

*On the afternoon of the day following Mary's death and Commissioner Whitson's observation remarks, a degree of information had been assembled to present this short obituary highlighting her career.*

The Indiana State Department of Health (ISDH) is saddened to announce the death of Mary Azbill. Mary passed away Wednesday, Feb. 10, 2010, at Clarian West Hospital in Avon. She had been hospitalized since Jan. 14. Mary was born in London, Ky. She graduated in 1965 from the University of Kentucky with a baccalaureate degree in bacteriology and medical technology. That same year she completed her internship at Lexington Clinic and passed the Medical Technology Board Certification of the College of American Pathologists.

From 1976 to 1984, Mary served as Director of the Hematology/Oncology Lab for the Indiana University School of Medicine Department of Oncology and Hematology. Mary joined the Indiana State Department of Health Division of Acute Care on Feb. 27, 1984, as a Medical Laboratory Surveyor where her first task was to reestablish the Clinical Lab Certification Program under the then Health Care Finance Administration (now Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services). Mary served as Program Director of the Clinical Laboratory Improvement Act (CLIA) program from 1985 to 1998. In September 1998, Mary was selected as the Director for the Division of Acute Care where she continued to serve.

Mary was a healthcare leader and recognized expert in acute care regulations. Her experience in Medical Technology was put to use throughout her career. When the federal CLIA was enacted, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services turned to Mary to oversee the development of clinical laboratory certification program and the writing of new regulations. Over the years, Mary was frequently consulted because of her expertise on federal health care regulations and survey procedures. At the state level, Mary was responsible for the development and implementation of many new state licensing programs to include ambulatory surgical centers, abortion clinics, birthing centers, and personal care service agencies.

In recognition of Mary's contributions, she was a recipient of two Indiana State Health Commissioner Awards. The first award was presented by Dr. Feldman recognizing Mary's work on the clinical laboratory certification program. The second award was presented by Dr. Monroe in 2008 recognizing Mary's efforts to assist state health care facilities maintain health care standards and access during two major floods that forced the evacuation and relocation of hospitals and home health agencies.

Mary was a dedicated public servant and took great pride in her work. Although she could have retired, Mary loved her work and wanted to continue her efforts to improve healthcare quality. Her energy and compassion was an inspiration to all of her staff. The ISDH will miss her leadership and friendship and we will forever be grateful for her contributions to healthcare.

In her spare time, Mary enjoyed sailing with her husband and had sailed much of the east coast and gulf. She enjoyed spending time with her grandchildren and took pride in being a caregiver for her mother. Mary is survived by her mother, husband, two children, and six grandchildren. The staff of the ISDH expresses our deepest condolences to Mary's family.

Services are scheduled for Monday, Feb. 15, at Ben Davis Christian Church in Indianapolis. There will be a visitation at the Church from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. with services to follow. The family has requested that memorial contributions be made to the Children's Ministry of Ben Davis Christian Church. Condolences may be sent to the family through the church address:

Ben Davis Christian Church 701 S. High School Road Indianapolis, Indiana 46241`