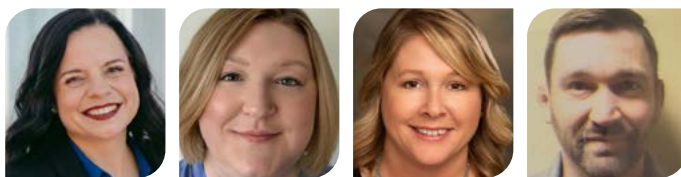


**Caring for
the Caregivers**
Mental Health
Awareness
Month *pages 16-19*

Start planning for the heat with our
Summer Readiness & Emergency
Preparedness Guides *pages 12-15*



National Nurses Month
Awesomeness in scrubs!
Meet some of our nurses *pages 28 - 31*

also this month ...



AC26



It's Nominations time!

Looking for our Champions of Healthcare ...
plus all conference news *pages 8 - 11*

Champions of Healthcare 2026



Welcome to the May Issue

As we welcome May, we are reminded that the strength of our communities lies in our shared commitment to care, advocacy, and connection.

Thank you all for your effort to raise awareness about how critical 340B funds are to state officials and the public. Your diligent efforts with Governor Braun and state officials have resulted in Governor Braun exempting FQHCs from the proposed changes. While this is not finalized, it is progress to celebrate. We want to give a special thanks to **Alan Witchy** and **Damian Center** for their advocacy initiative, **340B Saves Lives**, and their contributions of these amazing resources and advocacy tools, which provided much-needed tools for everyone on this effort. [Read our press release on page 5.](#)

As we head into summer, we are often drawn to the excitement of youth, travel, and family fun, and sometimes lose focus on our aging community members. May is **Older Americans Month**, which highlights the diverse aging experience and challenges outdated stereotypes. It calls on us to value older adults as active, engaged members of our communities and to support their independence, health, and well-being.

Encouraging older adults to stay active is one of the most effective ways to promote healthy aging. Regular movement supports physical and mental health, reduces the risk of chronic disease, and improves quality of life. Providers can play a key role by integrating physical activity guidance into care and connecting patients to accessible resources.

We encourage you to explore the **Move Your Way** materials from the **Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion** for practical tools to support active living at any age. [Click here](#) for materials for older adults.

Together, we can advocate for sustainable programs, challenge ageist perceptions, and empower individuals to live healthier, more active lives.

Thank you for your commitment to care for all Hoosiers day in and day out!

Sean

Sean Herbold, IPHCA CFO

[Contact Sean](#)





Monthly May 2026

>>> **Clickable links** are provided throughout this newsletter - please notify us of any missing or incorrect links.

Any comments or suggestions please contact **Sean Herbold**

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Highlighting AMAZING for National Nurses Month - p28-31

It's Health Vision Month - check out some of our Optometry teams! p20-22



Outreach advice for National HIV Testing Day p41

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If you have not done so already, **please follow us on Facebook!**



Also **visit our website** to find links to **previous issues**, an **events calendar**, our **resource center** and more!



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Our member organizations



News Update

Protecting 340B for FQHCs helps Indiana's most vulnerable patients



Governor Mike Braun

INDIANAPOLIS – The Indiana Primary Health Care Association today applauded Governor Mike Braun for his decision to exempt Indiana's Federally Qualified Health Centers from the proposed 340B Medicaid changes, calling it an important affirmation of the vital role health centers play in communities across the state.

The Association praised Governor Braun for making a thoughtful and principled decision that protects access to care for patients who depend on health centers for primary care, behavioral health, dental services, pharmacy access, and other essential supports. The decision reflects the Governor's longstanding commitment to strengthening healthcare access, supporting local communities, and ensuring Indiana's most vulnerable residents are not left behind.

"We are deeply grateful to Governor Braun for his leadership and for recognizing the critical role community health centers play in Indiana's healthcare system," said **Ben Harvey, CEO of the Indiana Primary Health Care Association.** "This decision demonstrates a clear commitment to protecting care for the patients and communities that rely on health centers every day. Governor Braun heard the concerns that were raised, engaged thoughtfully on the issue, and made the right decision for Indiana's FQHCs."

The Association also expressed appreciation for the Governor's team and administration officials who took the time to engage directly, listen carefully, and consider the real-world impact this proposal would have had on health centers and the patients they serve. Their willingness to engage in serious and constructive dialogue helped produce a positive outcome for communities across the state. This decision was also the product of extraordinary grassroots advocacy from every corner of Indiana. Health center leaders, board members, clinicians, patients, community partners, and advocates spoke with a strong and unified voice about

the importance of preserving 340B support for FQHCs. Members of the Indiana General Assembly also helped elevate those concerns and reinforce the importance of protecting access to care in their districts and communities.

"The strength of the response from across Indiana made clear just how much community health centers matter," Harvey said. "We are thankful to the many advocates, local leaders, and legislators who helped lift up this issue and ensure that the voice of Indiana's health center community was heard."

Indiana's community health centers remain committed to working with Governor Braun and his administration to advance practical, patient-centered solutions that strengthen access, improve outcomes, and support healthier communities across the state.

>>> [Read this release in our newsroom](#)





René Kougel, HealthNet CEO

Finding **Stability** in Times of **Change**

By René Kougel, **HealthNet** CEO

Like many health centers across Indiana and the country, **HealthNet** has been focused on ways to create **organizational stability during times of never-ending change.**

We've drawn inspiration from James Clear's **Atomic Habits**, which emphasizes that small, consistent changes compound over time to produce meaningful results. Rather than relying on a single solution, we've organized 10 cross-functional workgroups to examine key operational areas and identify practical opportunities for steady, incremental improvements.

One approach that has proven especially helpful is **examining the full lifecycle of a claim**—from the moment a patient engages with us to final reimbursement.

At the front end of this process is our **enrollment team**, which plays a critical role in ensuring patients have active coverage and access to affordable care. With ongoing changes to Medicaid eligibility, including renewed verification requirements and evolving policies, our team has taken a more proactive approach. A workgroup made of up diverse roles along the patient journey helped us update our workflow in a way that allows for a review of patient coverage status ahead of scheduled visits at multiple points in the process.

The team is also conducting **targeted outreach to patients at risk** of losing coverage and offering real-time support to complete renewals or explore alternative coverage options. By addressing eligibility issues early, we are reducing denied claims and helping patients avoid gaps in care. An added benefit: we are identifying outdated procedures and practice myths that can be eliminated, improving access and efficiency.

CEO Corner with Rene Kougel of HealthNet

A decades-old photo of a HealthNet team member at work reminds us that “everything old is new again.” The original album caption reads: “Working hard with Medicaid to help educate their clients about changes.” Health centers, by their very mission, are built to navigate change and innovate—showing up for those who rely on them as their healthcare home, often with nowhere else to turn. The challenging times we’re navigating now are exactly what we’re called to do. It’s remarkable what can be accomplished when adaptation, creativity, and flexibility aren’t optional.



At the back end of the lifecycle is our revenue cycle team, which has been **testing creative strategies to improve collections** while maintaining a patient-centered approach.

One recent example was a two-week financial “blitz” designed to reduce outstanding patient balances. During this campaign, patients with balances of \$50 or more were offered **a discount if they paid their balance in full**. Timing was intentional—the initiative coincided with tax refund season and regular pay cycles, when patients may have greater financial flexibility.

Using reporting tools, the team identified eligible patients and conducted consistent outreach through weekly text messages, encouraging them to take advantage of the limited-time opportunity. Patients could resolve their balances by phone or in person, making the process as accessible as possible.

To close out the campaign, the team hosted an **all-day walk-in event** at one of our largest health centers, providing on-site support for patients who preferred face-to-face assistance.

The results were encouraging. **In just two weeks, the team collected nearly \$20,000** in patient balances. Just as important, the effort strengthened patient engagement and reinforced our commitment to working with patients in ways that are both flexible and supportive. Based on this success, plans are underway to repeat the initiative in the fall.

While no single strategy solves every challenge, these types of focused, manageable efforts can add up to meaningful impact over time. By examining processes end-to-end and empowering teams to test new ideas, health centers can identify opportunities to improve both operational performance and the patient experience.



Your Health. Our Passion.

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Indyhealthnet.org



It's Annual Awards time!

Nominate your Champions of Healthcare and Quality

The Annual IPHCA Champions of Health Care and Quality Awards acknowledge and celebrate the amazing people, providers and projects that make our community.

Click here to start your nomination form

Every one of you is a healthcare champion, day in and day out. Your diligent work continues to improve the health of all Hoosiers and is moving the needle regarding healthcare quality in Indiana. Every year we have the honor of recognizing a few of the champions among us who make a difference in the lives of Hoosiers.

The Awards ceremony takes place in the closing session of our Annual Conference, to honor individuals and organizations that have demonstrated exceptional leadership, innovation, and commitment to community health in Indiana.

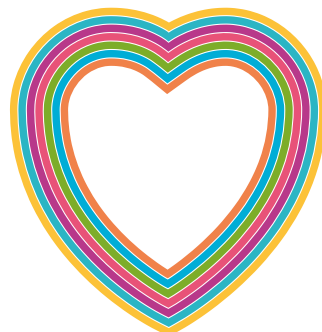
See opposite to find out about all the categories.

Your nomination form can be found here.

To make your nomination count, please submit before **September 11, 2026.**

>>> Visit our award pages

Click image to view last year's winners, or visit **IPHCA Monthly for November 2025**



The IPHCA Champions of Health Care and Quality Awards 2026

Award Categories



Volunteer of the Year Award

This award recognizes a primary health volunteer who has demonstrated excellence through: 1) patient advocacy; 2) innovative programs/services/systems; or 3) collaborative efforts.

- The primary health care volunteer must have volunteered for the health center for a minimum of two years.

Legislator of the Year Award

This award recognizes a state or national elected official who has championed access to health care and supported safety net infrastructure.

Provider of the Year Award

This award recognizes an outstanding provider who has demonstrated excellence in clinical leadership through: 1) advocacy; 2) innovative programs/services that have increased access, improved health care services to the community, or decreased disparities; or 3) collaborative efforts to reach high-risk populations in the community.

