



PAULA K. WILLIAMS, B.S.

Director

Office of Tribal Self Governance

Indian Health Service

Paula K. Williams, a member of the Sac and Fox Nation of Oklahoma, was named Director of the Office of Tribal Self-Governance, Indian Health Service (IHS), in April 1996. She joined the IHS from the Chickasaw Nation, Ada, Oklahoma, where she was the Director of the Office of Management and Budget and Self-Governance.

As Director of the Office of Tribal Self-Governance, Ms. Williams has primary responsibility for the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (Public Law 93-638) as it pertains to health related activities affecting the **Tribal Self-Governance Program**. This includes advocacy on behalf of American Indian tribes and tribal organizations on the development and implementation of federal self-governance policy. This office also has responsibility for advancing the positions and interests of self-governance tribes and providing policy analysis and development support to tribal governments and the IHS Director in the evolving area of self-governance and tribal/federal government relationships.

Before coming to the IHS, Ms. Williams supervised the negotiations with both the IHS and the Department of the Interior (DOI) on the first self-governance compacts and agreements with the Sac and Fox Nation of Oklahoma. She contributed extensively in tribal implementation of self-governance agreements as a lead negotiator of compacts with DOI, the Department of Health and Human Services, and the Department of Agriculture.

Ms. Williams earned a bachelor's degree from Wichita State University. She has been honored by the tribes she has represented at the local and national level.

The provision of health services to federally recognized Indians grew out of a special relationship between the federal government and Indian tribes. This government-to-government relationship is based on Article I, Section 8, of the United States Constitution, and has been given form and substance by numerous treaties, laws, Supreme Court decisions, and Executive Orders. The IHS, an agency of the U.S. Public Health Service within the Department of Health and Human Services, is the principal federal health care provider and health advocate for Indian people, and its goal is to raise their health status to the highest level possible. The IHS and tribal programs provide health services to approximately 1.5 million American Indians and Alaska Natives who belong to 556 federally recognized tribes in 35 states. There are currently 62 self-governance tribal compacts and 82 funding agreements representing 265 tribes, providing health services to over 55% of the American Indian and Alaska Native tribes.