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# Indian Health Service Press Release

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Increasing Access to Care – Groundbreaking Ceremony for New IHS Health Center for Navajo Nation**

Today the Red Mesa Steering Committee of the Navajo Nation held a ground breaking ceremony for the new Indian Health Service Four Corners Regional Health Center. The new center will be located in Red Mesa, Arizona.

"Increasing access to health care for all Americans is one of my highest priorities," said HHS Secretary Tommy G. Thompson. "The ground breaking for this new facility begins the process for providing 12,000 American Indian people with expanded health services within their community. Each new facility brings us all closer to eliminating the health disparity between Indian people and the rest of the nation."

The new 10,967 square meters health center will replace an existing 513 square meter IHS health station in Teec Nos Pos, Arizona, and a non-IHS health care facility in Montezuma Creek, Utah. The new health center will have a 24-hour emergency room and a 6-bed short stay nursing unit.

"This new health center will increase access to health services and it will decrease the time and distance it will take to receive those services," said Dr. Charles Grim, Interim Director of the IHS. "This center will be a focal point for the community to conduct health education programs and promote healthy choices and build their local capacity to respond to the health needs of the community. The Red Mesa Steering Committee has done a remarkable job."

The project will also include 93 housing units for employees of the new health center. The project is expected to be completed in 2006 and serve American Indian people residing in the Four Corners region of the states of Arizona, New Mexico, Utah, and Colorado.

"The new health center at Red Mesa will bring needed health care services to the local area," stated John Hubbard, Jr., Area Director of the Navajo Area IHS. "I am pleased with how much progress has been made to bring this project to reality. The Navajo Nation and the local communities will be very proud of the new facility."



NOTICE TO EDITORS: For additional information on this subject, please contact the IHS Public Affairs Office at 301-443-3593. Additional information about the IHS is available on the IHS website <http://www.ihs.gov> and <http://info.ihs.gov>