- A provider is defined as any provider who can directly bill hours for clinical services, including but not limited to: MD, DDS, NP, PA, Dental Hygienist, Psychologist, MSW, CNW, and CNS.
- The primary health care provider must have practiced at the health center for a minimum of three years.
- The Provider of the Year Award is given to the outstanding nominee in each of three categories - **Dental, Medical and Behavioral Health.**

Employee of the Year Award (Non Provider)

This award recognizes a primary health employee (non-practitioner) who has demonstrated excellence through: 1) patient advocacy; 2) innovative programs / services / systems; or 3) collaborative efforts.

- The primary health care employee must have worked for the health center for a minimum of two years.

Special Exemplary Project Award (x4)

This award honors a notable project by a member organization that has demonstrated excellence through: 1) advocacy; 2) innovative programs/services/systems that have increased access, improved health care services to the community, or decreased disparities; or 3) collaborative efforts to reach high-risk populations in the community.

- The project must have been in effect for a minimum of one year.
- The Project of the Year Award is given to the outstanding nominee in each of four categories - **Dental, Medical, Behavioral Health and Operations.**

The Debra Meers Grassroots Advocacy Award

This award is given in honor of Debra Meers. Debbie was the office manager and Director of Membership at IPHCA until she passed away in 2005 from a long-term illness. Debbie is fondly remembered for her bright smile and her passion for grassroots advocacy.

The award honors a health center consumer, Board member, or a staff person of an IPHCA member organization who has been a strong voice for community health centers with the state and national legislature and within the local community.

Philip L. Morpew, Health Center Dedication

This award recognizes an individual who has championed the advancement of community health centers' mission to deliver high quality, culturally competent, comprehensive primary care services regardless of patients' ability to pay. They have demonstrated a steadfast commitment to supporting the growth of the community health center program through education, partnership, or service.

- Recipients may include employees, community partners, consultants, contractors, or an individual demonstrating long term support of community health centers.

Start your nomination form

Conference Roundup ...



All roads lead to Muncie in October!

Join us for IPHCA Annual Conference on the 5th and 6th of October at the **Horizon Convention Center**, Muncie!

>>> For all details, updates and information head to our **Conference pages**



Our Conference hotel is the recently refurbished **Courtyard Marriott**, right adjacent to the Horizon Center.

Register to attend, or be a **sponsor** or **exhibitor** using these buttons.



Speaker Call

Share your knowledge and expertise
IPHCA Annual Conference 2026

Our conference brings together professionals across Indiana who are passionate about **“Leading the Way: Advancing the Future of High-Quality Primary Care.”**

We welcome your expertise in clinical integration, behavioral health, value-based drivers of health, clinical operations, workforce

>>> Start your Speaker proposal here

development, policy, or other areas that advance primary care.

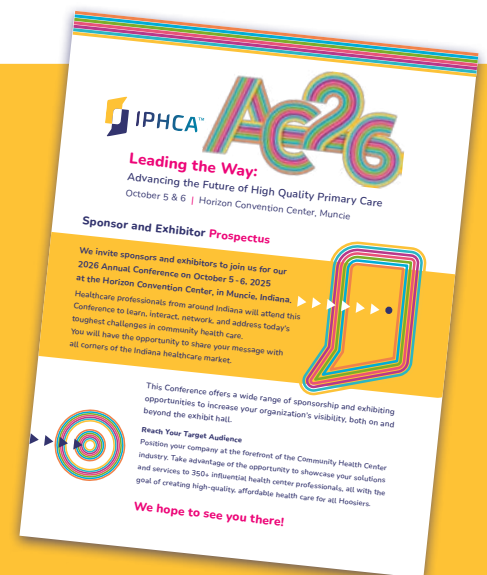
We encourage you to share your knowledge and help shape the future of community health in Indiana.

>>> Click here to find out more

Sponsor and Exhibitor Prospectus

Healthcare professionals from around Indiana will attend this Conference to learn, interact, network, and address today's toughest challenges in community health care. You will have the opportunity to share your message with all corners of the Indiana healthcare market.

Find out what our conference offers sponsors and exhibitors - **download our prospectus today!**



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UPDATES & NEWS

Our **Resource Center** is your first stop for all learning, news, webinars and updates - everything our community health center membership needs.



To contribute resources, or if you have any questions or updates, please contact **Sean Herbold** or call: 317.630.0845

Summer Readiness & Emergency Preparedness:

Protecting Patients, Staff, and Operations

As temperatures rise and weather patterns become more unpredictable, summer introduces a unique combination of risks, from extreme heat and power outages to hurricanes, flooding, and supply chain disruptions. For healthcare facilities, preparation isn't just operational. It directly impacts patient safety and outcomes.

A coordinated approach that integrates facility readiness, staff well-being, and pharmacy continuity ensures your organization remains resilient, responsive, and prepared for any scenario.

Building a Summer-Ready, Resilient Operation

1. Strengthen Facility Infrastructure & Operational Stability

Having a good system in place is crucial for keeping everyone safe during the hot summer months.

- **Keeping You Cool:** Make sure your air conditioning is working properly, change the filters regularly, and get the air flowing smoothly to stay safe and comfortable inside when it's hot outside.
- **Energy Efficiency:** Use LED lighting, window coverings, and smart thermostats to reduce heat load and energy strain.
- **Backup Power Systems:** Test generators and uninterruptible power supplies (UPS) to ensure continuity during outages.
- **Indoor Air Quality:** Enhance ventilation, increase cleaning frequency, and utilize filtration or purification systems.

2. Integrate Emergency Preparedness with Pharmacy Continuity

Emergency readiness must include a clear plan for uninterrupted access to medication.

- **Proactive Weather Monitoring:** Track forecasts and adjust delivery schedules ahead of severe weather.
- **Medication Supply Chain Readiness:** Coordinate early refills and maintain adequate inventory levels to prevent therapy disruptions.

- **Pharmacy Continuity Planning:** Ensure pharmacy partners can maintain operations through backup systems, remote processing capabilities, and redundant workflows.
- **Cold Chain Protection:** Safeguard temperature-sensitive medications with validated cooling systems, insulated packaging, and contingency storage plans.
- **Backup Pharmacy Network:** Maintain access to alternate pharmacy providers and confirm locations through a current Memo of Understanding (MOU).
- **Communication Protocols:** Establish clear, real-time communication channels between facilities and pharmacy partners.

3. Prepare for Summer-Specific Emergencies

Seasonal risks require targeted planning and practice.

- **Weather Risk Planning:** Anticipate heat waves, storms, flooding, and evacuations using forecasts and historical trends.
- **Emergency Communication Systems:** Use multi-channel communication (email, SMS, internal alerts) to keep staff informed.
- **Updated Protocols & Drills:** Regularly review and test emergency response procedures, including medication access workflows.

4. Protect Staff & Promote Well-Being

Staff safety is essential to maintaining quality care.

- **Heat Safety Measures:** Provide hydration stations, cooling areas, and shaded spaces for staff.
- **Flexible Work Options:** Implement scheduling adjustments or remote work where possible.
- **Wellness Support:** Encourage breaks, hydration, and mental health awareness during high-stress or extreme weather periods.
- **Staffing Readiness:** Plan coverage for vacations, emergencies, and surge scenarios.

5. Anticipate & Manage Heat-Related Health Risks

When it gets hot outside, it can be very bad for people's health, especially for those who are already weak or sensitive.

Facilities should be prepared to identify and respond to:

- **Heat Exhaustion & Heatstroke:** Symptoms include confusion, dizziness, nausea, and elevated body temperature.
- **Heart Problems:** When it's hot, people with heart conditions can get into trouble because their heart has to work a lot harder.
- **Dehydration-Related Complications:** Including kidney stress, migraines, and increased stroke risk.

Proactive monitoring and early intervention are key to preventing escalation.

Summer Readiness Checklist

✓ Facility & Infrastructure

- Schedule HVAC maintenance and optimize ventilation
- Install or update smart thermostats
- Test backup generators and power systems
- Upgrade to energy-efficient lighting
- Apply window treatments to reduce heat exposure
- Improve indoor air quality (filters, purifiers, ventilation)

✓ Emergency & Pharmacy Preparedness

- Regularly check and update emergency medicine kits, making sure they're fully stocked with essential items like antibiotics, IV supplies, and controlled substance kits.
- Maintain updated medication inventories for eBoxes and dispensing systems
- Keep paper or offline access to MARs and patient medication profiles
- Secure a current MOU with pharmacy partners, including backup pharmacy details

- Place refill requests early ahead of anticipated disruptions
- Review cold chain storage and emergency handling protocols

✓ Staff Safety & Wellness

- Provide hydration and cooling stations
- Implement summer-appropriate dress guidelines
- Offer flexible scheduling where possible
- Promote wellness and stress management resources
- Ensure adequate staffing coverage
- Communicate regularly about weather risks and safety protocols

✓ Clinical Awareness

- Train staff to recognize signs of heat-related illness
- Monitor high-risk patients closely
- Encourage hydration for patients and staff
- Track local heat and air quality conditions

Final Thought

Summer preparedness is most effective when approached as a unified strategy that connects facility operations, clinical awareness, staff well-being, and pharmacy continuity.

Through proactive planning and strong coordination, healthcare organizations can minimize disruptions, maintain medication access, and deliver safe, consistent care, no matter what the season brings.

[>>> Read this article in our resource center](#)



>>> [Read this article in our resource center](#)

Why Summer Preparedness Matters

Heat-related illnesses, dehydration, medication instability, and disruptions in care access can quickly become serious, especially for those with chronic conditions or mobility challenges. Proactive education helps patients:

- Prevent emergency situations
- Maintain medication adherence
- Reduce hospitalizations
- Stay connected to care during disruptions

Helping Patients Stay Safe This Summer:

A Provider's Guide to Patient-Focused Preparedness

When summer rolls around, it's not just the temperature that rises. It's also the risk of health problems for certain groups of people, like older adults, pregnant women, and those with disabilities.

