

# Spring 2024



**CAHoots Newsletter is funded by a grant awarded to the Indiana Department of Health/State Office of Rural Health (SORH) Flex funding.**

## Spring CAHoots Highlight

Each CAHoots issue will highlight two Business Partner Network members. IRHA's BPN members have chosen to be a major sponsor of IRHA and the Indiana Statewide Rural Health Network (InSRHN). As you explore the member links, you will find uniquely qualified businesses that possess in-depth knowledge of critical healthcare issues. They stand ready to provide high-performing service to you and your organization.



After a focused realignment at Purdue, PHA has been rebranded as HealthTAP under the Technical Assistance Program. We will continue our mission to partner with communities, hospital systems, healthcare organizations, and providers to improve patient care. Through fee-based contracts, grants, and no-cost programs, HealthTAP will consult and train healthcare professionals in lean process improvement, cybersecurity, metrics reporting, and community building.

Please visit <https://health.tap.purdue.edu/> for more information.



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**26th Annual RURAL HEALTH CONFERENCE**

**Rural Health: Leveraging Opportunities for Change**

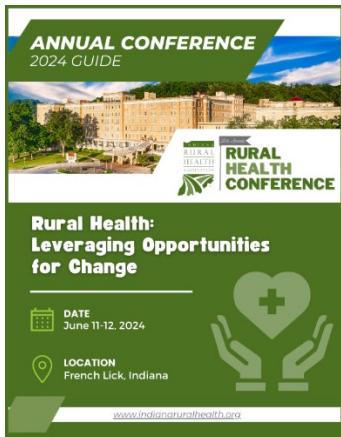
**DATE** June 11-12, 2024    **LOCATION** French Lick, Indiana



## The 26th Annual IRHA Rural Health Conference returns to French Lick this June!

This highly anticipated event returns to French Lick on June 11-12. Plan on joining hundreds of your colleagues in this fun and educational atmosphere where we'll focus on topics pertinent to enhancing rural healthcare delivery and leveraging opportunities for change.

### Conference Details



#### Introducing the 2024 Annual Conference Guide!

We have compiled a guide full of essential conference information. View the agenda, a list of speakers, and learn more about all conference activities.

Check out this year's speaker lineup, as well as the topics of discussion during each session.

View the Conference Guide, registration, scholarships, hotel information, and more by clicking [here](#):

<https://www.indianaruralhealth.org/annual-conference/annual-conference/26th-annual-indiana-rural-health-conference/>

Don't miss IRHA's biggest event of the year! Join your colleagues and peers in French Lick this June.



## BABY FOOD GIVEAWAY

Economic struggles can impact our overall health. That's why Sullivan County Community Hospital worked with a local non-profit to provide some relief to families with small children by giving away some free food on January 25 and February 2.

## SULLIVAN COUNTY COMMUNITY HOSPITAL AND WAGLER EDUCATION AND TRAINING CENTER PARTNER TO FILL THE NEED OF CCMAs FOR THE LOCAL HOSPITAL AND CLINICS

Sullivan County Community Hospital and the Wagler Education and Training Center have teamed up to provide prospective job opportunities for the Sullivan community.

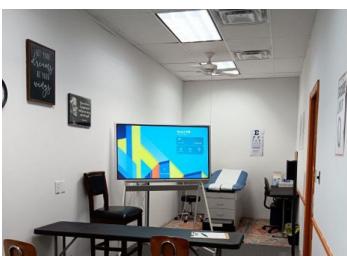
Wagler Education and Training Center provides students with the chance to acquire medical skills and become Certified Clinical Medical Assistants (CCMA).



Michelle Franklin, CEO of Sullivan County Community Hospital, Denise Hart, HR Director and Michelle Ellis, Director of Training Program with Wagler Education and Training Center have collaborated to establish a CCMA program in Sullivan, Indiana. To provide the best training, Sullivan Community Hospital has contributed an EKG machine and a new exam bed to enable students to gain experience performing hands-on training. The CCMA training site is at Sweet P's Café where GED classes are currently being instructed by building owner, Christy Pearson.

