



+ Celebrate THE HoliDaYs

Season's Greetings!

As we anticipate the holidays, the IAIC team would like to take this time to say thanks to all of our friends in the recovery community for the continued support and encouragement during these difficult and historic times.

Please watch our video, which captures the work that we have been doing to help people get connected to recovery support services throughout the state. Our appreciation goes out to all of our community partners who make this possible and our hope for better and brighter days ahead for all of us in 2021.



Indiana Recovery Network, a program of Mental Health America of Indiana (MHA), Regional Recovery Hub program, initially a 6-month program created in response to COVID-19 restrictions in partnership with FSS/DMHA and supported by the Governor's office Next Level Recovery program, has been expanded for an additional year. This extension will enable existing Hubs to continue providing much need recovery support services to Hoosiers

throughout our state as well as allowing the IRN to add additional recovery hubs in 2021. The existing Hubs provided recovery support services to a total of 11,799 Hoosiers from April thru November 2020. The IRN Peers App is now available for downloading on both

Apple and Android devices, providing Hoosiers in need with another way to directly connect to peers across the state and in local communities.

The IRN is collaborating with Purdue Extension to provide community education opportunities on recovery ecosystems, starting a recovery community organization, and technical assistance for becoming a recovery community organization.

For additional information on these training efforts please email Rebekah Gorrell, Manager of the IRN, at rgorrell@mhαι.net

The IRN now has 83 registered member organizations and is accepting new recovery focused organizations as members. Please reach out for additional information on the member registration process and criteria to Heather Rodriguez, Director of the IRN, at hrodriguez@mhαι.net and connect to our website at indianarecoverynetwork.org

IAPRSS is working diligently to continue it's support, advocacy, and education alongside the peer recovery support profession. IAPRSS has assisted peers with adjusting to the ever changing digital environment that COVID-19 has brought. IAPRSS continues to offer professional development for aspiring, and current, peer recovery support professionals. By working alongside communities, and organizations, IAPRSS continues to be a state leader in peer recovery support and education. Please visit www.iaprss.org to learn more about peer recovery, connect with other peers locally, or across the state, and find other information, and support related to peer recovery support.



IAIC Director Brandon George has been busy sharing information about the impact that COVID-19 has had on the recovery community. You can read the article published in the IndyStar and listen to the podcast with the IU Interdisciplinary team below.

IndyStar.

October 16, 2020
Brandon George

Op-ed: In Indy area, COVID-19 has shut down very things that people in addiction recovery need

Social distance.

In the fight against COVID-19, this phrase few of us had ever uttered is now a refrain that's been drilled into our heads. To be safe, avoid other people unless absolutely necessary. Work from home — if you're not among the millions to have already lost their jobs. Get groceries delivered (if you can afford to). For those in addiction treatment, community connection (along with health, home and purpose) is a pillar of the recovery process. As the pandemic continues, those connections are getting frayed, if not cut, and with deadly consequences.

Due to the coronavirus, treatment centers, 12-step meetings and other support efforts have been forced

to go virtual to reduce contact, hindering many folks' ability to connect with others and get the help they need. Access to telehealth and virtual support groups also requires a phone or internet access.

Social distance requirements have closed down many recovery residences, which provide critical housing for those with substance-use disorder. Here in Central Indiana alone, more than 500 recovery meetings have been shut down. The mandated isolation is in direct opposition to what many suffering from substance use disorders need in their recovery: community and connection.

New research by an Indiana University School of Medicine team found that EMS calls for service in Marion County for overdoses increased 43 percent during the four-month stay-at-home period through late July. Overdose deaths in Indianapolis increased 47 percent, the researchers found, while EMS calls involving administration of naloxone, which is used to treat opioid overdoses, grew 61 percent compared to the same time last year.

Similar spikes have been seen across the country, from Baltimore and Chicago to upstate New York and coastal South Carolina – more than 40 states documented post-pandemic increases in fatal opioid overdoses, according to the American Medical Association.

