

# Illinois Dept. of Public Health to Host 2024 Infectious Disease Conference in Bloomington

by Illinois Department of Public Health  
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CHICAGO – The Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) is hosting the state’s first infectious disease conference in nine years in Bloomington next Tuesday and Wednesday (April 23 & 24). The Emerging Stronger: 2024 Illinois Infectious Disease Conference is being held during IDPH’s *30 Days of Public Health* monthlong celebration of the public health profession. As the first such conference since the COVID-19 pandemic, the two-day event will bring together hundreds of infectious disease experts and focus on lessons learned from battling the worldwide public health emergency, how to move beyond COVID-19, and fighting misinformation in the realm of public health.

The [conference agenda](#) features more two dozen speakers and will kick off Tuesday morning with a welcome message from IDPH Director Dr. Sameer Vohra. He will introduce the initial keynote speaker Dr. Katelyn Jetelina, author of the widely read “Your Local Epidemiologist” blog, whose talk is titled: “Reimagining Public Health for the 21st Century.” Closing out the conference on Wednesday will be “A Guide to Inoculating Yourself Against Anti-Vax Propaganda,” featuring Heather Simpson, a mother from Texas who is a convert from the ranks of those who oppose vaccines and is known as the “Ex Anti-Vax Mom.”

*“As our 30 Days of Public Health celebration continues, IDPH is thrilled to relaunch our Infectious Disease Conference – our first since 2015,”* said Director Vohra. “Better understanding of new and old infectious diseases and working to prepare for future outbreaks will always remain a core part of our efforts to improve the health of Illinois’s communities. The Emerging Stronger conference will bring together experts from Illinois and beyond and give participants the opportunity to share the knowledge and experience we have gained in recent years – especially during the COVID-19 pandemic.”

Among the session topics during the two days are: Extensively Drug-Resistant Organisms in Illinois; Immunization Approaches and Novel Vaccines to Protect Pregnant Persons and Infants; Epidemiology and Prevention of Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) in Children; HPV

Vaccine is Cancer Prevention: Trends, Efficacy, and Opportunities; A Local Health Dept. Perspective on Healthcare-associated Infection Prevention and Response; Delivery of

Immunizations to Underserved Populations; UIC & IDPH Partnership to Combat Viral Respiratory in Illinois Long Term Care Facilities; and Vaccinations in Pregnancy: An Evolving Landscape.

The conference will take place both in-person and virtually. However, registration to attend in-person is now closed. To register for virtual attendance, [CLICK HERE](#).

One of the highlights of the conference will be the presentation of the David Baker Award for Excellence in Integrating Public Health and Infection Control. The award is in memory of David Baker, who worked in the IDPH Communicable Disease Section as an infection control expert. David passed away unexpectedly in October 2020 after working in that section for nearly four years. David was passionate about protecting the most vulnerable Illinois residents, especially veterans.