to get kids active and help them stay that way, because the majority of them aren't getting enough exercise – especially in the winter months. The Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans recommend that children and adolescents ages 6-17 receive 60 minutes or more of moderate to vigorous physical activity each day. This should include aerobic activity as well as age-appropriate muscle- and bone-strengthening activities like push-ups, running, jumping and active play.

Here are some ideas we share with our patients and families to help them beat the winter exercise blues:

## GO OUTSIDE

Just because it's cold outside does not mean you have to stay inside! The key is to bundle up. Dress in layers, wear boots instead of gym shoes, thicker, warmer socks, a hat at all times, and mittens or gloves. Moving around outside and getting your heart rate up will help keep you warm as well. Encourage your kids to walk the dog, go to the park, shoot basketball or play outside with friends.

## TRY ANOTHER INDOOR LOCATION

Especially in the winter months, getting out of the house can help prevent cabin fever. Try choosing a location that also incorporates physical activity like a bowling alley, local gym, indoor basketball court or indoor pool.

## DO MORE EVERYDAY ACTIVITIES

Everyday activities can count as exercise, too, so long



**Dr. Andrew Poltrack**  
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

as your kids are getting their heart rates up – things like walking the dog, getting the mail or going to the park. Incorporating these activities into your kids' daily routines will help them develop a healthy lifestyle that will stay with them for the rest of their lives. Parents should encourage an hour a day, but these activities can be accumulated throughout the day, not necessarily all at once.

## LIMIT SCREEN TIME

It's worth noting that children now spend more than seven and a half hours a day in front of a screen, which includes TV, video games, computers and iPads. This is likely one of the reasons why kids today just aren't getting enough physical activity. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends parents limit their kids' screen time to two hours or less a day. By doing this, kids are much more likely to be active. I believe that in order for kids to find exercise fun, they need lots of variety. And when they find exercise fun, they're much more likely to stick with it over an extended period of time. So get up, get moving, and stay active this winter!

If you would like more information, please call Children's Health Care in Batesville at 812-933-6000 or in Greensburg at 812-662-8115 or go to <https://www.cincinnatichildrens.org/indiana>

**Dr. Andrew Poltrack** is co-medical director of Children's Health Care Batesville and Greensburg. The practice is currently accepting new patients.

# Financial wellness provides foundation for progress

"There are many definitions of what constitutes being financially well, but, overall, financial wellness involves things such as income, debt and savings, as well as a person's understanding of financial processes and resources. A person's satisfaction with his or her current financial situation and future prospects also comes into play," according to the U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

Community Mental Health Center Inc., Lawrenceburg, is focusing on this issue as part of its ongoing campaign to highlight the Eight Dimensions of Wellness created and publicized by SAMHSA.

Financial wellness includes such topics as work life, managing checking and savings accounts, managing debt, and managing retirement and other accounts, notes Kevin Kennedy Sr., CMHC public

relations manager. Having a good knowledge of financial matters will help you achieve and maintain your own financial wellness while also equipping you to help family members, including aging parents, to maintain financial stability.

At some time in everyone's life, there may be stress caused by financial concerns – credit card debt, unemployment causing a drain on savings and other resources, substantial bills with insufficient income to pay those bills, and, particularly at this time of year, significant due or overdue income or other taxes. On occasion, these stresses can become overwhelming. This is why being aware of and taking care of your financial wellness is so important.

Working to achieve financial wellness likely will involve learning about how to overcome personal finan-

cial challenges at some point in your life. Areas of focus in these efforts often include such topics as debt reduction, asset management, and saving for current and future needs. Budgeting and keeping records based on your budgeting also are important. Many times, resources for addressing financial planning and wellness needs are available through your employer or through an independent financial planner. Check with your employer, then seek outside guidance, as needed, if you believe this will help you with your plans to achieve financial wellness.

Taking the steps outlined above will help you reduce stress caused by debt, substantial bills or other financial challenges. There may be instances when you have been under significant stress for some time while working to address and solve your financial challenges.

This may cause issues for individuals or families that require outside assistance to help resolve.

"Financial wellness is an aspect of wellness that we often overlook, yet it plays a central role in how we live our lives," said CMHC executive director Tom Talbot.

"Put yourself on sound footing with an overall good financial philosophy, approach and plan. Become educated! I definitely recommend that everyone work with a financial adviser to address your needs for today and for the future. There is a lot to know and to think about," he advised.

CMHC provides comprehensive behavioral health services in Franklin, Ripley, Dearborn, Ohio and Switzerland counties. For more information about services or a nearby office, please phone 812-537-1302 or visit [www.cmhcinc.org](http://www.cmhcinc.org).

# More scrutiny of Hoosier pregnant women and new moms

The Indiana State Department of Health has been awarded a grant from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to expand and strengthen Indiana's maternal mortality review process, according to a Sept. 5 news release.

The five-year grant will allow for the establishment and implementation of best practices by using data to make recommendations to improve the health outcomes for women of reproductive age in Indiana.

"Accurately capturing what is happening when pregnant women die with no immediately obvious cause will help us create prevention programs at the local, state and national levels," said Gretchen Martin, ISDH Division of Fatality Review and Prevention director. "We're grateful for the ability to support our health care partners and local maternal mortality review teams in their efforts

to investigate and document these tragedies as we look for ways to keep them from happening in the future."

ISDH will receive more than \$400,000 each year of the grant to develop and implement policies and protocols to prevent or manage maternal illness, improve timely recognition of early warning signs, ensure appropriate escalation of care and provide effective discharge counseling and follow-up.

