



## Indian Health Service Vision

by

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The Vision of the Indian Health Service is one that reflects the commitment and dedication of our employees, our tribal and urban Indian partners, and the American Indian and Alaska Native people we serve: to raise the health status of Indian people to the highest level possible, while reinforcing the spirit and principles of self-determination. It is a strong vision that acknowledges and upholds the treaties, laws, court decisions, and legislative decisions of the U.S. Congress.

The vision of the Indian Health Service is one where healthy American Indian and Alaska Native communities are at the center of the circle of Indian health. The vision of the Indian Health Service is one that looks to a future of healthy Indian children and adults. To ensure this future, we must continue to listen to all those involved in Indian health when they tell us how to shape that future, as we make decisions today that will affect generations to come. We must be flexible enough to adjust program emphasis to meet the health needs of our communities. And we must always be grounded in traditional wisdom, while being open to new ideas; remembering the past as we prepare for the future.

The Indian Health Service recognizes the legal and moral responsibility of the Federal Government to provide high quality health care services to American Indian and Alaska Native people. We embrace the values and priorities that tribal, Indian Health Service, and urban health leaders have placed on ensuring that every available resource and opportunity to promote healthy Indian communities is pursued. Our Indian ancestors forged a government-to-government relationship with the United States that has endured and strengthened. The Indian Health Service will continue to honor their sacrifices by effectively advocating for tribal sovereignty and for the fulfillment of federal treaty obligations to provide health services to Indian people.

The government-to-government relationship between the Federal Government and Tribal Governments, with its pervasive policy of tribal involvement in Agency policy and priority setting, should continue to serve as a model of best business practices in that it fosters a customer-oriented, results-driven infrastructure that is responsive to the needs of the people we serve. The Indian health system has been considered as a model by other governments of the world as they design programs to meet the health needs of their indigenous populations. We have not only an obligation but a genuine commitment to continue serving Indian people as a model program for health services delivery, business practices, and government effectiveness.

The Indian Health Service will also continue its support of tribal choice regarding self-determination in the delivery of health services. The goal of providing quality health services is effectively achieved whether the services are provided by a tribally managed program, an urban Indian health clinic, or the Indian Health Service. Tribal and urban Indian participation in the decision-making process of the Indian Health Service is critical to ensure those who will be affected by operational decisions reached by the Agency are represented. Only through effective involvement will the Indian Health Service continue to be the best community-based primary rural and urban health system for American Indians and Alaska Natives.

It is sound business practices that make the Indian Health Service effective in our delivery of health services, and it is our core values of human dignity, honesty, compassion, and respect for cultural and individual diversity that make us strong. And the values that have come to be spoken of as "Indian values," those of listening, mutual respect, caring, and harmony, are what make the Indian Health Service unique. These values guide us and help us remain professional, positive, and respectful in all our actions.

It is the hard work, dedication, and collective effort of all Indian Health Service, tribal, and urban Indian health program employees, not any one individual, that is making a difference in the quality of life in Indian Country. Effective partnerships with tribal, urban Indian, and academic organizations and institutions as well as with federal, state, and local government programs and agencies will create opportunities to move the Agency forward in achieving its mission. Meeting the health needs of Indian communities requires effective partnerships and collaborations so that all components of a healthy community can be addressed. This includes not only providing access to health care services but also to educational, economic, and employment opportunities, within a framework that incorporates and strengthens the spiritual, cultural, and traditional values of the community.

Our actions must always reflect the honor of being entrusted to provide health services to American Indian and Alaska Native people.

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