As a healthcare provider, you're in a unique position to help your patients prepare for these risks and prevent them from worsening. You can do more than just treat health issues. You can also help people prepare for them before they become serious. This is especially important for people who are more vulnerable to heat-related illnesses, as they may need extra care and attention to stay safe during the hot summer months.

By taking a proactive approach, you can help your patients stay healthy and avoid serious health problems. Clear, practical guidance can empower patients to stay safe, maintain independence, and avoid preventable complications during extreme heat and severe weather events.

Core Safety Tips for All Patients

Encourage every patient to follow these foundational precautions:

Stay Cool

- Spend time in air-conditioned environments whenever possible
- Use fans, cooling towels, or take cool showers
- Avoid outdoor activity during peak heat hours (10 AM – 4 PM)

Stay Hydrated

- Drink water consistently throughout the day—even if not thirsty
- Limit alcohol and caffeine, which can increase dehydration
- Keep water easily accessible, especially for patients with mobility limitations

Dress for the Heat

- Wear lightweight, loose-fitting, light-colored clothing
- Use hats and sunscreen when outdoors

Know the Warning Signs

Educate patients to seek help if they experience:

- Dizziness or confusion
- Nausea or vomiting
- Rapid pulse or difficulty breathing
- Excessive sweating or lack of sweating

Medication & Health Management

Summer heat can impact both medications and chronic conditions.

- **Medication Storage:**
Advise patients to keep medications within recommended temperature ranges—avoid leaving them in cars or direct sunlight.
- **Adherence Planning:**
Encourage early refills before vacations or anticipated weather disruptions.
- **Condition Monitoring:**
Patients with heart disease, diabetes, respiratory illness, or kidney conditions should monitor symptoms closely during heat waves.

Emergency Preparedness at Home

Help patients prepare for potential disruptions:

- **Create an Emergency Kit:**
Include medications, water, non-perishable food, flashlights, batteries, and important documents
- **Maintain Medication Lists:**
Keep an updated list of medications, dosages, and provider contacts
- **Plan for Power Outages:**
Identify cooling centers or alternative safe locations if air conditioning is lost
- **Stay Informed:**
Encourage patients to monitor local weather alerts and follow public safety guidance

Guidance for Vulnerable Populations

Older Adults

As people get older, their bodies don't regulate temperature as well as they used to, and they're more likely to have chronic health conditions. This makes them more susceptible to heat-related problems.

- Encourage daily check-ins from family, caregivers, or community members
- Review medications that may affect hydration or heat tolerance (e.g., diuretics)
- Ensure easy access to cooling and hydration
- Recommend avoiding outdoor activity during peak heat

Pregnant Individuals

Pregnancy increases susceptibility to dehydration and heat stress.

- Emphasize increased hydration and electrolyte balance
- Encourage frequent rest breaks and avoiding prolonged heat exposure
- Recommend loose, breathable clothing
- Advise contacting a provider if experiencing dizziness, swelling, or decreased fetal movement

Individuals with Disabilities

Patients with physical, cognitive, or sensory disabilities may face additional barriers during extreme weather.

- Develop personalized emergency and heat safety plans
- Ensure access to assistive devices, medications, and backup power if needed
- Encourage caregivers to monitor for signs of heat stress
- Provide guidance in accessible formats when possible

Supporting Continuity of Care

Providers can reinforce preparedness by:

- Discussing summer risks during routine visits
- Identifying high-risk patients and

offering targeted guidance

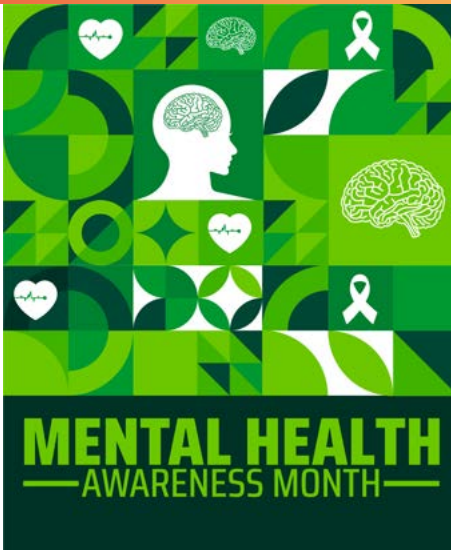
- Coordinating with caregivers and family members
- Encouraging early communication if patients anticipate travel or disruptions

Final Thought

Summer safety starts with awareness and preparation.

By equipping patients, especially those most vulnerable, with clear guidance, providers can help prevent complications, reduce emergency visits, and ensure patients remain safe, stable, and supported throughout the season.

Just talking to patients about the heat can really help keep them safe when it's hot outside.



May is National Mental Health Awareness Month

Caring for the Caregivers

How Medical Clinics Can Support Staff During Mental Health Awareness Month

Each May, *National Mental Health Awareness Month* serves as a reminder that mental health is essential to overall well-being. For medical clinics, this observance carries a deeper responsibility, not only to support patients, but also to care for the dedicated professionals who show up every day to provide that care.

Healthcare workers operate in high-pressure environments where emotional strain, long hours, and the weight of patient outcomes can take a cumulative toll. Burnout, compassion, fatigue, and stress are not abstract risks. They are daily realities. Clinics that take a proactive approach to supporting

employee mental health are not only investing in their teams but also strengthening patient care, retention, and organizational resilience.

Recognizing the Unique Pressures in Clinical Settings

Medical assistants, nurses, providers, front desk staff, and care coordinators all face different but overlapping stressors. Constant patient interaction, administrative burdens, staffing shortages, and exposure to trauma can lead to emotional exhaustion. Leaders must acknowledge that even the most resilient staff need structured support.

Building a Culture of Psychological Safety

Creating an environment where employees feel safe discussing mental health is foundational. This means:

- Encouraging open dialogue without stigma
- Training managers to recognize signs of burnout and distress
- Modeling vulnerability and balance from leadership
- Build employee-led employee support groups/employee resource groups that are supportive communities within the workplace

When staff feel seen and supported, they are more likely to seek help early rather than reaching a crisis point.

>>> [Read this article in our resource center](#)



Integrating Mental Health into Workplace Practices

Clinics can embed mental health support into daily operations in meaningful ways:

1. Normalize Breaks and Boundaries

Ensure staff take scheduled breaks and discourage a culture of “pushing through” exhaustion. Even short pauses can help reset emotional capacity.

2. Offer Flexible Scheduling Where Possible

Flexibility—whether through staggered shifts, remote administrative time, or adjusted hours—can significantly reduce stress.

3. Provide Access to Mental Health Resources

Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs), counseling services, or partnerships with behavioral health providers should be easily accessible and clearly communicated.

4. Conduct Regular Check-Ins

Supervisors should hold brief, consistent one-on-one check-ins focused not just on performance, but on well-being.

Supporting Teams After Difficult Patient Encounters

Healthcare workers often carry emotional weight after challenging cases. Clinics can implement:

- Debrief sessions after traumatic or high-stress events
- Peer support programs to encourage shared experiences
- Quiet spaces where staff can decompress during the day

These practices validate emotional responses and prevent isolation.



Investing in Leadership Training

Managers are the front line of employee support. Training leaders to:

- Recognize early signs of burnout
- Respond with empathy and practical solutions
- Connect staff to appropriate resources

can dramatically improve workplace morale and trust.

Promoting Work-Life Integration

Encouraging staff to maintain balance outside of work is just as important. Clinics can:

- Respect time off and discourage after-hours communication
- Promote use of vacation time and manage staffing schedules in a way that those not on vacation do not experience extra added stress and anxiety from the reduced staff coverage
- Offer wellness initiatives such as mindfulness sessions or fitness incentives

When employees feel supported beyond the workplace, they return more engaged and energized.

Measuring and Adapting

Finally, clinics should regularly assess employee well-being through surveys, feedback sessions, and retention data. Mental health support is not a one-time initiative—it requires ongoing attention and adaptation.

Conclusion

During **Mental Health Awareness Month**, medical clinics have an opportunity to reflect on an essential truth: caring for patients begins with caring for the people who serve them. By prioritizing healthcare workers' mental health, clinics foster stronger teams, better patient outcomes, and a more sustainable future for care delivery.

Supporting staff isn't just the right thing to do. It's a strategic imperative that can help employees thrive, not just survive.

>>> [Read this article in our resource center](#)



RESOURCE BULLETIN



To give feedback or provide resources for this section please contact **Nicole Stilianos** or call: 317.630.0845

Mental Health Month 2026: More Good Days, Together

Each May, communities across the country recognize Mental Health Month, an initiative led by Mental Health America to raise awareness, reduce stigma, and promote mental well-being.

This year's theme, **"More Good Days, Together,"** encourages us to reflect on what a "good day" looks like, for ourselves, our patients, and our communities. A "good day" doesn't always mean everything is perfect; it may simply mean feeling supported, stable, or able to cope. Together, we can connect people to the right support at the right time and create systems that make more good days possible for all.

>>> [Get MHA's Action Guide here](#)

Why It Matters for Indiana CHCs

Indiana Community Health Centers (CHCs) are on the front lines of expanding access to mental health care. As trusted providers, CHCs play a vital role in integrating behavioral health into primary care and addressing the whole person.

Opportunities for CHCs:

- Expand integrated behavioral health services
- Implement routine screenings (PHQ-9, GAD-7)
- Address social drivers of health
- Create welcoming, stigma-free environments for care

**MORE
GOOD
DAYS**
together



Bringing the Theme to Life

Simple, high-impact activities for CHCs:

- **"What is a Good Day?" Campaign**
Invite patients and staff to share what a good day looks like—via boards, sticky notes, or social media.
- **Mental Health Screening Events**
Offer dedicated days for screenings and immediate referrals to care.
- **Staff Wellness Moments**
Host brief mindfulness sessions, gratitude boards, or wellness breaks.
- **Community Connection Activities**
Organize walks, support groups, or wellness workshops to reduce isolation.
- **Care Integration Spotlights**
Highlight innovative efforts across CHCs that connect physical and mental health.





