



Illinois Department of Public Health
Immunization Advisory Committee (IAC)

Meeting Minutes

December 31, 2024
9:00 AM to 11:00 AM

IAC Members and Meeting Invitees:

- ☒ Sameer Vohra, MD, Director, IDPH
- ☒ Heidi Clark, Division Chief, Infectious Diseases, IDPH
- ☐ Dennis Tiburzi, Assistant Division Chief, Infectious Diseases, IDPH
- ☐ Arti Barnes, MD, Chief Medical Officer, IDPH
- ☒ Karyn Lyons, Section Chief, Immunizations, IDPH
- ☐ LaDaryl Hale, Coverage Level Administrator, IDPH
- ☒ Daniel Goodman, Vaccines for Children Administrator, IDPH
- ☐ Heather Shryock, Adult Immunization Administrator, IDPH
- ☒ Jennifer Paulk, CDC Public Health Advisor
- ☒ Patricia Montalvo, Assistant General Counsel & FOIA Officer, IDPH
- ☒ Connie Austin, State Public Health Veterinarian and Deputy State Epidemiologist, IDPH
- ☒ Matt Smith, Senior Policy Officer, IDPH
- ☒ Allison Nickrent, Division Chief, Governmental Affairs, IDPH
- ☒ Alma Collins, Program Policy Specialist, IDPH
- ☒ Greg Willis, Legislative Liaison, IDPH
- ☒ Jill Pulver, Illinois State Board of Education, School Nurse Consultant
- ☒ Stephanie Atella, ICAAP
- ☒ Kevin Hansen, Vaccine Manager, CDPH
- ☒ Marielle Fricchione, MD, Rush University Medical Center, IAC Member, Chair
- ☒ Arvind Goyal, MD, Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services, IAC Member, Chair
- ☐ Craig Batterman, SIU Medicine, IAC Member
- ☒ Rebecca Doran, Illinois State Board of Education, IAC Member
- ☒ Amanda Minor, Douglas County Health Department, IAC Member
- ☒ Bessey Geevarghese, Lurie Children's Hospital, IAC Member
- ☐ Suzanne Spychala, RN, Illinois Association of School Nurses, IAC Member (pending application)

Agenda:

1. **Welcome and Membership Roll Call:** The meeting began with a welcome from Dr. Marielle Fricchione, Chair of the IAC. A quorum was established with 5 of 7 members present.
2. **Meeting called to order:** The meeting was called to order at 9:09 AM.
3. **Open Comment:** There were no public comments.
4. **Old Business:** Approval of 12/18/2023 Meeting Minutes
The minutes from the December 18, 2023, meeting were reviewed.
Motion: Dr. Goyal moved to approve the minutes.
Second: Dr. Geevarghese seconded.
Outcome: The motion passed unanimously.
5. **Remarks from Sameer Vohra, MD, Director, IDPH:**
Dr. Sameer Vohra addressed the committee and highlighted several key initiatives and challenges:
 - Preparedness Efforts: Lessons learned from recent public health



emergencies, including measles outbreaks, the threat of Marburg virus, and H5N1 avian influenza.

- Modernization Initiatives: IDPH's new dashboards for school immunizations and seasonal respiratory viruses, designed to enhance public access to critical data.
- Rebuilding Vaccine Confidence: Addressing the decline in public trust in vaccines through innovative community engagement strategies.
- Future Planning: Preparing for potential changes under the new federal administration and continuing to prioritize safety and disease prevention in Illinois.

Dr. Vohra concluded with gratitude for the committee's work in supporting public health initiatives.

6. New Business:

6.1. CDPH Update

Presenter: Kevin Hansen, Vaccine Manager, Chicago Department of Public Health

Key points:

- Vaccination Events: CDPH conducted over 200 vaccination events, with a focus on Health Equity Zones (West Garfield Park, West Englewood, Burnside, Hermosa, and McKinley Park)
- Migrant Response: CDPH's "Landing Zone" intake station vaccinated new arrivals for MMR and varicella. These efforts have now been absorbed into regular shelter operations.
- Future Plans: Continuing vaccination events involving shelters, faith-based groups, and colleges, with a focus on flu, COVID-19, MMR, mpox, and varicella vaccines.