Throw in historic job losses, and the mounting eviction crisis, with 30 to 40 million at risk of losing their homes, and you can see why those who fall victim to the opioid overdose epidemic are often referred to as “deaths of despair.”

I shared this grim update at a virtual Access to Justice Forum hosted by the Legal Services Corporation, a federally funded nonprofit that is the largest funder of legal aid programs across the country.

While the statistics remain dire, I'd also proudly point to efforts here at home to battle this scourge.

In August, Gov. Eric Holcomb announced a partnership between the state Division of Mental Health and Addiction and Mental Health America of Indiana that expands access to peer recovery specialists at 16 sites across Indiana.

In announcing the expansion, state drug czar Doug Huntsinger cited the “increased feelings of anxiety and isolation (that have) simultaneously limited access to treatment and recovery services.”

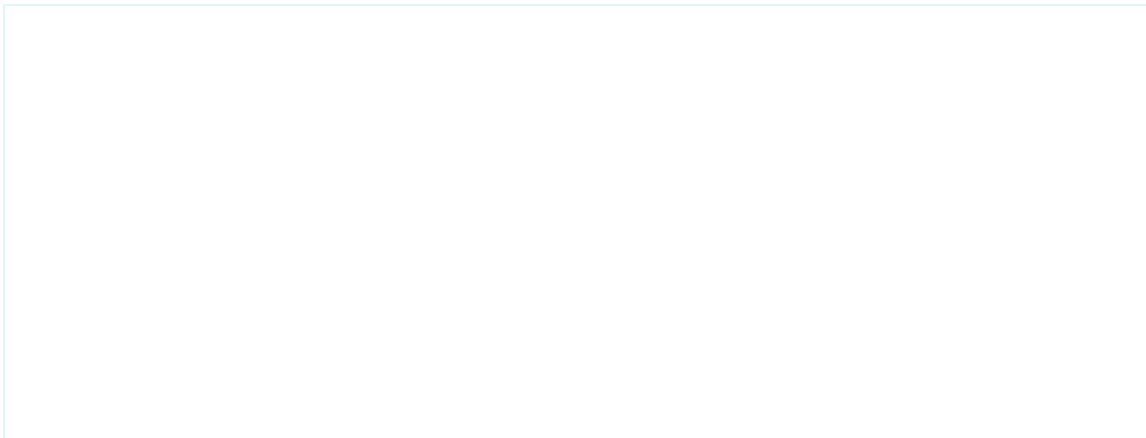
Joining me on the national panel discussion about the challenges of providing legal services during COVID-19 to those with opioid use disorders were Chief Justice Loretta Rush of the Indiana Supreme Court, a champion advocate for access to justice.

Chief Justice Rush and I both served on the Legal Services Corporation's Opioid Task Force, which in June 2019 issued its findings here. Among our recommendations: more frequent collaboration in which attorneys are embedded in health care settings to address the unmet civil legal needs of patients.

Such medical-legal partnerships include an alliance between Indiana Legal Services and Mental Health America of Indiana called Project CLear (Civil Legal Aid in Recovery).

As we continue forging our paths forward, I ask our elected leaders and ordinary citizens alike for their public support of the Indiana Recovery Network, Project CLear and similar efforts to ensure that those struggling with addiction can access the health, home, community and purpose they need.

Brandon George is vice president of Mental Health America of Indiana and director of the Indiana Addictions Issues Coalition. He lives in Central Indiana.





An Interprofessional Grand Rounds by IPE 10x10

Back in 2019, a unique event took place. Aspects of theater, traditional panel discussions, and audience Q&A were combined to present a nursing grand rounds session. Brandon George, of the Indiana Addiction Issues Coalition, joins Dr. Kim Hodges...

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LET'S MAKE 2021
THE BEST YEAR OF RECOVERY!