ISDH currently has a Maternal Mortality Review program and a committee that identifies and reviews all pregnancy-related and pregnancy-associated deaths in Indiana. As one of 25 recipients selected nationwide, ISDH will use this funding to better identify and characterize maternal deaths, leading to better focused prevention strategies that reduce maternal deaths in Indiana.

The grant will also allow for better data collection, with

the goal of reviewing every pregnancy-related and pregnancy-associated maternal death occurring in Indiana by the fifth year of the grant

period.

More about ISDH's maternal mortality review teams can be found online at <https://www.in.gov/isdh/28174.htm>.

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# Lenten Series, retreats, coffee talks, movie nights

**BEVERLY WILSON**  
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Come rest your heart awhile in the peace of the Oldenburg Franciscan Center as the beauty of winter snow days anticipate the breath of springtime.

The Oldenburg Franciscan Center, located on Main Street (State Road 229) in Oldenburg, provides retreats and programs that nurture the spirit, mind and body. The center, which carries on the mission of the Sisters of St. Francis, fosters spirituality and learning.

The annual Lenten Series will be held on Thursdays, Feb. 27-March 19. The series topic will be "Holy Visionaries for Today." Speakers are Dorothy Day, Feb. 27; Catherine De Houck Doherty, March 5; Sister Madeleva Wolff, March 12; and Mirabai Starr, March 19. Participants can sign up for

the entire series or attend individual sessions.

Join us on select Fridays (Feb. 28, March 20, May 22 and June 19) to experience a day of renewal and relaxation. Take time out of your busy schedule to spend some quiet time on the grounds of the Sisters of St. Francis. Explore our library, grab a comfy chair and read, journal or just gaze out the window. Take a walking tour of the shrines or to Michaela Farm for fresh vegetables and a labyrinth walk. Experience spiritual direction with a Sister. Spend time to center and renew yourself.

The center hosts movie nights once a month. Movies can be followed by Saturday programs. "Ad Astra" will be shown March 6 followed by "Celebrating our Struggles" March 7. Kelly Richey will lead this writing workshop. Participants will learn to strengthen

their spiritual cores while exploring the power of self-care through writing. No previous experience is required.

Join us April 16 for "On the Road with OFC: Interfaith Pilgrimage to Indy." We will spend the morning touring the Hindu Temple of Central Indiana. After lunch at one of Indianapolis' great restaurants, we will spend the afternoon touring the Islamic Center of Indianapolis. Come learn and experience the richness of these two diverse religions. Space is limited so register early.

The April 17 movie is "Victoria and Abdul" followed by "Climate Change, Immigrants and Refugees: Realities, Connections, Possibilities" April 18. As sea levels rise, storms become more volatile and drought and flooding become daily occurrences for people on multiple continents, "cli-

mate refugees" fleeing their homelands are increasing exponentially. This presentation, given by Sister Carol Jean Willie, SC, will look at the reality of climate change as it directly affects populations throughout the world and the responsibility that is ours as Christians to take action. It will also provide specific actions that individuals and communities can adopt to demonstrate their commitment to all in God's creation.

The movie "Little Women" will be shown May 1 followed by "Soul Collage: Discovering a Deeper Awareness of God's Mystery Within" May 2. Do you enjoy creative play that has personal meaning and healing power? Our spiritual journeys can wax and wane over all the various transitions of life, but there are gentle

See **WOMEN** on 10



Photo courtesy of Beverly Wilson

During Women's Day with a "Wisdom of Women" theme, retreat director Sister Olga Wittekind, Ph.D., will look at the archetypal images of wisdom and the spirituality of God's wisdom. Breakout sessions feature certified yoga instructor Chris Bruns leading breath awareness exercises and gentle stretches, and artist Beverly Wilson instructing an art exercise.



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## February is American Heart Month

Hoosiers are coming together this month to show their support for the fight against heart disease and stroke. American Heart Month, an annual celebration in February that began in 1964, urges Americans to join the battle against heart disease. A presidential proclamation each year pays tribute to researchers, physicians, public health education professionals and volunteers for their tireless efforts in preventing, treating and researching heart disease, according to Tim Harms, American Heart Association senior director of communications, Indianapolis.

Three Hoosier events keep awareness of the month alive. The organization hosted a Red Dress Dash Tuesday, Feb. 4, in Indianapolis. Women – and men – put on red dresses and dashed around Monu-

ment Circle at noon to raise awareness about heart disease. Across the state and the nation, millions of people wore scarlet attire for National Wear Red Day Friday, Feb. 7, to show their support of the association's mission to save lives from the nation's No. 1 killer. A Go Red for Women luncheon is Friday, Feb. 28, at 10 a.m. at The Westin Indianapolis. To purchase \$500 tickets: <https://bit.ly/2U7n4kg>

Launched in 2004, the Go Red for Women movement raises awareness about heart disease in women. In the United States, a woman dies from heart disease every 80 seconds, making it the leading cause of death.

Through Go Red for Women, the AHA is educating women that up to 80 percent of heart disease is preventable through healthy lifestyle

changes that include:

### HEALTHY DIET

- Increasing physical activity
- Healthy blood pressure
- Healthy cholesterol
- Healthy blood sugar
- Healthy weight
- Quitting smoking

Every year the American Heart Association funds more than \$180 million of research nationally, including more than \$5 million at universities in Indiana. Thanks to advancements in treatment, mortality rates from heart disease have dropped more than 50 percent in the last 30 years. However, one in three deaths are still the result of heart disease.

By wearing red, participating in these events and financially supporting the American Heart Association at <https://www.heart.org>, Hoosiers will help save lives.