Students will complete an assessment in Math and Reading, background checks, and a drug screen to begin 12 weeks of training and sit for the National Healthcare Association CCMA exam. Students will also conduct 20 hours of clinical experience with Sullivan County Community Hospital, giving the clinic a chance to know the student before offering employment. The first CCMA class will test on 02/22/2024 and the next course will begin on 03/05/2024 with 6 students.

Wagler Education and Training Center is an Indiana approved Adult Education site with Division of Workforce Development offering GED and multiple skills training such as CCMA, EMT, CNA, Welding, CNC Machinist, CDL-A, CDL-B, and School Bus. Training Program Director Ellis states, "About 95% of our students go through our training programs without any out-of-pocket costs due to qualifying for grants with our local WorkOne offices. We collaborate with the WorkOne Career Advisors to help our students qualify for grant funding and job placement." CCMA students also receive a set of scrubs, a stethoscope, and a blood pressure kit to help them be prepared to enter the workforce in the medical field. CCMA is also offered at Wagler's Lyons location partnering with Greene County General, My Clinics.



Wagler Education and Training Center is thrilled to partner with Sullivan County Hospital. If you're looking to obtain a CCMA license, please go to our website and fill out a pre-registration form to get your name on the waiting list today. [www.waglereducation.com](http://www.waglereducation.com)

## **GROUND IS BREAKING ON A NEW OFFICE SPACE AT SULLIVAN COUNTY COMMUNITY HOSPITAL**

Construction has begun on a brand new 30,000 square foot office building at the Sullivan County Community Hospital.

The hospital began accepting bids for construction contracts in October of 2023, a move that signaled the beginning of a multiple phase construction project at the hospital. The first phase is the construction of the new office space, which will be used to house pain medication services, as well as office space for medical providers. This will open up additional space inside the primary hospital, which will be used for drug and alcohol treatment and recovery.

The next phase of the construction process is hospital modernization. The United States Department of Agriculture gives loans to organizations in rural communities, in order to provide a more secure living situation to people in agricultural areas. The Sullivan County Community Hospital is working on securing loans from the USDA and hopes to use the funds to help update areas of the hospital that need modernized.

The Sullivan County Community Hospital is a "critical access hospital", this means that there are no other hospitals within a 35-mile radius. Because of this, hospital efficiency and space utilization is crucial so that the hospital can provide the highest level of care to a large area of the state.

Michelle Franklin, the CEO of Sullivan County Community Hospital, says that they are about a year-and-a-half into the four-year construction plan. She says that the new office space should be completed by Spring of 2025.

## **EXPANSION UNDERWAY AT SULLIVAN COUNTY COMMUNITY HOSPITAL**

Construction is underway on the campus of Sullivan County Community Hospital (SCCH) as part of the hospital's master plan.

"One of the things that we've always tried to do here at the hospital is to make sure that our community has access to services," Michelle Franklin, CEO of SCCH said. "Because it's very difficult for people to leave our community and drive. There's no transportation, gas is very expensive, your family members have to take off work to take you somewhere and so we've really been focused on just trying to grow and plant nice seeds here in our community."

To allow for better access to care in Sullivan County the hospital announced 2 ongoing projects. Dirt work has started on the first project, a freestanding medical office building on the hospital campus.

"About a 30,000 square foot building in our backyard that will accommodate that growth," Franklin said.

Franklin said the building will allow some services to be moved from within the hospital. One of those is pain management, "It's one of our more robust service lines. And so that lets us add an additional provider there and add some additional services to that service line. And then that gives, in turn, our medication-assisted treatment programs, suboxone and alcoholism treatment, it gives it some room to grow as well too and then provides us with some additional space to add some providers here within the hospital."

A larger footprint means more opportunity for care.

## SULLIVAN COUNTY COMMUNITY HOSPITAL'S PAIN MANAGEMENT CLINIC

Watch the Good Day LIVE interview here: <https://www.mywabashvalley.com/gdl/scch-pain-management-clinic-2/>



### GREENE COUNTY GENERAL HOSPITAL APPOINTS NEW CHAPLAIN



**Linton, IN**— Greene County General Hospital (GCGH) is happy to welcome its new Chaplain, Rev. Rhonda Haynes, MA, BS, who will lead the way in providing support, comfort, and spiritual guidance for GCGH patients and employees.