MENTAL HEALTH — AWARENESS MONTH —

Resources to Support Your Efforts

>>> [Click here to access tools and guidance from Mental Health America](#) including:

- Mental Health Month Toolkit
- Free online mental health screenings
- Outreach and community engagement guides
- Journaling prompts and reflection tools
- Workforce wellness resources

Key Message

Mental health is something we all manage every day. While 1 in 5 people experience a mental health condition each year, 5 in 5 people have mental health!

Moving Forward Together

Mental Health Month is more than awareness; it's a call to action. For Indiana CHCs, it's an opportunity to strengthen care, build connections, and ensure every patient has access to the support they need.

Because when we work together, more good days are possible for everyone.

Mental Health of America of Indiana

Strategies for becoming a Bell Seal

The nation's top recognition for U.S. employers committed to creating mentally healthy workplaces.

First Wednesday every month from 12 – 1 pm

Focus on information sharing, strategies for becoming Bell Seal; highlight top companies in Indiana to talk about strategies in workplace culture, benefits, compliance, and wellness

>>> [Click here for full details](#)

or contact Jama Donovan, Workforce Wellness Director - jdonovan@mhai.net



National High Blood Pressure Education Month

Take Control of Your Numbers

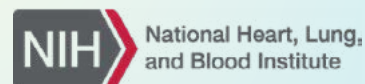
Taking Control of Blood Pressure—Together

Each May, communities across the country recognize **National High Blood Pressure Education Month**, led by the **National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute** to raise awareness about hypertension and promote heart-healthy lifestyles.

Often called the “silent killer,” high blood pressure (hypertension) typically has no symptoms but can lead to serious health complications such as heart disease, stroke, and kidney damage.

The good news: it is preventable and manageable with the right care, education, and support.

>>> [Click here for info and resources](#)





Healthy Vision Month 2026

Healthy Lives, Healthy Eyes

Each May, Healthy Vision Month highlights the connection between overall health and eye health, reminding us that protecting our vision starts with healthy daily choices.

You've heard that the eyes are the window to the soul, but they're also a window to your health. Conditions like diabetes and high blood pressure can increase the risk of serious eye diseases. The good news? Healthy habits that support your overall well-being also help protect your vision.

Community Health Centers (CHCs) play a key role in early detection and prevention of vision problems, especially for patients managing chronic conditions.

Indiana CHCs Offering Vision Services:



These centers provide services such as comprehensive eye exams, diabetic retinal screenings, and coordination with primary care teams to manage eye health as part of whole-person care.

Vision Resources for CHC:

- **Introduction to Comprehensive Vision Services in Health Centers (NACHC)**
- **We've Decided to Offer Vision Services in Our Health Center, Now What? (NACHC)**
- **A Roadmap for Community Health Centers to Establish and Expand Comprehensive Vision Services (ACU)**

If you would like more vision services resources or how IPHCA can support your vision services, please contact **Karla Marin Muskus** Kmarin@indianapca.org

Healthy Vision Month 2026



Raphael Health Center

Raphael is pleased to partner with the **Indiana University School of Optometry** to provide primary optometric health care services that include preventive care and education, comprehensive vision examinations, intermediate vision examinations, eye-wear orders, and diagnosing, treating and managing diseases and disorders of the eye.

Services include:

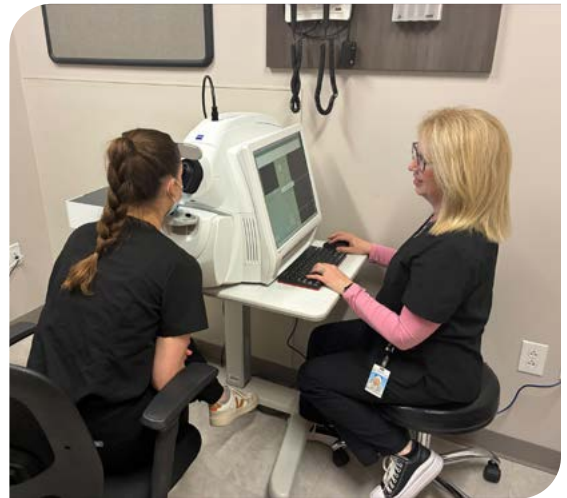
- Comprehensive Eye Examinations
- Eye Infection & Dry Eye Treatment
- Pediatric Vision Care
- Management of necessary Eye and Medical Referrals
- Eye Disease Diagnosis and Management
- Frames and lenses onsite
- Pre- and Post- surgical Care

Our initiatives and impact:

We have recently received technology to diagnose eye diseases, like glaucoma, macular degeneration, or diabetic retinopathy. Using our new technology further guides us in the treatment and the prevention of vision loss.

We take pride in building relationships with our patients, so getting the exam and other tests from the same doctor is important.

Optometrists on staff: Jackie Jenkins, OD and Larissa Krenk, OD



Jane Pauley Optometry



JPCHC's optometry service line was added in February 2026 and provides affordable, comprehensive eye exams for both adult and pediatric patients, along with an in-house glasses display that allows patients to view and order eyeglasses during their appointment. The addition of optometry services is especially impactful for JPCHC's large patient population living with diabetes.

Dr. Slemp is the first optometrist to work under the network and has been an incredible addition to the team!



Dr. Anna Slemp, Optometrist at Jane Pauley Community Health Centers

Shout Out: Congratulations to Jane Pauley Community Health Center (JPCHC) on the launch of their new **optometry service line**, helping increase access to essential vision care across Indiana

Healthy Vision Month 2026

HealthLinc Vision Program

HealthLinc strives to meet the needs of our communities. When we noticed patients struggling to access affordable optical care, we began offering optometry services at HealthLinc Valparaiso in October 2013.

As this need continued, we expanded services to HealthLinc East Chicago Harbor in June 2021, HealthLinc Mishawaka in December 2021 and HealthLinc Michigan City in April 2024.

Annual eye exams are essential for monitoring eye health and identifying conditions early. Without affordable care, patients may delay treatment or struggle to access the care they need.

In 2025, HealthLinc served 4,587 unique optometry patients and provided more than 6,900 total encounters.

Today, Dr. Michael Roach leads the optometry team at HealthLinc Valparaiso. Dr. Khushbu Mehta serves patients at HealthLinc East Chicago Harbor, Dr. Sayf Al-Khazraji serves patients in the South Bend and Mishawaka area, and Dr. Lourdes Lorino leads the team at HealthLinc Michigan City.

>>> Visit Healthlinc Optometry



Dr. Michael Roach



Dr. Lourdes Lorino



Dr. Khushbu Mehta



Dr. Sayf Al-Khazraji

NHSC recertification cycle

Don't Miss Out—Apply Now to Become a National Health Services Corp-Approved Site

Recruit, hire, and retain clinicians in your community by becoming a **National Health Service Corps** (NHSC)-approved site. You could miss out on qualified candidates seeking scholarship and loan repayment opportunities.

Exclusive benefits of approved sites include:

- Attract primary care medical, dental, and behavioral health providers supported by NHSC scholarship and loan repayment programs



- Post openings on the Health Workforce Connector, our online job board
- Connect directly with and hire candidates through free, exclusive virtual job fairs.

The application deadline* is May 19, 2026.

>>> Apply today!

**Federally Qualified Health Centers and Look-Alikes are auto-approved, meaning they can apply year-round and are exempt from uploading documentation into their NHSC applications.*

American Cancer Society's Road To Recovery Program: Breaking Transportation Barriers One Ride at a Time

*Contributed by: Emmanuel Zambrano, MPA, Associate Director of
Access to Care Solutions Delivery, American Cancer Society*



Transportation is a critical but often overlooked barrier to cancer care. For many cancer patients across Indiana, accessing timely treatment depends not only on clinical services but also on reliable transportation. Without it, patients risk missed or delayed appointments, which can negatively affect outcomes.

The American Cancer Society's Road To Recovery® program helps address this need by providing free rides to cancer-treatment-related appointments through trained volunteer drivers. This service ensures that transportation does not prevent patients from receiving lifesaving care.

Transportation Barriers in Indiana

Patients in urban areas such as Indianapolis may face long travel times, complex transit systems, or physical and financial limitations that make reaching appointments difficult. In rural areas, patients often must travel long distances with limited or no public transportation.

In Indiana, demand for transportation support continues to grow. In 2025, Road To Recovery provided 727 rides, assisting 62 patients with the help of 72 volunteer drivers.

FQHCs: Partners in Access

Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) play a key role in cancer prevention through screenings for breast, cervical, and colorectal cancers. While they do not provide cancer treatment, FQHCs can help identify patients who may need transportation assistance after diagnosis and connect them with resources like Road To Recovery.

FQHCs can also raise awareness in their communities about the transportation challenges cancer patients face and encourage others to volunteer as drivers, helping expand the program's reach.

How You Can Help

Providers and community organizations can support Road To Recovery by:

- Referring patients in need of transportation to treatment
- Sharing program information with patients and care teams
- Promoting volunteer driver opportunities

Looking Ahead

Expanding volunteer networks and strengthening community partnerships are essential to ensure equitable access to cancer care across Indiana. The American Cancer Society is committed to reducing barriers and supporting patients throughout their cancer journey.

For more information,
to refer to a patient,
or to volunteer, visit
www.cancer.org/drive
or call 1-800-227-2345.





To give feedback or provide resources for this section please contact

Alexis Stewart
or call: 317.630.0845



National Institute for Children's Health Quality (NICHQ)



Maternal Mental Health Month serves as an important reminder that mental wellness is just as vital as physical health. When maternal mental health conditions go untreated, **the impacts** can affect both mother and baby. These effects may include fewer positive interactions with the infant, increased emergency room or doctor's office visits, a higher risk of preterm birth or low birth weight, and more. The consequences can be long-lasting, extending from infancy to childhood. For example, untreated maternal mental health conditions in the parent can increase the risk for **behavioral, cognitive, emotional delays in children.**

Throughout May, healthcare organizations, community partners, and advocates should work together to

May is Mental Health Awareness Month

Maternal Mental Health Month

Each year, the month of May is recognized as **Maternal Mental Health Month**, a dedicated time to bring awareness, education, resources, and compassionate support to the forefront of healthcare.