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# Body and mind connection important

**DR. CLAIRE SHERMAN**  
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

The beliefs you hold about yourself, the world, your emotions, your habits and early life conditioning all influence your physical health and well-being. Understanding the connection between your mind and body is important.

There is a cellular network of communication taking place within everyone – chemical and electrical signals that direct the cells' behavior. This network transmits signals to all components of the body, dictating what does what and how. It transmits an endless number of intercellular (emotional and physical) messages throughout the body.

Cells are sensitive to our emotional and psychological states. They are tuned into our will to thrive and live, as well



**Dr. Claire Sherman**

as our desires and intentions. How we live, act, feel and think can positively or negatively affect the biological functioning of the body. This is because the nervous, endocrine and immune systems share a common language, which allows constant communication between the mind and body through messengers like hormones and neurotransmitters. When emotions like anger, sadness, guilt, resentment, depression and stress are experienced, the body reacts and an imbalance or illness can result. Examples of this are the way stress can lead to a headache or the inability to

sleep, or when frightened or nervous, the digestive tract acts up with a stomachache or diarrhea.

Tuning in to the information you are presenting to your body is valuable. If you are constantly ignoring your feelings, neglecting your body or always criticizing yourself, the body is getting the message that you don't matter, are not worthwhile or of value. This doesn't energize the system or promote positive feedback to the immune system.

Negativity toward oneself and toward life in general can lead you down a path of poor health, psychological issues and unhappiness. It is easy to forget that choice is always available when it comes to how we perceive ourselves, other people and situations. Many of our reactions and perceptions are automatic, programmed responses based on past experiences. They can

derail us and lead us into illness, emotional turmoil and dysfunction.

Research has shown that paying attention to our psychological well-being can prevent medical illness and speed our recovery when we are sick. By acknowledging feelings, gaining self-awareness and resolving unfinished issues from the past, self-acceptance and esteem increase. This provides positive feedback to the body, promoting good health.

Dr. Bernie Siegel, a pioneer in the body-mind connection movement, proposes this guide to staying well or to getting well if you are sick:

Do things that bring you a sense of fulfillment, joy and purpose that validate your worth.

Pay close attention to yourself. Nourish, support and encourage yourself.

Release negative emotions; do not hold onto them. Express them appropriately. Forgive yourself.

Hold a positive image of yourself. Picture goals that you truly want in your life.

Love yourself and love everyone. Make loving the purpose and primary expression in your life.

Create fun, loving, honest relationships. Seek security and intimacy to fulfill your inner needs. Try to heal any wounds from past relationships, as with parents and other family members, old lovers and friends.

Make a positive contribution to your community.

Make a commitment to health and well-being. Develop belief in the possibility of total health.

Accept yourself and everything in your life as an opportunity for growth and

learning.

Keep a sense of humor.

**Dr. Claire Sherman** received her Ph.D. in clinical psychology from the International College, Los Angeles, and has been serving as a counselor in the Batesville area since 1985.

*At the Southeast Indiana Health Center, the staff is aware of the mind-body connection. The clinic offers individual, couples and family counseling to assist in the health and well-being of the patients. Sherman is available to help navigate you through difficult emotional problems, addiction and co-dependency issues and to gain more self-awareness and appreciation.*

The Southeast Indiana Health

See **BEING** on 10



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## Easier for adults to get MMR vaccine

State health Commissioner Kris Box, M.D., FACOG, recently issued a statewide standing order to make it easier for Indiana adults to get vaccinated against measles, a highly infectious disease that sickened more than 700 people in 22 states last year, including one person in Indiana.

The standing order means that adults do not need to see their health care providers for a prescription and can obtain the measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) vaccine from any pharmacy that carries it. Pharmacies and health care providers have been notified about the standing order. Hoosiers choosing to seek a vaccine using this order should contact the pharmacy to ensure the vaccine is available and inform the pharmacist that they will be using the state health commissioner's standing order. Vaccine costs will be billed to insurance.

"Vaccination is the best way to prevent the spread of this

highly contagious disease, and we want to remove any barriers that may prevent Hoosiers from being protected during this nationwide outbreak," Box said. "Even one case of a disease that had largely disappeared is too many, and our hope is that this proactive step will help prevent additional cases in Indiana."

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the MMR vaccine is safe and 97 percent effective at preventing measles after the second dose. The CDC recommends two doses of MMR vaccine for children, the first at age 12-15 months and the second between 4-6 years. Many Indiana adults may not be aware of their vaccination status or may have received a single dose of inactive virus, which does not provide the full protection. These individuals are encouraged to ask their health care provider about receiving a dose of MMR.

Measles is caused by a virus

and spreads through the air when an infected person coughs or sneezes. It can remain in the air for two hours after an infected person leaves an area. The illness typically begins with cold-like symptoms, such as a low fever, cough, runny nose and conjunctivitis, or pink eye. Then a rash of blotchy red spots breaks out starting at the head and spreading to the rest of the body.

Measles can be serious, and there is no treatment or cure. Some children may have very mild symptoms, but others may face more serious complications, including pneumonia and encephalitis.

Nationally, the number of measles cases reported is the highest in the U.S. since 1994. Measles was declared eliminated in the U.S. in 2000, but it is still common in many other countries with lower vaccination rates. The CDC

See **MMR** on 10

## Farmers at greatest risk for suicide

**DEE KLEIER**  
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

The fastest growing cause of death in the United States of America is suicide.

Rural communities like our own in southeastern Indiana are disproportionately affected by factors that contribute to suicide risk.

