



# **Richie K. Grinnell**

## **Acting Nashville Area Director**

### **Indian Health Service**

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Richie K. Grinnell, a member of the Sac and Fox Tribe of Missouri, began his career with the Indian Health Service (IHS) in 1980, an agency within the Department of Health and Human Services. His first position with the Agency was at the Wewoka Indian Health Center in the Ada Service Unit, IHS Oklahoma Area, as a field sanitarian with the Environmental Health and Engineering Program.

Effective February 9, 2004, Mr. Grinnell was appointed as the Acting Area Director for the IHS Nashville Area. As Area Director, he administers a comprehensive health care program for American Indians living in 14 states in the southern and eastern United States. The Nashville Area health programs provide preventive, curative, and environmental health services to more than 50,000 American Indians. The Nashville Area consists of 27 federally recognized Tribes and urban groups. The largest IHS-owned facility in the Nashville Area is the Cherokee Hospital in Cherokee, North Carolina, which is now managed by the Eastern Band of Cherokees under a self-determination compact. Cherokee is also the site of Unity Regional Treatment Center, a residential substance abuse facility for adolescents that focuses on a 12-step program following traditional values. The Nashville Area is also in the process of establishing two new federally operated Service Units.

Mr. Grinnell oversees a unique Indian health system composed of Tribes that have assumed partial or full responsibility for their own health care programs through P.L. 93-638 tribal contracts and compacts. As part of a national Indian health system of federal, tribal, and urban Indian health programs, the Nashville Area also contributes to the support of two urban health programs located in New York, New York, and Jamaica Plains, Massachusetts.

Mr. Grinnell has served in numerous positions of responsibility and advocacy in the Indian health field. He served as a sanitarian at the Wewoka Service Unit, Southern Colorado Ute Service Unit, and the Santa Fe Service Unit. He worked in the Albuquerque Area Office as the Director, Division of Environmental Health; Associate Director, Office of Environmental Health and Engineering; Acting Area Executive Officer; and Acting Area Director. In 1999, Mr. Grinnell relocated to the Nashville Area as the Associate Director, Office of Environmental Health and Engineering. He has also served as Acting Nashville Area Executive Officer and Acting Area Director.

Mr. Grinnell is a Commissioned Officer in the U.S. Public Health Service and currently holds the rank of Captain. His service awards include the Outstanding Service Medal, Achievement Medal (awarded twice); PHS Citation, Commendation Medal (awarded twice); Unit Commendation (awarded twice); and Crisis Response Service Award.

In 1978 he earned a bachelor of science degree in environmental science from East Central State University, Ada, Oklahoma, and in 1990 he earned a master of public health degree in environmental health from the University of Hawaii, Honolulu, Hawaii.