While pregnancy and the postpartum period are often portrayed as joyful milestones, many individuals experience emotional and mental health challenges that deserve understanding, care, and timely intervention.

Maternal mental health conditions can range from postpartum depression, anxiety, mood disorders, to trauma-related responses. These conditions can arise during pregnancy and may persist for up to a year following childbirth. Mental health conditions during this stretch of time are not uncommon; according to the **Postpartum Support International, 1 in 5 women and 1 in 10 men experience depression or anxiety** during the perinatal period, and these conditions are often treatable with the right support and interventions.

Unfortunately, despite their prevalence, numerous parents feel compelled to suffer in silence. This can be attributed to various factors, including societal stigma surrounding mental health, a lack of accessible information about these conditions, and limited access to appropriate care and treatment resources.

raise awareness of maternal mental health by sharing resources, encouraging screenings, and connecting families to support before, during, and after pregnancy. Support may come from healthcare providers, therapists, peer groups, or loved ones who listen and check in.

This month, and always, we encourage prioritizing maternal mental wellness, reminding those who are struggling that help is available, and providing a space for open communication free of stigma. If looking for support, consider looking into the **Postpartum Support International** support groups and resources.





Preeclampsia Awareness Month

Each May, **Preeclampsia Awareness Month** serves as a vital initiative to highlight the importance of early detection and prevention of preeclampsia, a serious pregnancy-related condition.

This month-long observance aims to increase awareness, encourage education, and promote timely medical care, ultimately improving pregnancy outcomes and supporting maternal health and well-being.

The **American College of Obstetrics and Gynecologists** (ACOG) defines preeclampsia as a specific disorder associated with new-onset hypertension that occurs during pregnancy, typically after the 20th week of gestation, but often surfacing closer to the time of delivery. The exact cause of preeclampsia remains unclear, but it is believed to arise from various factors, including placental dysfunction, abnormalities in blood vessel development, immune system irregularities, and genetic predispositions. Globally, **preeclampsia affects approximately 3-8% of pregnant women**, representing a significant health concern for both mothers and infants.

Early detection is critical, as preeclampsia can progress rapidly and may not present noticeable symptoms until it reaches a severe stage. Regular prenatal visits are essential for monitoring warning signs such as elevated blood pressure, protein in the urine, and indicators of organ stress or dysfunction. These routine check-ups allow healthcare providers to identify and manage the condition promptly, helping to protect both maternal and fetal health throughout pregnancy.

According to ACOG, a widely recognized preventative measure to delay the onset of preeclampsia is taking a low dose aspirin tablet (81 milligrams per day). ACOG advises that this low dose aspirin should be started between 12 weeks and 28 weeks of gestation, ideally before 16 weeks, and continued daily until delivery.

In addition to medication, **lifestyle factors** such as maintaining a healthy diet and engaging in regular physical activity may also support overall pregnancy health. Open and ongoing communication between patients and healthcare providers is essential, particularly when managing pre-existing conditions that may increase the risk of developing preeclampsia.

This May, families, healthcare providers, and communities are encouraged to learn more about preeclampsia, share accurate information, and support those affected by the condition. Despite its prevalence, preeclampsia is often misunderstood or overlooked. By raising awareness and promoting early recognition, we can help ensure timely care and better outcomes for both mothers and babies.



[Click here to browse Maternal and Child Health resources](#)



IPHCA™
**Maternal &
Child Health
Corner**



To give feedback or
provide resources for this
section please contact

Alexis Stewart
or call: 317.630.0845

Webinar

Considerations for Adolescents' Contraceptive Care and Access

Upstream USA is presenting a one-hour session on May 27th from 10-11am EST that will equip clinicians, clinic managers, school-based health providers, and public health professionals with practical, evidence-based strategies to support adolescents' access to and use of contraceptive services.

Participants will explore the multifaceted barriers young people face and learn actionable approaches to protect confidentiality, streamline clinic workflows, and create youth-friendly environments that improve access to contraception. Attendees will leave with concrete steps to operationalize confidential care, reduce access gaps, and improve contraceptive care for adolescents.

>>> Register Here to Join!

upstream USA

Save the Date

Upstream Happy Hour

Join Upstream USA and the Indiana Primary Health Care Association (IPHCA) for a happy hour you won't want to miss! Enjoy great drinks, tasty appetizers, and inspiring conversations with primary care leaders from across Indiana who share your passion for patient-centered contraceptive care.

We hope to see you there!

- **When:** Thursday, May 7 / 5:00–7:00 PM

- **Where:** Maggiano's Little Italy, 3550 E 86th St, Indianapolis, IN 46240

- **What to expect:** Great drinks and food, fun activities, and enriching conversations!



**>>> SAVE
YOUR SPOT!**

FUNDING OPPORTUNITY:

Expanding Nutrition Services

- **For HRSA-funded Health Centers**
- This funding will support HRSA-funded health centers to increase access to nutrition services. Nutrition services can help to prevent, manage, and treat diseases and conditions through nutritional and food-based interventions within primary care settings



- Efforts aim to prevent and manage chronic diseases such as obesity, heart disease, and diabetes, aligning with the Administration's Make America Healthy Again priorities
- Funding (\$125 million) will support more than 350 Health Centers

>>> For all details click here

The Right Contracts. The Right Prices. Right Now.

The only health center-owned and operated channel partner to Provista-Vizient, the largest group purchasing organization in the country, offers the deepest discounts on equipment, products, and services, allowing you to **reinvest more in care and spend less on supplies.**



chcollective.com

Contact Alex Vector for more information

avector@chcollective.com 412.612.0593



May is National Nurses Month



Honoring the Heart of Care in Indiana CHCs

Each May, we celebrate National Nurses Month, a time to recognize the dedication, compassion, and impact of nurses across the country.

At IPHCA, we extend our deepest gratitude to the nurses serving Indiana's Community Health Centers (CHCs), the backbone of patient care and a driving force behind healthier communities.

Nurses in CHCs go far beyond clinical care. They are educators, advocates, care coordinators, and trusted partners to patients navigating complex health needs. Whether managing chronic conditions, supporting preventive care, or responding to urgent needs, your work ensures that high-quality, equitable care reaches those who need it most.

To all nurses across Indiana CHCs:

**Thank you for your resilience,
your expertise, and your
unwavering dedication.**

**Your work does not go
unnoticed, and your impact is
felt every day
in the lives of your patients
and communities.**

Happy National Nurses Month!



Celebrating You!

Throughout this month, we encourage CHCs to:

- *Recognize and celebrate nursing staff*
- *Share stories of impact and patient care*
- *Promote staff wellness and appreciation activities*
- *Highlight the essential role nurses play in advancing health equity*



“**Brett Deckard** was a Medical Assistant that worked for Windrose (WHN) for several years. She went back to school in her 30s to become an RN and then re-joined WHN in 2018 as a Nurse Manager.



Brett Deckard

Brett brings an intangible but unmistakable leadership presence to the Windrose clinic that she manages. There is a confidence in how she communicates with patients that reflects both a high level of competence and a compassionate and caring spirit. Her leadership is reflected in her ability to step in anywhere she is needed, offer support to her co-workers, and keep patient flow moving forward in a calm and steady manner. She approaches challenges with a solutions-oriented mindset and maintains a clear focus on ensuring operations run smoothly for staff & providers while patients receive the best care and in-clinic experience as possible. Brett was WHN’s 2019 Employee Excellence Award winner - as selected by her peers - and seven years later, still continues to exhibit the traits & characteristics that earned her that award.”

‘Our Registered Nurses are the backbone of our mission to provide high-quality, patient-centered care across our Indiana communities.



Led by Director of Nursing **Rachel Rollings**, MBA, BSN, RN, CCM, who champions patient safety and operational efficiency, and Nurse Manager **Megan Mendez**, BSN, RN, who provides vital leadership for our daily clinical success, our nursing team remains steadfast in the FQHC mission.

Our remote triage operations are expertly supported by **Tami Linton**, RN, ensuring patients receive timely, high-quality care.

On the front lines, **Hannah Murff**, RN, **Shannon Rhea**, RN, and **Joshua Perkins**, BSN, RN deliver essential complex care management and long-acting injections, providing indispensable support to our providers and high-needs patients. Notably, Shannon brings valuable ACT experience to the team, further strengthening our clinical depth.

To ensure our technical systems match our clinical talent, **Johanna Graham**, MS, BSN, RN serves as our EHR specialist to optimize experience and utilizes her mastery of Azara to empower our nursing staff with clinical data and insights.

Together, this dedicated team of Registered Nurses brings a diverse range of contributions and a collaborative spirit, ensuring that every patient receives the safe, efficient, and compassionate care they deserve.’

by Christine E. Negendank, CMO, Adult & Child



Rachel Rollings



Megan Mendez



Tami Linton



Hannah Murff



Shannon Rhea



Joshua Perkins



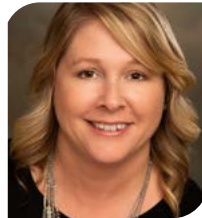
Johanna Graham

May is National Nurses Month

We would like to highlight **Lacrisha Whitley**, Chief Quality and Information Officer at Neighborhood Health Center.

Under Lacrisha's leadership, we have achieved HRSA Gold Badge status in 2023 and 2024 for Clinical Quality and are the highest performing health center in Indiana. Lacrisha has been instrumental in developing and growing our care coordination program, remote patient monitoring, our Community Health Worker program, and our food distribution program. Lacrisha's work with our provider and clinical teams has allowed our clinical quality to improve resulting in better patient outcomes and satisfaction.

By Carrie Miles, CEO, Neighborhood Health Center



Lacrisha Whitley



'Riggs would like to nominate **Katheryn Einstein**, our director of clinical services.