Our communities have much lower access to mental health care providers and experience barriers to care, such as transportation and stigma around talking about mental health.

Data released by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reveals farmers are the highest risk population in the country for experiencing extreme mental health conditions and death by suicide.

Farmers' risk for suicide is more than double the risk experienced by veterans.

Why is this? Farmers' jobs are extremely stressful.

Many factors that affect farmers' success and profits are outside of their control. Volatile markets, unpredictable weather, government regulations, machinery breakdown, limited access to high-quality laborers, high debt loads and input costs, and livestock or crop disease are just some of the factors pushing producers to the limit. Farmers have intimate ties to their lands, and many



Dee Kleier

local producers are operating farms that have existed for generations. In farming, the stakes are high.

Experiencing high levels of stress over long periods of time has a significant effect on the mind and body.

When stress is excessive and prolonged, the body begins to break down. We become more susceptible to illness and can develop conditions that affect all our bodily systems, including sleep problems, digestive problems, weight fluctuation, heart disease, memory and concentration impairment, anxiety and depression. Chronic stress changes the way our bodies function.

The stress experienced by farmers is not the only factor increasing their risk for suicide.

Mental health is often a taboo topic in rural communities. Lacking awareness and openness about the effect chronic stress has on the mind and body can leave farmers feeling isolated. Farmers, their families and their friends may not seek information about the seriousness of mental health conditions resulting from stress.

Without community support and open communication about their experiences, farmers may feel unable to cope with excessive stress.

Rural communities are uniquely equipped with the tools to combat the risk of suicide for farmers.

Our agriculture communities have strong connections that run deep across county lines and generations. We

come together and support each other when times are tough, and right now, times are tough for our farmers.

Purdue Extension provides two farm stress programs throughout the state to help strengthen our agriculture communities against the threat of extreme stress and suicide.

"Communicating with Farmers Under Stress" is a program for professionals who work with farmers (i.e. banking, insurance, seed sales, etc.) These professionals are helping farmers deal with their many stressors on a daily basis. This program provides professionals with the practical skills to respond and assist when working with farmers under stress. The next upcoming workshop is Thursday, Feb. 27, from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. at the Brookville Public Library.

"Weathering the Storm," a program for farmers and their families, provides practical information for coping with stress, recognizing risks to yourself and others, and responding to friends or family experiencing a mental health crisis.

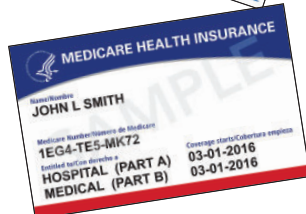
Purdue Extension provides farm stress programs upon request. If your business, organizations or group would like more information about hosting one, please contact Franklin County Purdue Extension at 765-647-3511.

**Dee Kleier** is the Franklin County Purdue Extension educator in health and human sciences and community development.

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## Free e-cigarette quit program offered

A text message program to help Indiana teens and young adults who want to quit vaping has been announced by the Indiana State Department of Health, in partnership with the Truth Initiative®.

The This is Quitting program was created with input from teens, college students and young adults who have attempted to or successfully quit e-cigarettes. Hoosier youth who need help quitting vaping can text "Indiana" to 88709 and receive age-appropriate recommendations about ways to quit. The program is part of a three-pronged approach directed by Gov. Eric Holcomb to reduce youth vaping that focuses on prevention, education and cessation.

Since its launch in January 2019, This is Quitting has enrolled almost 100,000 teens and young adults nationwide. Preliminary data from the Truth Initiative show more than 60 percent of people using the

texting feature reported that they had reduced or stopped using e-cigarettes after just two weeks.

"Teen vaping has reached epidemic proportions in Indiana and across the U.S.," said state Health Commissioner Kris Box, M.D., FACOG. She announced the new text-to-quit feature during a Youth Action Day to call attention to the risks that tobacco products pose to young people. "While we'd like to see a world where no young person uses these products, the reality is that e-cigarette use in Indiana middle and high school students has increased more than 350 percent since 2012. We have to meet our youth where they are comfortable to help them quit, and texting is a proven way to do that."

Indiana youth who enroll in This is Quitting will receive one support text per day for at least 60 days after their quit date. Individuals who are interested in ending e-cigarettes use, but

aren't yet ready to set a quit date will receive at least four weeks of messages focused on building skills and confidence to prepare for quitting. Users can receive on-demand support for cravings, stress, slips and a desire for more tips or inspiration in addition to their scheduled interactive messages. Upon program completion, users will receive periodic text messages and may continue to receive messages of support for as long as needed.

Dr. Amanda Graham, chief of innovations at Truth Initiative, said many young people want to quit vaping but don't know where to start.

"Text messaging is a proven, powerful strategy to deliver interventions that drive behavior change. We've taken input directly from young people and positioned This is Quitting as a supportive, nonjudgmental friend, with

See **QUIT** on 10

## New food labels can lead to smarter decisions

It's 2020 and for most food companies, that means it's time to switch to the new nutrition facts label, reports Margaret Mary Health registered dietitian Adrienne Found. Located on many of your favorite foods, the label hasn't been updated in almost 30 years. So much has changed in that time in terms of nutrition science and the way we eat, so the FDA decided the label needed a makeover.

If you're new to reading labels or even if you're an old pro, it helps to have a guide to detail the most important changes so you can make healthier food choices:

### ADDED SUGARS

**What's changed:** For the first time, the Added Sugars category is listed and includes total grams and Percent Daily Value.

**Why this is important:** High intake of added sugars is linked to chronic health conditions like obesity, diabetes and

heart disease.

