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*Governor*

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*State Health Commissioner*

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## **IU HEALTH PROGRAM HONORED WITH STATE HEALTH COMMISSIONER AWARD**

INDIANAPOLIS—State Health Commissioner Gregory Larkin, M.D., presented the State Health Commissioner Award for excellence in public health to the Indiana University Health’s “Garden on the Go™” program Monday.

The award was for outstanding contributions in promoting, protecting and providing for the health of people in Indiana.

“Unfortunately, for many urban Indiana residents, ready access to fresh, affordable and nutritionally sound food choices, is difficult,” said Dr. Larkin. “Garden on the Go™ is a great example of aggressively addressing nutritional access problems for our urban citizens who may have limited mobility or access to fresh produce. Many of the most significant health risks Hoosiers face are related to poor nutrition. Diseases related to obesity, diabetes, cardiovascular, cancers and orthopedic degeneration all could be reduced with Hoosiers improving their dietary and exercise habits.”

Garden on the Go™ is an initiative of the Community Outreach and Engagement Department of IU Health. A food truck carrying a variety of fresh fruits and vegetables from local and regional sources stops and parks at various locations throughout Indianapolis to sell the produce. Often, these stops are near senior and public housing facilities. Cash, credit, and importantly—Food Stamps—are all acceptable forms of payment.

The program aims to counter the epidemic of diabetes and obesity by improving access to fresh fruits and vegetables in lower income neighborhoods in Indianapolis. The goal is to ensure that fresh produce is easily available to those who might not otherwise have access to food retailers selling affordable produce.

“As noted in the recently released ‘Indiana State Health Improvement Plan,’ Indiana’s health solutions will only be found with strong and vibrant partnerships with communities’ public, private and faith based institutions,” said Dr. Larkin. “Congratulations to IU Health and the ‘Garden on the Go™’ program.”

IU Health continues to be an active partner in the implementation of Indiana’s Comprehensive Nutrition and Physical Activity Plan, 2010-2020. The plan is designed to promote healthy eating and physical activity and decrease obesity in Indiana. The plan provides the framework for action needed across all sectors of Indiana to address poor nutrition, sedentary behaviors and obesity.

Garden on the Go™ makes scheduled stops in various sections of Indianapolis Wednesdays through Saturdays, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., but its schedule may vary during holidays or severe weather.

To learn more about Garden on the Go™, visit [www.iuhealth.org/gardenonthego](http://www.iuhealth.org/gardenonthego).

For more information about Indiana’s Comprehensive Nutrition and Physical Activity Plan, 2010-2020, visit [www.INHealthyWeight.org](http://www.INHealthyWeight.org).

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