Kat Einstein has been a dedicated part of Riggs Community Health Center since 2019, beginning her journey as a Unit Manager while simultaneously working toward her BSN. From the very start, Kat set herself apart through her unwavering commitment to both her team and her patients. It was not uncommon to see her staying well beyond her scheduled hours to ensure the clinic was supported and operations continued to move forward.

Kat has a natural ability to identify gaps in processes and turn them into sustainable, standardized workflows. Many of the systems she developed early on are still in place today and continue to drive efficiency across our organization. Her keen attention to detail and passion for process improvement quickly led her into the role of Director of Quality, where she has made a lasting impact on patient care and operational excellence.

What stands out most to me is Kat's dedication to mentorship. I had the privilege of working under her as a nurse, and through her guidance and support, I was able to grow into the role she once held. Today, I have the honor of serving alongside her in a Director capacity. Kat consistently challenges those around her to improve, encouraging Unit Managers and staff alike to be better than they were the day before.

Kat has played an instrumental role in shaping Riggs into the well-oiled, process-driven organization it is today, and she continues to seek out opportunities for growth and improvement so we can deliver the highest level of care to our patients.

I am truly honored to call Kat both a teammate and a friend.'

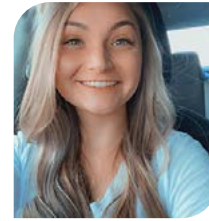
by Melinda Savage, Director of Clinical Services, Riggs Community Health Center



Katheryn Einstein



Taylor Wesley, RN - Taylor serves at the treatment center and consistently demonstrates a strong commitment to patient care. She brings compassion and clinical skill to her role while continuing her education to become a Nurse Practitioner. Her dedication to growth and patient advocacy makes her a valuable asset to both the team and the clients she serves.



Taylor Wesley

Paula Lowery, RN - Paula plays a critical leadership role in infection control while also serving as a key support to nursing operations. Her attention to detail, commitment to safety standards, and proactive approach help ensure a safe and compliant environment for both patients and staff. Her contributions directly impact the quality and safety of care across the organization.



Paula Lowery

Jacqueline “Jackie” Singleton, MSN, RN (CNO) - As Chief Nursing Officer, Jackie provides strategic leadership and direction for nursing services across the organization. She is committed to building strong teams, improving clinical outcomes, and supporting staff development. Her leadership fosters a culture of accountability, compassion, and excellence in patient care.



Jackie Singleton

Jessica Terry, RN (Tell City) - Jessica serves as a clinic nurse and is known for her reliability, strong clinical skills, and patient-centered approach. She plays an essential role in ensuring efficient clinic operations while maintaining a high standard of care. Her dedication and teamwork contribute to positive patient experiences and outcomes.



Jessica Terry

Donna Gunselman, RN (Jasper) - Donna is a skilled clinic nurse who consistently provides high-quality care and supports both patients and staff. She is a dependable team member who helps maintain smooth clinic operations while delivering compassionate, patient-focused care. Her experience and steady presence make her a valuable contributor to the team.



Donna Gunselman



by Beth Keeney, DrPH, President/CEO LifeSpring Health Systems



Amber Melchior

Amber Melchior, RN, and Manager of Quality Assurance and Improvement has served JPCHC in a variety of roles, including as a Practice Administrator and HIV Prevention Grant Manager. Recently, she has shown great dedication to clinical quality and vaccine management. Her focus on quality improvement benefits all members of clinical staff and her leadership is widely appreciated across staff and management.



Danica Simurina

Danica Simurina, RN, and Manager of Clinical Education is a key mentor and resource for new nursing staff. She leads staff training and onboarding efforts, supports ongoing nurse education, and plays an essential role in improving the quality and consistency of care. Danica has also been instrumental in developing and standardizing clinical practices across the organization, including within Turning Point.

by Emma Wynn PR Assistant, Jane Pauley Community Health Centers





RESOURCE BULLETIN

IPHCA is committed to supporting Oral Healthcare provision across all community health care settings for our membership and throughout Indiana.



For help, to give feedback or provide resources for this section contact:

Karla Marin Muskus
or call: 317.630.0845

The Power of a Smile in CHCs

Every day, CHC teams across Indiana are transforming lives, one smile at a time. From preventive care to restorative treatment, oral health services help patients:

- Feel confident in their daily lives
- Improve their overall health
- Engage more fully in work, school, and community

This work goes beyond teeth, it's about restoring hope and improving lives.

A Message from IPHCA

At the Indiana Primary Health Care Association, we recognize the incredible work happening across CHCs every day. Your commitment to oral health is helping build stronger, healthier communities across Indiana.

Keep Smiling Forward

A healthy smile can change a life, and together, we are making that possible.

Because when we invest in smiles, we invest in people, confidence, and a healthier future for all.

National Smile Month 2026

Healthy Smiles, Stronger Communities



From May 11 to June 11, 2026, **National Smile Month**, led by the **Oral Health Foundation**, celebrates the power of a healthy smile and its impact on confidence, well-being, and overall health.

A smile is more than an expression, it's a reflection of health, dignity, and connection. For many patients served by Indiana's Community Health Centers (CHCs), access to oral health care can be life-changing. A healthy smile can restore confidence, open doors to opportunity, and improve quality of life.

Simple Actions, Lasting Impact

National Smile Month reminds us that small habits can lead to big changes:

- Brush twice a day with fluoride toothpaste
- Clean between teeth daily
- Choose healthier foods and limit sugar
- Visit a dental provider regularly

These simple steps help prevent disease and protect long-term health.

A Moment to Inspire Action

This month is an opportunity to:

- Educate and empower patients
- Celebrate oral health teams
- Strengthen connections between dental, medical, and behavioral health
- Continue advancing health equity across communities



**SAVE
YOUR
TOOTH
MONTH**



>>> [Click here to see this article in our resource center](#)

[Click here to browse Oral Health Resources](#)

[Click here to see all Oral Health Events](#)

Save Your Tooth Month 2026

Protect What Matters – Your Natural Smile



Each May, *Save Your Tooth Month*, led by the *American Association of*

Endodontists, highlights the importance of preserving your natural teeth and raising awareness about the benefits of endodontic care.

A simple but powerful message drives this campaign: your natural teeth are worth saving.

Why Saving Your Tooth Matters

When a tooth becomes infected or damaged, many people assume extraction is the only option, but that's not always the case. Modern treatments, like root canal therapy, can relieve pain and restore your tooth's function.

In fact, losing a tooth can lead to:

- Difficulty chewing and speaking
- Shifting of surrounding teeth
- Increased long-term dental costs
- Impacts on confidence and quality of life

The Role of Endodontists

Endodontists are specialists trained to diagnose tooth pain and perform procedures that save natural teeth, most commonly root canals. These treatments remove infection, relieve pain, and allow the tooth to function normally again.

Thanks to advances in technology and techniques, these procedures are more effective and comfortable than ever before.

What This Means for Indiana CHCs

Community Health Centers Dental Clinics play a vital role in:

- Providing early diagnosis and treatment
- Educating patients on the importance of saving natural teeth
- Connecting patients to specialty dental care, including endodontics
- Promoting preventive care to avoid advanced dental disease

Nothing looks, feels, or functions like your natural tooth.

Saving your tooth isn't just about oral health, it's about preserving your quality of life.

To find your nearest CHC dental clinic, visit:

>>> [IPHCA CHC Dental Services Directory](#)



WEBINARS & TRAINING



Dr. Jason Hua, Dental Director at Jane Pauley Community Health Center



Strengthening Oral Health in Underserved Communities Through Leadership

Access to oral health care remains a persistent challenge in many underserved communities, making strong, community-focused leadership more important than ever.

A recent leadership program highlighted by **From Common Ground** is helping dental directors strengthen their skills to improve care delivery, expand access, and advance more equitable oral health systems.

The program emphasizes practical leadership development, peer learning, and systems-based thinking to help dental leaders respond effectively to the complex needs of safety-net and community health settings.

A strong example of this impact is **Dr. Jason Hua, Dental Director at Jane Pauley Community Health Center** and a valued IPHCA member. Dr. Hua exemplifies excellence in clinician leadership, combining a commitment to high-quality patient care with a clear focus on strengthening systems and expanding access for underserved populations.

Through his leadership at Jane Pauley, Dr. Hua continues to advance integrated, patient-centered oral health services that reflect the needs of the community. His work highlights the difference that dedicated, forward-thinking dental leaders can make in improving access and outcomes at the local level.

As more dental directors engage in leadership development opportunities, community health centers are increasingly positioned to expand care, improve outcomes, and advance oral health equity across the populations they serve.

This story is part of a **series** on the challenges and solutions related to oral health in Michigan, Indiana, and Ohio. It is made possible with funding support from the **Delta Dental Foundation**.

The **National Network for Oral Health Access** runs the **Oral Health Leadership Institute**, called NOHLI. The program focuses on a key challenge in community health care: helping dental professionals learn how to lead clinics and speak up for patients who may not have easy access to care.

>>> **To learn more click here**



WEBINARS & TRAINING



Inspiring the Next Generation of Oral Health Professionals

Planet Smilez in Indianapolis

In April, Indianapolis hosted the Planet Smilez program, an interactive, hands-on initiative designed to spark interest in oral health careers among students and help build a stronger, more diverse future workforce.

Supported by the **Delta Dental Foundation**, **Planet Smilez** introduces students to dentistry and health sciences through engaging, educational experiences that make oral health both accessible and exciting. The program is especially focused on reaching students from underserved and underrepresented communities, helping them envision future careers in health care.



By combining education, exploration, and real-world connection, Planet Smilez helps strengthen the pipeline of future dental professionals, an important step toward addressing workforce shortages and improving access to care across communities.

The April event in Indianapolis reflects a continued investment in both oral health education and equity, ensuring that more students have the opportunity to discover careers in dentistry and related health fields.