6.2. ICAAP Update

Presenter: Stephanie Atella, Chief Program Officer, Illinois Chapter American Academy of Pediatrics

- ICAAP's Illinois Vaccinates Against COVID-19 (I-VAC) Program's funding ended in June 2024. It was successful in supporting healthcare providers through education, tools, and webinars.
- ICAAP is celebrating their 50th anniversary this year

6.3. H5N1 and Respiratory Virus Update

Presenter: Dr. Connie Austin, State Public Health Veterinarian, IDPH

Key points:

- Background and Context: H5N1 first entered the U.S. in late 2021, primarily affecting poultry, cattle, and other mammals, including humans.
- Transmission: Similar to the 2009 swine flu, which now circulates as a seasonal flu virus, H5N1 is transmitted through unprotected exposure to infected animals or contaminated environments. The virus has been detected in the respiratory and gastrointestinal tracts of birds and in mammary glands, with unpasteurized milk posing a risk for transmission (pasteurized milk remains safe).
- Animal Impact: H5N1 has been found in wild and domestic bird populations across nearly the entire state, with 10 positive flocks identified since 2022. Affected mammals include cattle, llamas, goats, and domestic cats, raising concerns about species-to-species transmission.
- Human Cases: There have been 66 confirmed U.S. human cases, primarily among farmworkers exposed to infected animals. Most cases have been mild, with no confirmed person-to-person transmission. Concerns were noted about two human cases with unknown exposure sources.
- Prevention and Monitoring: Preventative measures include monitoring exposed individuals for 10 days post-exposure and encouraging the use of PPE. Symptomatic individuals are tested and isolated if necessary. Tamiflu is recommended but often declined.
- Research and Challenges: Vaccine development and field testing for cattle are ongoing, with no current distribution of an H5N1 vaccine in the U.S.
- Discussion: Dr. Austin emphasized the importance of ongoing surveillance, collaboration with IDNR and USDA, and public awareness to mitigate risks associated with H5N1.

6.4. IDPH Update

Presenter: Karyn Lyons, Section Chief, Immunizations, IDPH

- COVID-19 Vaccine Programs:
 - The Bridge Access Program (BAP) for underinsured/uninsured individuals ended in August, distributing 11,000 doses with 3,649 administered.
 - The program, in partnership with HFS, reimbursed 67 providers and will transition into IDPH's regular adult



vaccine program, funded by additional Section 317 dollars.

- COVID-19 vaccines will now be included in the broader 317 program and the Vaccines for Children (VFC) program.
- VFC Program Expansion:
 - Six birthing hospitals and the first independent pharmacy have enrolled in the VFC program.
- Childhood Health Examination Form Updates:
 - Internal discussions have occurred about revising the immunization section of the form. Updates are expected to align immunization details with data collection methods, pending a comprehensive review.
- Statewide Immunization Coalition:
 - IDPH is providing seed money to the Illinois Public Health Association to establish a statewide immunization coalition.
 - The coalition will bring together stakeholders in a collaborative environment to address challenges hindering immunization coverage.
- Vaccination Coverage and Trends:
 - Reviewed dashboards on CDC's and IDPH's website. Influenza and COVID-19 vaccination rates are lower than previous years. RSV vaccination rates in those 75+ appears to lag behind the national average, though CDC's data sources for national and state-level data differ. Nirsevimab showed a 31% coverage rate for infants aged 0-7 months, highlighting a need for increased efforts.
- School Vaccination Coverage:
 - Nationwide and Illinois trends show declining school vaccination rates, with increasing exemption rates.
 - Coverage gaps are most pronounced among kindergarten and elementary school students, posing risks to community immunity thresholds.
- Data Dashboards:
 - IDPH dashboards for influenza, COVID-19, RSV, and school vaccination coverage are available online. These dashboards depend on provider reporting in I-CARE.
 - Concerns were raised about gaps in coverage data, especially among schools and younger populations.

6.5. Vote on Updated IAC Bylaws

The committee reviewed and discussed updates to the IAC bylaws. The changes were aimed at improving governance and aligning the committee's work with IDPH priorities.

Vote Outcome: The bylaws were approved by roll call vote. Dr. Goyal abstained. All other members present voted in favor of adopting the updated bylaws.

6.6. Other New Business

Dr. Fricchione proposed exploring EverThrive's equitable vaccine initiatives for future collaboration.

7. Adjourn: Dr. Fricchione adjourned the meeting at 11:09 AM.