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INDIANAPOLIS— November is National COPD Awareness Month, and the Indiana State Department of Health (ISDH) is raising awareness of an often undiagnosed condition.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), nearly 37 percent of Hoosiers with asthma also have chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD). Nationally, only about 15 percent to 20 percent of patients have been diagnosed with asthma-COPD overlap syndrome (ACOS). This condition occurs when someone has symptoms found in both asthma and COPD and frequently remains undiagnosed.

“If you’ve been diagnosed with asthma or COPD, it’s important to talk to your healthcare provider about asthma-COPD overlap syndrome because ACOS can have more serious complications than asthma or COPD alone,” said State Health Commissioner Kris Box, MD, FACOG.

Asthma, which causes wheezing, breathlessness, chest tightness and coughing at night or early in the morning, is one of the most common long-term diseases in children, though more than 500,000 Indiana adults have asthma.

COPD, which includes emphysema and chronic bronchitis and is characterized by chronic coughing, excessive mucus production, shortness of breath, wheezing and chest tightness, was the third-leading cause of death in Indiana in 2016.

Distinguishing between the two diseases can be difficult, especially in smokers and older adults. However, proper diagnosis is critical because ACOS patients with asthma symptoms require different therapies than those with COPD symptoms.

All patients with chronic airflow limitation should get treatment for any other health issues they have. Quitting smoking, increasing physical activity and treating other diseases and conditions that impact health can lessen the severity of ACOS symptoms.

To learn more about asthma, visit <http://www.in.gov/isdh/24965.htm>. For more on COPD, see the CDC’s website at <https://www.cdc.gov/copd/index.html>.

Visit the Indiana State Department of Health at [www.StateHealth.in.gov](http://www.StateHealth.in.gov) for important health and safety information, or follow us on Twitter at @StateHealthIN and on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/isdh1](http://www.facebook.com/isdh1).