To learn more about Planet Smilez in Indianapolis, [click here](#)

Research update

Advancing Oral Health Through Prevention

Recent research published in **Frontiers in Oral Health** reinforces a clear message: prevention is key to improving oral health at the population level.

The study highlights the continued effectiveness of fluoride, especially in community water systems, in reducing tooth decay. While challenges such as public perception and policy differences remain, the evidence supports fluoridation as a safe, effective, and equitable strategy when properly managed.



What This Means for Indiana CHCs

For Community Health Centers, this research underscores the importance of:

- Promoting preventive oral health practices
- Educating patients on fluoride and oral hygiene
- Integrating oral health into primary care
- Addressing disparities in underserved communities

Key Takeaway

Prevention works. By focusing on education, early intervention, and community-based strategies, CHCs can continue improving oral health outcomes across Indiana.

To learn more, visit: **Frontiers in Oral Health** and explore the latest research on fluoride, prevention, and oral health equity.



RESOURCE BULLETIN



Webinar

Infection Prevention & Control 2026: Promoting a Culture of Safety in the Delivery of HIV Oral Healthcare

May 20, 2026 / Noon ET

This session will highlight strategies for building a culture of safety in HIV oral healthcare, with a focus on infection prevention and safety.

Participants will gain practical tools and resources for monitoring and evaluating site-specific programs.

>>> [Click here for full details and to register](#)

NEW NNOHA Resource

NNOHA Office Hours



NNOHA Office Hours are a monthly, interactive forum designed to connect health center teams with NNOHA leaders and field experts.

Each session focuses on timely topics in dental operations, compliance, and policy, while creating space for open discussion and peer-to-peer learning. Join to share experiences, ask questions, and gain practical insights to strengthen your programs and improve patient care.

First Session: June 9th at 3 PM EST

Topic: Handling Refusal of Treatment for Dental Patients with Dr. Katie Rothas and Dr. Bruce Wilcox

Expect practical insights, real-world scenarios, and strategies you can apply immediately in your setting.

Whether you're a clinical leader, administrator, or frontline team member, these sessions are designed to keep you informed, connected, and equipped.

>>> [Save this Zoom link to join on June 9th!](#)

NNOHA Webinar

Oral Health and Mental Health Integration for Homeless Individuals (or Populations)

Tuesday, May 5 / Noon ET

Homeless individuals experience disproportionate oral health and mental health conditions, conditions that are interconnected.

This webinar, a partnership between National Network for Oral Health Access (NNOHA) and National Health Care for the Homeless Council (NHCHC), will discuss the relationship between oral health and mental health and offer strategies to integrate the two disciplines for homeless individuals. 1.0 CDE is available.

>>> [Register here](#)



EXECUTIVE LUNCH & LEARN WEBINAR

No More Surprises at the Front Desk: Pointcare's New Patient Coverage Experience

Your patients shouldn't find out their coverage lapsed at your front desk. Join us to see how Pointcare's new patient experience sends proactive alerts, tracks every family member's coverage in real time, and stops gaps before they happen.

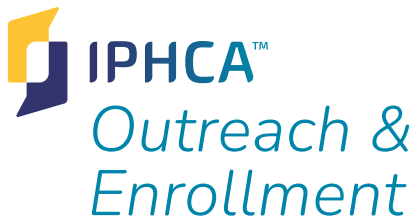
Thursday May 21, 2026 @ Noon

Register Now!

After registration, you'll receive a DoorDash giftcard
to order a lunch of your choice!



Pointcare



NEWS & UPDATES



For help, to give feedback or provide resources for the O&E section of this newsletter please contact:

Jenny Walden
or call: 317.630.0845

**Register today -
Places are limited!**

Navigator Monday 2026

Monday, May 11
8:00 am – 4 pm

The Founders Lodge at
Camp Dellwood, 7201 Girl
Scout Lane, Indianapolis

Navigator Monday provides
the most thorough training
for community health
center navigators and
all those working in the
Medicaid arena.

*Breakfast, lunch, and snacks
are provided, with networking
opportunities and continuing
education credit!*

**>>> For full details
and registration,
click here**

Navigator Monday 2026

Counting down the days!

May 11th has been proclaimed as Navigator Day in Indiana

Empathy, cultural competence, trust building, active listener, advocate, resourceful and persistence. These are just a few of the adjectives that are used to describe Navigators.

Remember to Celebrate your Navigators this month.

You can find helpful tips in **last month's edition** of the magazine.

- Check June's upcoming edition of IPHCA Monthly to see how IPHCA celebrated Navigators at Navigator Monday!

There's still time to sign up for Navigator Monday ...

Our training will break down the **latest updates to Medicaid, immigration policy, and SNAP**—so you can give accurate guidance and avoid costly mistakes for the people you serve.

You'll also gain practical tools in **Motivational Interviewing** to improve client engagement, along with insights from a live Medicaid panel and opportunities to earn continuing education credits.

With ongoing federal and state changes, **staying informed isn't optional**—it's essential to providing accurate, trusted support in your community.

Secure your spot today and stay ahead of the changes impacting your work every day.

Webinar

Community Collaboration- the New Essential Tool for Enrollment Success

May 20th / 11 AM

As the looming impact of the care coverage crisis grows, health centers must leverage community relationships in a more creative fashion.

Learn how a community health center's experiences with community partners during the MDWise open enrollment are now helping create a plan of preparedness for the coming changes to Medicaid eligibility and enrollment later this year.

Cindy Brumbarger, M.Ed., BSN, Chief Branding & Engagement Officer, HealthNet Foundation Executive Director shares their strategies on how they are supporting Hoosiers in their community.

>>> Register here



Don't miss:

Outreach and Enrollment Peer Calls

This is a bi-weekly call that includes Navigators, SHIP Counselors, CHW and Certified Application Counselors who share best practices.

May dates:

May 14th / 11am

May 28th / 11am



Medicaid Enrollments

Indiana Medicaid Enrollments Down 18,038 From Feb 2026-Mar 2026, Ending with 1,589,575 Hoosiers enrolled at the end of March 2026

Click here to view FSSA's Enrollment Dashboard

The First Quarter Reports for Presumptive Eligibility have been released.

If you did not receive the copy, please email **Jenny Walden**, O&E Director.

Medicaid News update

FSSA hiring 400 employees to monitor Medicaid eligibility ahead of work requirements
Compliance checks of Indiana childcare providers come back clean.

The state agency overseeing Medicaid is hiring 400 employees to check the eligibility of the 560,000 low-income Hoosiers getting their health insurance through the Healthy Indiana Plan.

The hiring spree comes as FSSA prepares to comply with new state and federal work requirements, including more frequent eligibility checks.

State lawmakers voted to implement work requirements for Healthy Indiana Plan members starting on July 1, 2025 but were overridden by Congress. Federal work requirements for participants in Medicaid expansion programs nationwide take effect Jan. 1, 2027.

"Twenty years ago, Indiana created the Healthy Indiana Plan ... to provide coverage for the uninsured, low-income working Hoosiers, the working poor — emphasis on the word 'working,'" FSSA Secretary Mitch Roob said.

>>> Read the full article at Indiana Capital Chronicle

Mark your calendars ...

National HIV Testing Day June 27th

Each year, America observes **National HIV Testing Day** on June 27, raising awareness about the importance of testing for HIV and getting an early diagnosis. Called NHTD in short, this day is crucial for encouraging people to increase HIV testing and know their status, and thus get the care they need to treat this illness



KNOW YOUR STATUS

Knowing your HIV status helps you make **decisions to prevent** getting or transmitting HIV.



Find an HIV testing site near you:
Locator.HIV.gov

>>> [Click here to visit HIV.gov for more info and resources about NHTD](#)

The Role of CHWs in HIV/AIDS education

A community health worker (CHW) plays a hands-on, people-centered role in supporting HIV/AIDS education, especially in communities where access, trust, or understanding may be limited.

- First, they focus on education and awareness. CHWs break down what HIV and AIDS are, how transmission happens, and—just as importantly—how it doesn't happen. This helps reduce fear, myths, and stigma, which are still major barriers to prevention and care.
- They also promote prevention strategies. That can include teaching safer sex practices, explaining the use of condoms, and raising awareness about tools like PrEP (pre-exposure prophylaxis) and regular testing. CHWs often distribute prevention materials directly in the community.
- Another key role is encouraging and facilitating testing. Many people avoid testing due to fear or lack of access. CHWs help normalize it, connect individuals to testing sites, and sometimes even coordinate mobile or community-based testing events.
- CHWs provide linkage to care and ongoing support for people living with HIV. That includes helping individuals enroll in healthcare, access medications, understand treatment (like antiretroviral therapy), and stay consistent with care. They may also check in regularly to support adherence.
- They're also critical in reducing stigma and building trust. Because CHWs are often from the communities they serve, they can have more open, honest conversations and create safe spaces for people to ask questions or seek help without judgment.
- Finally, they connect people to wraparound resources—like housing support, food assistance, or mental health services—since those factors often impact someone's ability to manage HIV effectively.
- In short, CHWs make HIV/AIDS education practical, accessible, and personal—they don't just share information, they help people act on it and stay supported over time.

Here are some great outreach tools for National HIV Testing Day - and for conversations around HIV in general...

Key Talking Points

(Keep it simple)

- Focus on 3 core messages:
- Get tested – It's quick, confidential, and important
- HIV is preventable – condoms + PrEP are very effective
- HIV is treatable – people can live long, healthy lives
- If it feels like too much info, just land one message well.

Outreach Activities That Work

1. Table setup (most common)

- Friendly greeting + eye contact
- Use visuals (not just stacks of paper)
- Keep items visible and easy to grab

2. Mini education moments (1–3 minutes)

- Quick chats instead of long lectures
- Example: “Want a quick rundown on prevention options?”

3. Interactive approach

- “Myth or fact” questions
- Spin wheel or small game (great for engagement)

4. Community partnerships

- Team up with churches, schools, shelters, barbershops
- Go where people already are



Handling Common Situations

If someone is nervous or embarrassed:

- Keep your tone calm and normal
- “A lot of people have questions about this—you're not alone.”