Rhonda is a St. Louis, MO, native and has a diverse background in cross-cultural communication and engagement, along with an extensive background in education and business administration. She says ministry has always been a part of her life and in 2005 she made the decision to enter the mission field. Rhonda has worked extensively in South and Central America, Uganda, and most recently in Guam. She and her husband, also a pastor, relocated to Linton last year. They have 6 children and 9 grandchildren. Rhonda says her vision as Chaplain at GCGH is to create a safe place where those who serve and are served at the hospital feel seen, valued, and cared for in body and spirit. GCGH Director of Inpatient Services, Vicki McHenry, RN, BSN, says, “We believe that Rhonda will play a vital role in enhancing the over-all well-being of our community and employees by fostering support, empathy, and spiritual growth.”

As GCGH Chaplain, Rhonda will be available for prayer requests, spiritual guidance, confidential conversations, counseling, and to offer support during both good and challenging times. Rhonda can be reached at 812-699-6176, Email: [Rhonda.haynes@mygogh.org](mailto:Rhonda.haynes@mygogh.org) – Any prayer or spiritual request can also conveniently be made by scanning this confidential QR code:



Rhonda will lead a community church service happening Sunday, April 7<sup>th</sup> at Humphreys Park in Linton. The service coincides with community events surrounding the eclipse on April 8<sup>th</sup>. The worship service begins at 3 p.m. and aims to bring together people of all denominations and walks of faith.



## ADAMS WOODCREST TO HOST EXCLUSIVE LUNCH AND LEARN EVENT WITH BEERS & MALLERS, ATTORNEYS AT LAW

Decatur, IN - Adams Woodcrest is pleased to announce a special lunch and learn event in collaboration with Beers & Mallers, Attorneys at Law, focusing on the crucial topic of Navigating Medicaid Waiver and Power of Attorney. The event is scheduled to take place on Thursday, April 18th, from 11:00 am to 12:30 pm in the Adams Woodcrest Independent Living Dining Room located at 1300 Mercer Avenue, Decatur, IN 46733.



Esteemed speakers for the occasion will include Jesica L. Thorson, Esq, and Janell M. Sprinkle, Esq, distinguished representatives from Beers & Mallers. Attendees will have the exclusive opportunity to gain valuable insights into navigating the complexities of Medicaid Waiver and Power of Attorney, crucial aspects of elder care planning.

In addition to these pivotal topics, the event will foster an engaging in-person discussion covering long-term care and estate planning, as well as other key elements of Elder Law. This event promises to be an invaluable resource for those seeking to secure their future and plan ahead for peace of mind.

Participants are kindly requested to RSVP by April 15, 2024, by contacting 260-724-3311. For any further inquiries or information, please reach out to Amy Hake at [amy.hake@adamshealthnetwork.org](mailto:amy.hake@adamshealthnetwork.org).

Adams Woodcrest and Beers & Mallers look forward to welcoming all attendees for an enriching and empowering session. Take charge of your future—Secure Your Tomorrow Today.

## SATURDAY HOURS NOW AVAILABLE AT ADAMS MEMORIAL HOSPITAL'S OB/NEWBORN CLINIC

Decatur, IN - At Adams Memorial Hospital, obstetrics (OB) and newborn care are readily available at a single location where women and infants can come to their appointments together. Pre-natal and post-partum care appointments are offered in one convenient location. The OB/Newborn Clinic services include maternity care, midwifery, well-woman exams, and pre-conception counseling. Nurse care coordinators at the clinic also provide resources, education, and personalized guidance and support for mom and baby for the first 12 months of baby's life. The clinic's hours are 8:00am - 4:30pm Monday through Friday, and **NEW** Saturday hours are 8am-12:00pm.

Providers at the OB/Newborn Clinic include Dr. Nicholas Nussbaum, Dr. Kathleen Heimann, Dr. Jessamine Hippensteel, Dr. Lisa Ferrando, Dr. Dominique Sanchez, and Certified Nurse Midwives, Annette Edgell and Stephanie Lothamer.