**How to use it:** Aim to choose products with the least amount of Added Sugar as possible, avoiding any item with greater than 10 grams or 20% Daily Value.

### CALORIES AND SERVING SIZE

**What's changed:** The font size for calories and serving size is larger. Also, many serving sizes were updated to reflect what people actually consume.

**Why this is important:** Larger font means this information is easier for customers to find. Keep in mind all the information on the food label is based off the serving size.

**How to use it:** Eat the portion size listed. If you are choosing snack foods, aim for items between 150 to 200 calories with limited added sugar or salt.

### MICRONUTRIENTS

**What's changed:** Vita-

min D and potassium were added, and Vitamin C and A were removed. The actual amount also must be listed for required micronutrients in addition to the Percent Daily Value.

**Why this is important:** Americans have low intake of potassium and Vitamin D. Eating foods with more Vitamin D helps with bone health and immunity. Eating foods with more potassium helps with high blood pressure and stroke prevention.

**How to use it:** Choose food items that have 20% or more of the Daily Value for micronutrients listed. If you have chronic kidney disease and were told to watch your potassium intake, use the milligrams listed as a guide.

### FIBER

**What's changed:** Percent Daily Value is now listed.

**Why this is important:**

See **FOOD** on 10



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## New initiative will lessen infant mortality

The Indiana State Department of Health recently presented its seventh annual Labor of Love Infant Mortality Summit at the JW Marriott in downtown Indianapolis.

The focus of this year's summit was "Connecting Communities," emphasizing how community partnerships are needed to help more Indiana babies reach their first birthdays. Gov. Eric Holcomb, who has set a goal for Indiana to be the best in the Midwest for infant mortality by 2024, kicked off the event hosted by WISH-TV anchor and reporter Brooke Martin. More than 1,500 public health professionals from across the state joined together at the event to share new ways to positively impact the lives of the most vulnerable Hoosiers.

"Mothers deserve to see their babies celebrate their first birthdays. Ensuring both moms and infants receive the health care and support they need is a key piece of my Next Level agenda," Holcomb said. "This is an all-hands-on-deck effort, and I am confident we have the right people putting the best resources in place across our state to make that happen."

Data from the Indiana State

Department of Health show 559 Indiana babies died before the age of 1 in 2018, down from 602 in 2017. The overall infant mortality rate stood at 6.8 per 1,000 babies in 2018, down from 7.3 in 2017.

A key to saving more Hoosier babies is to address the disparities and socioeconomic factors that prevent a woman from accessing prenatal care early and continuing that care for herself and her baby. That means linking pregnant women to services where they live and connecting community-based organizations to each other.

"It will take communities working in unison to make sure the needs of every mom and baby in Indiana are met," said state Health Commissioner Kris Box, M.D., FACOG. "I'm emboldened by seeing so many health professionals and community partners committed to making a difference in the health and development of Indiana's children and families."

One new state initiative focused on that mission is the ISDH OB Navigator program, established in partnership with the Family and Social Services Administration and the Indiana Department of Child Services. The program's goal is

to identify women early in their pregnancies and connect them with an OB navigator – a home visitor who provides personalized guidance and support to a woman during her pregnancy through at least the first six to 12 months after her baby's birth. The program will begin by connecting pregnant women who are covered by Medicaid in the state's highest-risk areas to services in their communities. Community sessions explaining OB Navigator are under way across the state in preparation for implementation that began last month.

The summit featured Nzinga Harrison, M.D., who spoke about connecting communities to support maternal substance use and mental health disorders, and pediatrician Dipesh Navsaria, M.D., who discussed the impact of early life experiences on child development. Attendees chose from more than 30 different afternoon breakout sessions on a variety of topics related to maternal and infant mortality.

To learn more about Indiana's efforts to reduce infant mortality, visit <https://www.in.gov/laboroflove/>.

## Student loan grants will boost Hoosiers' health care

The Indiana State Department of Health has awarded 60 student loan repayment grants to practitioners across Indiana to help ensure that Hoosiers have adequate access to mental health, substance use and primary care.

"Ensuring more people can access quality care for substance use and skilling up Indiana's workforce are among Governor Holcomb's top priorities," said Jim McClelland, Indiana executive director for drug prevention, treatment and enforcement. "Empowering students to become health care professionals is a win both for the students and the Indiana communities where their expertise will save lives and help people enter and maintain recovery."

ISDH is investing \$300,000 in the student loan repayment

program, and the U.S. Health Resources and Services Administration will match that amount. Thirty awards are issued in each of the grant's four years.

The funding provides an incentive for physicians, psychiatrists, alcohol and substance use counselors and practitioners in related disciplines to practice in specific, federally-designated areas experiencing health professional shortages and those that have experienced deaths from opioid use. The program is available to practitioners in any Indiana county, with priority given to Franklin, Dearborn, Blackford, Fayette, Grant, Henry, Jay, Randolph, Switzerland, Union and Wayne counties.

"Like many states, Indiana is working to increase access to treatment for those battling substance use disorder. This

is a challenge in many rural communities, which also face a shortage of primary care providers," said Ann Alley, director of the ISDH Division of Chronic Disease, Primary Care and Rural Health, which administers the program. "By removing some of the financial barriers to practicing in underserved areas, we hope to build resources and ensure that all Hoosiers have access to the care they need."

Applications for the next round are available online at <https://www.in.gov/isdh/28090.htm>.

Visit the Indiana State Department of Health at [www.StateHealth.in.gov](http://www.StateHealth.in.gov) or follow the agency on Twitter at @StateHealthIN and on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/isdh1](http://www.facebook.com/isdh1).



