

## News Release

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IU Kokomo nursing student Shelby Markins gives a flu shot at the annual Howard County Health Fair.

### **Nursing students volunteer at county health fair**

**KOKOMO, Ind.** — Indiana University Kokomo nursing students provide free preventative health care services, and gain practical job experience, as volunteers at the annual Howard County Health Fair.

Sixty-five students and seven faculty members gave flu shots, performed vision screenings, took blood pressure, and checked body mass index for hundreds of people attending the fair, at the Ivy Tech Event Center.

For sophomores like Katie Hislope, who performed blood pressure screenings, it was a first opportunity to check vitals on people other than classmates.

“This is my first hands-on experience as a nurse,” said Hislope, from Tipton. “It’s nice to use the skills I am learning in my nursing classes to help people. It’s completely different from practicing on another student.”

While the 49 sophomores performed basic health screenings, 16 seniors in the community health nursing class gave flu shots. They stayed busy most of the day, each giving dozens of vaccinations. Taylor Balog, Kokomo, was happy to participate, and to get a flu shot from one of his classmates, too.

“This is a great opportunity for us to help people avoid a preventable disease, get some practice as nurses, and be active in the community,” he said.

At the next table over, Shelby Markins donned purple gloves, opened an alcohol wipe and rubbed it on her patient’s arm. She gently pinched the skin on her upper arm together, and inserted the needle, performing the vaccination efficiently. She learned to give immunizations several semesters ago, but said it was good to have the chance to practice.

“I’m glad to see so many people come out to get immunized,” Markins, from Tipton, said. “It’s good to be able to do something to benefit others while we learn.” She said in addition to giving the shots, each nursing student had to review the patient questionnaire; to be sure the shot was appropriate for each person receiving it.

“I enjoyed getting to interact with real patients,” she said.

IU Kokomo has partnered with the Howard County Health Department to provide volunteers for the health fair for at least 15 years, according to Assistant Dean Bridget Whitmore, who serves on the planning committee.

“We are glad to provide these services to our community, while our students apply what they are learning in their classes to real life patients,” she said. The community health nursing students have learned about mass vaccinations, and how to help prevent influenza. At the health fair, they get hands-on experience providing immunizations, and see how to organize an event of this magnitude.”

Joyce Hollingsworth, who teaches the community nursing class, said her students were excited to participate in a health outreach project.

“We study how to make your community healthy, and how to teach people to be healthy, and this puts what we’ve learned into action,” she said. “I told them today is their chance to shine, and use the skills they’ve learned.”

*Indiana University Kokomo serves north central Indiana.*

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