Please call provider scheduling at 833-724-DOCS (3627) to schedule an appointment. The OB/Newborn Clinic is located at 1100 Mercer Avenue Decatur, IN 46733 on the 2nd Floor of Adams Memorial Hospital.



**Pulaski**  
Memorial Hospital

## **PULASKI MEMORIAL HOSPITAL ADDS ADDICTION THERAPY TO ITS INTEGRATED BEHAVIORAL HEALTH PROGRAM**

In response to the pressing need for comprehensive support in tackling substance abuse issues within the community, our Medical and Surgical Group's Integrated Behavioral Health Program has announced the addition of addiction therapy into its service lineup.

This strategic expansion marks a significant step forward in addressing the complex challenges posed by addiction locally. With substance abuse continuing to exact a heavy toll on individuals and families across the region, the decision to incorporate addiction therapy underscores the clinic's commitment to fostering wellness and recovery. By providing specialized counseling and support tailored to the needs of individuals grappling with addiction, the clinic seeks to empower clients on their journey towards sobriety and improved well-being.

The hospital has partnered with Tim Gearhart, LCSW, LCAC, a licensed-clinical social worker and addiction counselor. Over the last five years, Tim has grown a small private practice in Winamac, working with individuals who are vulnerable to legal trouble as a result of substance abuse disorders, as well as those who are already involved in the criminal justice system due to substance abuse disorders. "The addition of addiction therapy to the clinic's offerings reflects a growing recognition within the healthcare community of the need for more robust support systems for individuals struggling with addiction," said Gearhart.

Catherine Dywan, LCSW, the Integrated Behavioral Health Program director, emphasized the importance of addressing addiction within a healthcare setting that prioritizes both physical and mental health. "We recognize that addiction is a multifaceted issue that requires a comprehensive approach. By integrating addiction therapy into our services, we aim to address not only the immediate challenges of substance abuse but also the underlying factors that contribute to addictive behaviors."

As the Medical and Surgical Group moves forward with its expanded service lineup, the hope is that their efforts will not only provide much-needed support to individuals in crisis but also contribute to a broader shift towards a more compassionate and effective approach to addressing addiction within the community.



## **FRANCISCAN HEALTH CANCER CENTER RENSSELAER APPROVED AS CLINICAL RESEARCH SITE**

RENSSELAER, IN – Franciscan Health Cancer Center Rensselaer was recently approved as a clinical research site for oncology.

Dr. Arshad Husain will be the principal investigator (PI) at the location. He specializes in hematology and medical oncology. While he has been with Franciscan Health Rensselaer for one year, he brings a wealth of knowledge, experience, and energy to the Cancer Center with sixteen years of expertise in hematology and oncology.

The S2013 Immune Checkpoint Inhibitor Toxicity (I-CHECKIT) study is a Prospective Observational Study and is officially open to enrollment in Rensselaer. The clinical research team is in the process of pre-screening patients. I-CHECKIT is an observational trial in which solid tumor patients undergoing treatment will be monitored.

With Franciscan Health Cancer Center Rensselaer being an approved research site, this will allow for the opportunity to potentially open more studies in the future as the site continues to grow. "Being approved as a clinical research site shows the strength of Franciscan, infused to its Critical Access Hospital (CAH) in rural Indiana," said Carlos Vasquez, vice president and chief operating officer for Franciscan Health Rensselaer. "Clinical research is very rare in a CAH. This endeavor demonstrates Franciscan's commitment to extending its oncology program and mission to benefit underserved communities."

Franciscan Health Cancer Center Rensselaer offers cancer care close to home for residents of Jasper and surrounding counties, with screenings, tests, including genetics testing, diagnosis, treatments, and procedures, along with programs and support for patients and their families.



Pictured left to right: Franciscan Health Rensselaer Oncology team includes Shelby Gembala, Holly Godina, Lynda Edwards, Dr. Husain, Deb Walker, Carol Black, Jessica Schanlaub

## FRANCISCAN HEALTH RENSSLAER & PURDUE EXTENSION TO HOST JASPER COUNTY WELLNESS WALK

**JASPER COUNTY WELLNESS WALK**

Enjoy the outdoors as the weather warms, and build healthy habits. Join us every Friday for six weeks for a brief wellness lesson and 1-mile walk around the park. Refreshments will be provided.