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# Birth defects second leading cause of infant death here

**KIM DUNLAP**  
CNHI NEWS INDIANA

KOKOMO – In October 2011, Amber Broman remembers sitting in the doctor's office bawling, screaming and crying out.

Minutes earlier, she had learned that the baby girl she was carrying would likely never have the chance to talk or walk, ride a bike or drive a car or be walked down the aisle on her wedding day.

"We had an amniocentesis and had noticed some abnormalities in the ultrasound," Broman noted. "So we saw a specialist in Indianapolis and did an amnio there, too. ... On the ultrasound, they initially saw multiple defects within her heart, and they didn't think her esophagus was attached to her stomach. ... And that's when they told me what it was and that it was in every cell of her body."

## THE CONDITION WAS TRISOMY 18

It was five weeks before the Kokomo woman was to deliver, and all she remembers hearing that day were the words "incompatible with life."

According to the National Institutes of Health, Trisomy 18 is a chromosomal genetic disorder that includes a combination of birth defects that impact nearly every organ in the body. People born with the disorder, also known as Edwards syndrome, have three copies of the 18th chromosome, and most babies with Trisomy 18 die within the first year of life.

"She only lived two days," Broman said, referring to her daughter she named Khloe Nicole. "We chose comfort care for her because we did not necessarily want to go through having her on machines and then making those decisions. We chose to just let life take its course, and we had almost 48 full hours with her."

Broman is not alone.

## STAGGERING NUMBERS

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Atlanta, describe a birth defect as a structural change



Kelly Lafferty Gerber | CNHI News Indiana

**Amber Broman** holds a photo of her daughter, Khloe Nicole Broman, who died after 48 hours of life from Trisomy 18.

present at birth that can affect any or all parts of the body. They vary from mild to severe and depending on the type of defect, some infants can go on to live healthy lives.

In the United States, a baby is born with a birth defect every four and a half minutes, according to the Indiana Birth Defects and Problems Registry, which equals roughly 120,000 babies per year.

In the Hoosier state, birth defects are the second leading cause of death for infants, with over 2,500 Indiana babies born each year with some type of congenital abnormality, such as a cardiovascular, chromosomal, central nervous system or musculoskeletal defect.

In 2018 alone, the Indiana State Department of Health concluded that birth defects contributed to 6.8 deaths per 1,000 births, a slight dip from 2017.

The infant mortality rate in

Indiana is the lowest it's been in six years, the ISDH noted, but the rate is still one of the highest in the nation.

## THE STATE'S RESPONSE

In recent months, Gov. Eric Holcomb has taken the infant mortality plight to the public stage, making it one of the top priorities in his administration to have the lowest infant mortality rate in the Midwest by 2024.

The state has already begun the process of achieving that goal, rolling out programs and committees with the sole focus of lowering that rate.

One of those programs, OB Navigator, was signed into law in 2019 and works in collaboration with the ISDH, Indiana Family and Social Services Administration and Indiana Department of Child Services.

OB Navigator was established by Indiana House Enrolled Act 1007 and is set in place to "build a network of services and support through-

out Indiana to wrap our arms around moms and babies to create healthier outcomes for both," its website states.

The program works as a connection tool between women who are early in their pregnancies and individuals who can provide personal guidance for those women through the rest of those pregnancies and at least the first six months of life.

Some of that guidance includes a Mom's Helpline, which is a contact center that connects pregnant women throughout Indiana to available resources and a network of prenatal and child health care services, the program's website cites.

In a recent press release on the subject, state Health Commissioner Kristina Box noted that OB Navigator will be available to women on Medicaid in the state's highest-risk counties, and program organizers anticipate enacting it in 20 counties by the end of 2020.

Visit the ISDH's website at [in.gov/isdh/](http://in.gov/isdh/) for more information about the program.

While doctors do say that many birth defects can't necessarily be fully prevented, there are ways to lower the risk factor.

## WHAT YOU CAN DO

"We usually don't start doing testing until about the second trimester of pregnancy," said Dr. Andrew Barlow, OB-GYN at Trinity Health Network. "We start offering blood tests and ultrasounds at that time to determine birth defects. However, there are women that can undergo screening beforehand if they're at higher risks."

Women that fall into those categories are those over 35 or with certain medical conditions, Barlow noted.

Because fetal growth, like organ development, takes place in the first few weeks of pregnancy, Barlow said it's imperative to see your doctor on a regular basis if you're planning on becoming pregnant.

"Review your medical history and make sure you're healthy enough to have

See **BABY** on 10

## LEISING IRHA PAOTY



Submitted photo

**State Sen. Jean Leising (R-Oldenburg, right)** was presented with the 2019 Policy Advocate of the Year Award Jan. 27 by Indiana Rural Health Association President Mark Vonderheit during an IRHA legislative luncheon in Indianapolis. Leising received the award for her leadership and continued support of rural health initiatives.



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# DCMH recognized for workplace health culture

Fourteen Indiana companies were recognized for taking significant steps to build a culture of health in the workplace as part of the 2019 results of the American Heart Association Workplace Health Achievement Index. The American Heart Association, the world's leading voluntary organization dedicated to building healthier lives, free of cardiovascular diseases and stroke, created the Index with its CEO Roundtable, a leadership collaborative of more than 40 CEOs from some of America's largest companies who are committed to applying evidence-based approaches to improve their employees' overall health.

