



Indiana's SACCHO

State Association of County and City Health Officials



Newsletter July 2016

Rush County Health Department Receives National Accreditation

Rush County, one of the smallest health departments in the nation to receive national accreditation, celebrated the event on June 22 in the Commissioner's Room at the Rush County Courthouse.

It all began in 2009. National accreditation of local health departments was at the forefront in public health news. The late Davis Ellis, M.D., who had been serving as health officer for Rush County for more than a few years, had a vision. He felt that Rush County should be recognized for the work they did, and thus the work began.



Davis Ellis, M.D.

The Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB) application for local health department accreditation is lengthy, and requires much work to document the activities of local health departments. There are 12 domains (areas) with multiple sub-domains for which policies and procedures must be written.



Seated: Ellie Ellis, widow of the late Dr. Davis Ellis. Row two: Fred Philips, DVM, Rush County Board of Health president; Helen Steussy, MD, Rush County Health Officer; Dorothy Boersma, MD, former Rush County Health Officer; Marge Amos, Director of Nursing. Row three: Lisa Senour-Reboulet, Community Outreach Coordinator/MRC Coordinator; Sharon Brown, Vital Records; Sherry McKinney, Office Manager; Terri Nigh, Environmentalist; Kim Roe, former environmentalist, and Dixie Meyer, RN.

Read the details here:

<http://www.phaboard.org/wp-content/uploads/SM-Version-1.5-Board-adopted-FINAL-01-24-2014.docx.pdf>

The requirements include submitting all information electronically, a review of the documents, and a site visit from an accreditation review committee.



**Helen Steussy, MD
Rush County Health Officer**



Dr. Helen Steussy, the current Health Officer for Rush County, celebrates Dr. Dorothy Boersma, who succeeded Dr. Ellis, and the health department staff, for their diligent and time-consuming work in completing the application process leading to Rush County's national accreditation status, making it the first local health department in Indiana to receive this accreditation, and the smallest health department in the entire United States to be accredited.



Dorothy Boersma, MD

Dorothy Boersma, M.D., who spearheaded the work of her staff to develop the policies and procedures required by PHAB, thanked many for their contributions to the successful application and accreditation. Cynthia Stone, Ph.D., Richard M. Fairbanks School of Public Health, along with her Masters of

Public Health Students, created and conducted the Community Needs Assessment, the first step in the application process. A community needs assessment is required every five years, and Dr. Stone and her students repeated this process again in 2014. Dr. Boersma thanked her staff, the county commissioners, county council, Rushville mayor, community partners, Indiana State Department of Health, Indiana Public Health Association, and Indiana Public Health Foundation, Inc. and other organizations that had provided training in the accreditation process.

It is quite an honor for an individual or organization to earn

the State Health Commissioner's Award. State health commissioner, Jerome Adams, MD, who was unable to attend the celebration, issued this prestigious award to the Rush County Health Department for its diligence, hard work, and success in achieving national accreditation.

Sarah Seward, Director of the Office of Public Health Performance, Indiana State Department of Health, represented State Health Commissioner Jerome Adams, in presenting the Rush County Health Department with the State Health Commissioners Award. **Pictured below from left to right: Dorothy Boersma, MD, Sarah Seward, Director of the Office of Public Health Performance, and Helen Steussy, MD.**





On hand to present the Certificate of Accreditation was **Fred Philips, DVM**, chairperson of the Rush County Local Board of Health. Left to right: **Helen Steussy, MD., Dorothy Boersma, MD, Fred Philips, DVM**



Among those celebrating Rush County's accreditation were **Dorothy Boersma, MD**, former health officer, **Jerry King**, Executive Director, Indiana Public Health Association, **Bruce Levi**, Rush County Commissioner, and **Helen Steussy, MD**, current health officer.



Together again for the accreditation celebration are left to right: **Dixie Meyer, RN, Sherry McKinney, Office Manager, and Dorothy Boersma, MD**, former health officer under whom accreditation was pursued.



Rush County Health Department staff are keeping a journal of the multi-year accreditation process. Shown checking out the journal are **Marge Amos, RN, Director of Nursing, Melissa Brodey, ISDH Local Health Department Outreach Office, Sarah Seward, Director, ISDH Division of Public Health Performance.**

Dorothy Boersma, MD and Helen Steussy, MD, share their excitement and happiness after receiving the Certificate of National Accreditation from the Public Health Accreditation Board on behalf of the Rush County Health Department.