**EVERY FRIDAY**  
**APRIL 12 TO MAY 17**  
**10:30AM TO NOON**  
REGISTER ON SITE AT 10:15AM  
Brookside Park/Weston Cemetery  
900 block of Bunkum Road • Rensselaer, IN

**Questions?**  
Carmen Fortney  
Extension Agent, Nutrition and Human Sciences  
cfortney@purdue.edu (219) 888-5341

**PURDUE EXTENSION**  
Purdue University is an equal opportunity employer and an affirmative action institution.

**Franciscan HEALTH**

Franciscan Health Rensselaer and Jasper County Purdue Extension will be hosting the Jasper County Wellness Walk on six consecutive Fridays from April 12 to May 17 at 10:30 a.m. at Brookside Park/Weston Cemetery in Rensselaer.

The Jasper County Wellness Walk provides an opportunity for participants to enjoy the outdoors as the weather warms and to build healthy habits.

The event will begin with a brief wellness lesson prior to the one-mile walk. Refreshments and water will be provided.

The Jasper County Wellness Walk is open to everyone, with on-site registration taking place each week at 10:15 a.m. A snack and water will be provided. For those with questions, contact Carmen Fortney at: [cfortney@purdue.edu](mailto:cfortney@purdue.edu).

Brookside Park/Weston Cemetery is located on the 900 block of Bunkum Road in Rensselaer.

## CARLOS VASQUEZ NAMED VICE PRESIDENT, CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER FOR FRANCISCAN HEALTH CRAWFORDSVILLE



Franciscan Health Crawfordsville recently named Carlos Vasquez as Vice President and Chief Operating Officer. Vasquez is now responsible for both Franciscan Health Crawfordsville and Franciscan Health Rensselaer. He has served in his role for Rensselaer for more than eight years. He has served Franciscan Health for seventeen years.

"I am humbled to begin this role in Crawfordsville. There are many similarities between Crawfordsville and Rensselaer. I will be able to hit the ground running. There is an incredibly talented team of physicians, surgeons, nurses, and staff in Crawfordsville, whom I look forward to getting to know and to work with, as we continue to provide exceptional care to our neighbors in Montgomery and surrounding counties," said Vasquez.

Vasquez was recently recognized by the Greater Rensselaer Chamber of Commerce as the "Citizen of the Year" while Franciscan Health Rensselaer was named "Business of the Year." Vasquez was a committed driver in the partnership with Appleseed Childhood Education, which opened a childcare facility on the campus of Franciscan Health Rensselaer: Appletree Child Care Center.

Vasquez holds multiple board seats and engages in numerous civic groups including Rotary, the Knights of Columbus, Jasper County Economic Development Organization, the Indiana Chapter of NAHLE and the IHA Council on Rural Health. The Chamber said of Vasquez's new role, "This busy man just doubled his workload in order to help. We know you have a great team in Rensselaer to support your efforts." Both Hospitals are incredibly fortunate to have Vasquez as the guiding force moving each into the future while serving both communities.

Like Franciscan Health Rensselaer, Franciscan Health Crawfordsville offers a variety of inpatient and outpatient services along with 24/7 emergency care.

## IRHA PARTNERS WITH IDOH/TOBACCO PREVENTION AND CESSATION PROGRAM

Indiana Rural Health Association (IRHA) is a statewide partner with the Indiana State Department of Health (IDOH), Tobacco Prevention and Cessation (TPC) program that is working to help build the capacity of Indiana health systems to impact tobacco use. We are working to support the integration of tobacco dependence treatment in the clinical setting. Health Systems Change allows for healthcare organizations to implement systems change initiatives. These initiatives are sustainable, integrated solutions at the organizational level that support clinicians and health systems to address tobacco use consistently and effectively. We work in partnership with TPC to provide technical assistance/services targeting the following focus areas:



1. Implementing Best Practices for Tobacco Dependence Treatment - Care Coordination
2. Quality Improvement
3. Utilization of Electronic Health Record (EHR) System

According to the [U.S. Public Health Service Clinical Practice Guidelines, Treating Tobacco Use and Dependence: 2008 Update](#), health systems change leads to improvements or modifications in the way

health care systems can enhance or improve clinician interventions and to integrate tobacco treatment into health care delivery. Services may include:

- Developing processes to ensure that tobacco dependence treatment, and its documentation, is fully integrated into care and sustained over time.
- Implementing quality improvement processes to enable integration of tobacco dependence treatment best practices into routine care.
- Demonstrating meaningful use of the EHR system.