The closest award recipient is Decatur County Memorial Hospital, Greensburg, Bronze. Other southern Indiana companies were recognized: Deaconess

Hospital, Evansville, Gold; St. Meinrad Archabbey, St. Meinrad, Silver; Baptist Health Group, New Albany, Bronze; and Oliver Winery, Bloomington, Honorable Mention, according to a recent news release from Tim Harms American Heart Association, Indiana senior director of communications.

More than 900 organizations completed the index assessment this year and, of those companies, 82% received either Gold, Silver or Bronze recognition. Organizations receive benchmarking reports, which allow them to identify potential areas of improvement so that they can advance their annual performance and recognition.

"The American Heart Association applauds these local companies for their efforts in cultivating healthier workplaces and communities, as

part of our mission to build a culture of health and well-being throughout the country," said Dr. William Gill, AHA Indianapolis board of directors president.

The Workplace Health Achievement Index uses science-based best practices to evaluate the overall quality and comprehensiveness of workplace health programs. A unique feature of the index is that it calculates an average heart health score for employees of participating companies that securely submit aggregate health data based on Life's Simple 7®. The American Heart Association has defined ideal cardiovascular health based on seven risk factors that people can improve through lifestyle changes: smoking status, physical activity, weight, diet, blood glucose, cholesterol and blood pressure.

As part of its commitment to

healthier workplaces, the association offers Health Screening Services, an onsite biometric screening solution that allows organizations to collect and submit employee health data seamlessly. The health screenings are combined with a health assessment and education to motivate participants to make behavior changes or seek support for lifestyle changes and follow-up medical care as appropriate.

The American Heart Association's Workplace Health Solutions offers a suite of evidence-based tools to help optimize current employee health programs. These tools leverage the science behind the index while improving consumer engagement and promoting healthier behaviors. For more information, visit [www.heart.org/workplacehealth](http://www.heart.org/workplacehealth).

## BEING

CONTINUED FROM 5

Center, 920 County Line Road, Batesville, was established for residents of Franklin and Ripley counties who do not

have health care coverage or insurance. Clinic hours are Tuesdays from 9-11:30 a.m. and 5-7:30 p.m. and Thursdays from 5-7:30 p.m. Office hours are 9-11:30 a.m. weekdays. Appointments are required: 812-932-4515. Info: [www.seihc.org](http://www.seihc.org).

## MMR

CONTINUED FROM 6

says nine out of 10 unvaccinated people will contract measles if exposed to the virus.

Anyone born before 1957 is considered immune to measles because almost all individuals born prior to that

year likely had the disease.

All family members should be up to date on the MMR vaccine, especially before international travel. Health care providers can help determine if more vaccine doses are needed before traveling.

More information is available at [www.cdc.gov/measles](http://www.cdc.gov/measles) or <https://www.in.gov/isdh/25456.htm>.

## QUIT

CONTINUED FROM 7

text messages written in the first person or as quotes from other users," she said.

Printable flyers and palm cards with the text code and number as well as more information about the program are available for download through VapeFreeIndiana. [isdh.in.gov](http://isdh.in.gov).

## FOOD

CONTINUED FROM 7

Many Americans do not eat enough fiber in their diet. Fiber helps decrease risk for many chronic conditions,

including diabetes, heart disease and digestive cancers.

**How to use it:** Choose foods that have more than 20% of the Daily Value for fiber. Another rule of thumb is to choose items with 5 grams of fiber or more.

## WOMEN

CONTINUED FROM 3

ways to be with and celebrate the diverse experiences that bring us into wholeness. In this one-day retreat, Lisa Heckman will lead participants as they gather in quiet prayer both within themselves and in community. The intuitive process of SoulCollage® invites us to gather images and make personal collage cards for the purpose of self-expression and discovery. Join us for this soul-tending day and lean into a deeper awareness of God's Mystery within. All supplies

are provided. Space is limited.

Sunday morning coffee talks at 10:45 a.m. are also held once a month. On April 26 the topic is "Ignatian Spirituality" presented by Father Ed Kinerk, S.J. St. Ignatius of Loyola founded the Society of Jesus in 16th century Spain. His followers became known as Jesuits. Their motto is "We are called to be men and women for others." May 17 will feature "Benedictine Spirituality" with Sister Aileen Bankemper, OSB. St. Benedict of Nursia founded the Benedictines in the 6th century. His rule invites all to listen deeply with the ear of the heart and come closer to God.

"Women's Day: Women of Wisdom" will be held Saturday, March 28, from 9 a.m.-3 p.m. We are all women of wisdom. We have an inner source of sacred power that gives meaning to our lives. We will look at the wise-woman archetype in psychology and the wisdom literature from the Bible. The fees of \$50 or two for \$90 include lunch.

Spend time in silence and reflection during Holy Week by retreating April 9-12 at the center. Experience the liturgical celebrations in the Sister's Chapel along with daily spiritual direction with Sister Olga Wittekind.

Do you need a space to rent for your church retreat or business? The center offers day retreats for up to 60 people. Weekend retreats, directed or private, are available throughout the year. The center also offers counseling and spiritual direction.

For more information about any of the programs and/or services or to register online for a program, visit [www.oldenburgfranciscancenter.org](http://www.oldenburgfranciscancenter.org), call 812-933-6437 or email [center@oldenburgosf.com](mailto:center@oldenburgosf.com).

**Beverly Wilson** is the Oldenburg Franciscan Center marketing manager.

## BABY

CONTINUED FROM 9

children, too," Barlow advised. "And make sure that you're not taking any medication that can contribute to birth defects. Also, obviously, don't abuse alcohol or drugs during pregnancy either."