If someone believes a myth:

- Don't correct harshly
- “I've heard that too—what we know now is...”

If someone asks something you don't know:

- “That's a great question—let me find that info for you.”

Follow-Up Support

Always try to leave people with:

- A clear next step (testing site, appointment, hotline)
- Written info they can take with them
- Optional: offer to help them schedule or connect on the spot

What Makes Outreach Effective

It's not about how much you say—it's about:

- Being approachable
- Being consistent
- Building trust over time

People are more likely to act on information when they feel respected and not judged.



>>> See this article in our resource center

>>> See all HIV/AIDS resources



RESOURCE BULLETIN

IQIN is a constituent network of community health centers within IPHCA, who work together to improve the quality and value of care provided to Indiana’s most vulnerable residents.

By using health information technology and data, health centers are able to change the way they deliver care to produce better health outcomes for their patients.



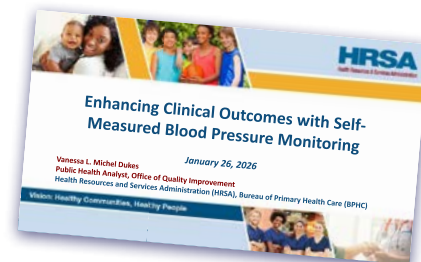
For further help or to give feedback or provide resources for IQIN please contact:

Laura Totten
or call: 317.630.0845

April is Blood Pressure Education Month

Enhancing Clinical Outcomes with Self Measured Blood Pressure Monitoring highlights practical

strategies health centers can use to improve hypertension control through self measured blood pressure (SMBP). Drawing on national guidance from HRSA, CDC, and Million Hearts®, the presentation showcases real world health center experiences, implementation considerations, and workflow models that support team based care, patient engagement, and effective use of digital tools. Topics include validated devices, proper measurement techniques, EHR integration, Medicaid coverage, staffing roles, and lessons learned from the field—offering health centers actionable insights to strengthen blood pressure management and advance health equity.

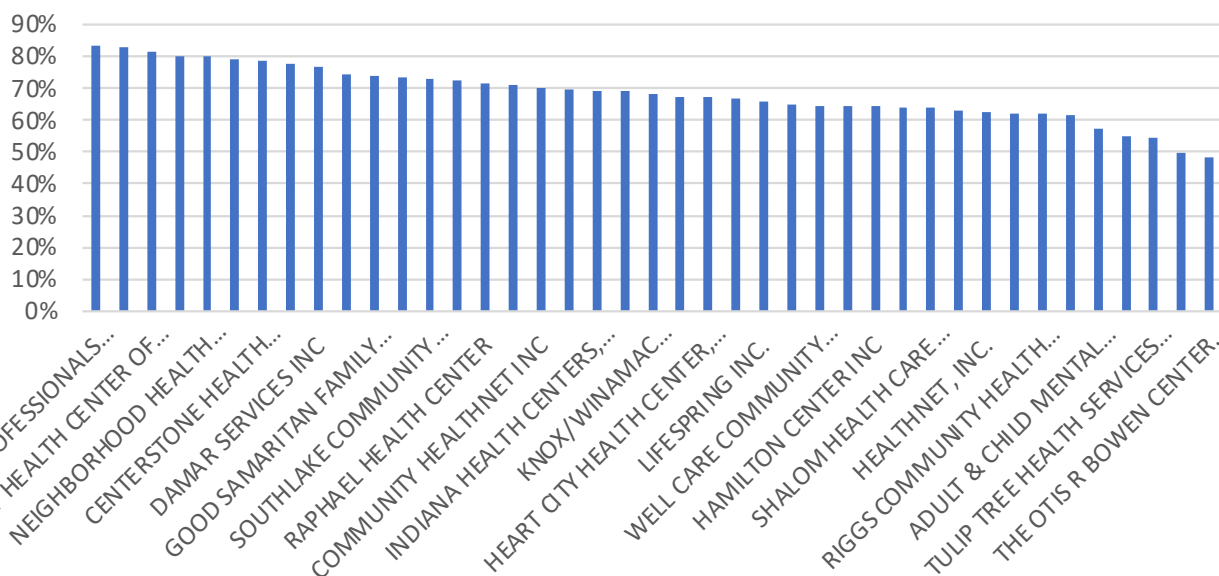


>>> Click here to view / download

UDS Data Spotlights: Each month, IQIN will highlight metrics from the recently released UDS 2024 data. For For Blood Pressure Education Month, we are highlighting data on the importance of controlling blood pressure for patients with hypertension. **Click to view data.** See the full dashboard **here.**



Blood Pressure Control for Hypertension (UDS 2024)



Context: The graph shows the percentage of patients with hypertension whose most recent blood pressure was under 140/90. The denominator includes all patients with a diagnosis of essential hypertension and a medical visit during 2024. The numerator includes those patients whose most recent hypertension was controlled: systolic blood pressure less than 140 mmHg and diastolic blood pressure under 90 mmHg. Patients who were pregnant during 2024 and patients with evidence of ESRD, dialysis, or renal transplant before or during 2023 were excluded. Patients who were in hospice, along with patients 66.

To view more UDS data at the center level, **visit the PowerBI Dashboard**



RESOURCE BULLETIN

What's New at IQIN

Learning from Engagement

April was a highly productive month for IQIN Engagement Calls. Our team met with 36 of our 42 health centers, engaging in thoughtful, meaningful discussions focused on advancing community health. As always, the IQIN team values the opportunity to learn from the innovative and impactful work being done across our health centers.

During these calls, we reviewed IQIN's five objectives. While we always strive to cover each objective in every conversation, the depth of discussion and sharing of best practices often made it challenging, in the best way possible. We continue to see strong progress across the four implementation stages: *Not Planned*, *Planned*, *Implemented*, and, increasingly, *Optimizing*. These calls provided a fantastic opportunity to celebrate accomplishments, and the dedication and momentum among our centers were clearly evident.

We also shared updates on the CINI-IQIN integration, with the goal of avoiding duplication of effort and ensuring continued alignment with the important work already underway at your organizations.



Key Progress and Trends Observed

- **Objective 1: Data Management and Analytics**

Many health centers are actively implementing Azara DRVS. Those already live are moving into optimization, using the system for patient visit planning, quality improvement monitoring, enhanced EHR data quality, and more.

- **Objective 2: Interoperability & Data Sharing**

Most health centers have EHR integration with INSPECT, bidirectional data exchange with CHIRP, access to external prescription history, and are working toward IHIE Docs4Docs integration via HL7 within their EHRs.

- **Objective 3: Data Modernization**

Engagement calls included updates on HRSA guidance related to FHIR-based interoperability. Our current focus is education: what FHIR is, how it works, and how it can support your health center. The IQIN team continues to deepen its understanding of various EHR capabilities in this area to better support centers in leveraging existing tools.

- **Objective 4: Value-Based Care**

Much of the conversation centered on CINI participation. Health centers continue to demonstrate strong progress, aligning smart goals with the right people, processes, and technologies.

- **Objective 5: Digital Health Tools**

Most health centers are utilizing either third-party vendors or EHR functionality to support patient texting campaigns and appointment reminders. Several centers are also advancing efforts in remote patient monitoring and patient feedback and satisfaction tools.

The IQIN team greatly appreciated the opportunity to connect with so many health centers this past month and is excited to see this momentum continue. With just two months remaining in the first year of the HCCN grant cycle, it is inspiring to reflect on how much progress has already been made and to look ahead to what's next.

Questions? Reach out to [Devan Busenbark](#), Health Information Program Director



RESOURCE BULLETIN

FHIR 101: Health Center Adoption of FHIR

This article introduces health center leaders and staff to the fundamentals of ***Fast Healthcare Interoperability Resources (FHIR)*** and its growing importance in today's healthcare landscape.



Presented by the HITEQ Center, this session explains why FHIR matters now, how it supports interoperability, patient access, and regulatory compliance, and what health centers need to consider as they prepare for adoption. The presentation covers FHIR basics, use cases, benefits for clinicians and patients, security considerations, and readiness questions—equipping health centers with a clear, practical foundation to navigate evolving federal requirements and advance data sharing, care coordination, and health equity.

>>> [View the full presentation here](#)

Telehealth



Telehealth & Health Equity Toolkit from the ***Upper Midwest Telehealth Resource Center (UMTRC)*** explores how telehealth can be strategically used to advance health equity and expand access to care for underserved and rural populations.



The toolkit provides an overview of health equity concepts, examines opportunities and challenges associated with telehealth adoption, and offers practical guidance for designing telehealth programs that address social determinants of health and digital access gaps. It serves as a valuable resource for organizations seeking to implement equitable, patient centered telehealth services and build more inclusive models of care.

>>> [Read the full article here](#)

The KLAS Corner



Register using your community health center's provided email address, and you will have access to all the resources KLAS provides.

[>>> Click here for more](#)



Virtual EHR Education 2025: A Transformative, Scalable & Effective Approach

explores how virtual EHR training has evolved from a stopgap solution during the pandemic into a powerful, engaging, and cost effective learning model. Drawing on recent research and industry insights, the article highlights the strong link between high quality EHR education, clinician satisfaction, and retention—particularly through self directed, asynchronous learning. It also outlines practical benefits and best practices to help healthcare organizations implement virtual EHR education successfully, even amid shrinking budgets and workforce constraints.

[>>> Read the full article here](#)



Case Study: Transforming Onboarding, Go Live, & Ongoing Training 2025

spotlights how **Ochsner Health** successfully modernized its EHR education strategy in response to rapid geographic expansion. Facing challenges in delivering consistent, in person training across a growing footprint, Ochsner leveraged Amplifire's e learning platform to create a scalable, engaging approach to onboarding, go live preparation, and continuous EHR education. This case study illustrates how innovative digital learning solutions can improve training reach, support workforce readiness, and ensure a consistent user experience across a complex health system.>>>

[>>> Read the full case study here](#)

OchsnerHealth



[Click to see all upcoming IQIN Events in our Calendar](#)