Our hope is that the healthcare sector will explore and implement these strategies. These partnerships can lay the foundation for future systems change efforts. The integration of these strategies will build support and knowledge focused on systems change and quality improvement in Indiana. TPC's vision is to replicate and share lessons learned to continue informing our work and build capacity within health systems to consistently offer best practices in treating tobacco use and dependence. Several healthcare organizations have successfully integrated these practices.

Tobacco use continues to be the [leading cause of preventable death and disease](#).

Our program is available to assist healthcare systems with education, trainings, and implementation of health systems change. Please contact Kathy Walker, IRHA Program Coordinator, at [kwalker@indianarha.org](mailto:kwalker@indianarha.org) to learn more.



Healthy Start Communities that C.A.R.E. (HSCC) partnered with the National Healthy Start Association (NHSA) and received funding from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to participate in the Food and Nutrition (FAN) program for Better Health Leadership Training Institute. Through this project, the HSCC was able to select Healthy Start participants based on high-risk indicators and participated in a 3-week intensive program. Each event consisted of two live cooking demonstrations, led by the Healthy Start Perinatal Navigator, Nicole Page BSN, RN, IBCLC, and Shannon McDonald, the Director of Food Service at GCGH. They were accompanied by a Purdue Extension Educator offering evidence-based nutrition education specific to the target population. Cooking demonstrations incorporated whole foods primarily grown by local farmers and seasonings/spices. All cooking demonstrations were performed on an electric skillet, which was also given to each participant, along with a kitchen utensil and cutting board, complete food kits, and coordinating recipes.

These items were disseminated to promote healthy food choices and encourage and build confidence in cooking skills for Healthy Start participants and their families. This comprehensive program provided the opportunity to reach our vision of increasing access to locally grown/whole foods, while incorporating education and the resources/tools to prepare these foods and develop healthy habits while mitigating disease and improving health outcomes during the perinatal phase and beyond. A total of 30 Healthy Start participants benefited from this program. Program participants who completed all live cooking demonstrations and a pre and post survey to showcase how the program benefited them also received a "How to Shop Healthy" flyer along with a \$50 gift card to buy groceries.



Pictured here is the Jones family. Travis and Katelyn participated in this program, along with their 3-month-old son, Waylon. They also have two daughters, ages 12 and 3, and have been participants in Healthy Start for nearly 3 years. When asked about their thoughts on the FAN program, they stated "The food was awesome! We tried a lot of new foods that we didn't think we would like." My kids also tried the food, and I didn't think they would like it, but they did!"



## UPCOMING EVENTS



Missed a webinar? View past Lunch & Learn webinars by checking out IRHA's YouTube channel.

[CLICK HERE](#)

## SAVE THE DATES

### ***26th Indiana Rural Health Conference***

***"Rural Health:  
Leveraging Opportunities for Change"***

**Mark your calendars for our next Annual Conference!**

June 11-12, 2024, in French Lick, Indiana

Networking Reception will be June 10, 2024

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### ***Indiana Rural Health Association***

Presents

### ***2024 Fall Forum: Harvesting Rural Solutions***

***Wednesday, September 11, 2024***

Ivy Tech Community College Culinary and Conference Center  
2820 N. Meridian St  
Indianapolis, IN 46208

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**Membership**

[Join Now](#)

## IRHA Membership

Please be sure you stay active with the IRHA.  
For instructions on renewing your membership,  
[CLICK HERE](#). Student memberships are free!  
We welcome new members to join at any time!

If you have any questions, please  
contact [Carolyn Miller](#).

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