It's also important to take a prenatal vitamin with the right amount of folic acid (400 mg). Having a deficiency of that can lead to brain and spine defects, such as spina bifida or anencephaly. Spina bifida is a birth defect in which a fetus' spinal

cord fails to develop properly. Anencephaly is the absence of a major portion of the brain, skull and scalp that occurs during the embryo's development.

Dr. Sheila Hockman, OB-GYN at Ascension Medical Group and part of a statewide Maternal Mortality Review Committee enacted to address the issue, agreed with Barlow, while also stressing that, such as in cases like young Khloe's, there is really nothing that mothers can do to prevent such a defect.

However, areas like genetic

testing can still be a giant help, even if a defect is already in place, she noted.

"You can do genetic testing early in the pregnancy," Hockman said. "And a lot of people, when we ask them if they want to do genetic testing, they'll say no because they're going to deliver the baby regardless."

"But for us, it's not a matter of keeping the pregnancy or terminating it," she continued. "It's the more well prepared we are during the pregnancy, it enables us to care possibly in a different fashion. Do they need to see

a maternal fetal medical specialist or can this pregnancy be monitored like a regular uncomplicated pregnancy? It's that sort of thing."

That can sometimes mean the difference between life and death, Hockman added.

"The big point I would like to get across is that there are so many of these birth defects that are preventable, especially when you look at things like maternal obesity," she said. "It's a national issue, but we can do something about it, and it often just takes a healthier lifestyle."

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## Study: Hoosier firefighters face higher risk of dying from cancer

Hoosier firefighters face a significantly higher risk of dying from cancer than non-firefighters, according to a study that shows death from malignant cancers was the leading cause of death for Indiana firefighters between 1985-2013.

Of 2,818 Indiana firefighters, 30.4 percent died from malignant cancers. The study found the firefighters experienced an estimated 20 percent increase in the odds of dying due to malignant cancers compared to nonfirefighters.

This study is unique in that it is one of the first to match an exposed firefighter population to an independent comparison group of nonfirefighters from a general population.

The research findings are in the paper "Excess mortality among Indiana firefighters, 1985-2013," which was published in the American Journal of Industrial Medicine.

"The purpose of this study was to examine patterns of

chronic disease deaths among Indiana firefighters from 1985-2013 compared to non-firefighters," said Carolyn Muegge, a doctoral candidate in the Richard M. Fairbanks School of Public Health at IUPUI, who is also a research scientist at the National Institute for Public Safety Health in Indianapolis and first author on the paper.

"Firefighters are exposed to toxic agents, increasing their risk for cancer and cardiovascular disease," she said. "We examined the odds of cancer and cardiovascular mortality of firefighters relative to a matched group of nonfirefighters from the general population."

To compare firefighters and nonfirefighters, each firefighter death record was matched to four nonfirefighter death records by age at time of death, sex, race, ethnicity and year of death.

Heart disease was the second leading cause of fire-

fighters' deaths, accounting for 824, or 29.2 percent. There was no difference in the odds of death due to cardiovascular diseases between firefighters and nonfirefighters.

When the causes of deaths of firefighters between 1983-2013 are looked at in five-year increments, research shows heart disease had been the leading cause of Indiana firefighters' deaths until 1995, when "the burden of cancer significantly surpassed heart disease," the paper stated.

Heart disease was the leading cause of death in the nonfirefighter comparison group, at 29.6 percent, followed by malignant cancers at 27.1 percent.

According to the researchers, the leading cause of firefighter deaths – cancer and heart disease – underscore the need for implementing and expanding cancer and heart disease risk factor reduction programs and policies for firefighters.

## Homes should be tested for radon

Radon, a radioactive gas that occurs naturally in most soil, is the second-leading cause of lung cancer among smokers and the No. 1 cause among nonsmokers. It is responsible for more than 20,000 lung cancer deaths in the U.S. each year, according to U.S. Environmental Protection Agency estimates.

January was National Radon Action Month, and the Indiana State Department of Health is urging homeowners to test their homes for radon because this tasteless, colorless and odorless gas can build up in homes without residents' knowledge.

"You can't see, smell or taste radon, but it could be present at a dangerous level in your home," said state health commissioner Kris Box, MD, FACOG. "By testing, Hoosiers can determine whether a high radon level is present and

take steps to fix the problem and ensure their families are breathing safe and healthy air."

Indiana residents can purchase a short-term test kit for as little as \$15 from the American Lung Association through its website at <https://bit.ly/2No7Se4>. Test kits also can be purchased at most home improvement and hardware stores and through some online retailers.

Radon enters homes and other buildings through small cracks and holes in the foundation, where it becomes trapped and accumulates in the air. When people breathe in radon, it damages the lungs. Long-term exposure can eventually cause lung cancer.

Because radon has no taste, smell or color, a home must be tested to find out how much radon is in the air. There is

no safe level for radon, but the EPA and U.S. surgeon general recommend fixing homes that have levels at or above 4pCi/L (picocuries per liter). More than two-thirds of Indiana counties have predicted average indoor radon levels of 4 pCi/L, according to the EPA.

If high levels of radon are detected, licensed contractors can install mitigation systems to eliminate the problem and protect occupants of the home.

To learn more about radon, visit the ISDH's radon page at <http://www.in.gov/isdh/24346.htm> and the EPA's "A Citizen's Guide to Radon" at <https://www.epa.gov/radon/publications-about-radon>. To find out what levels of radon have been found in your community, see ISDH's map at <https://bit.ly/2RjTmPb>.

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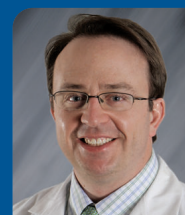
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