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Indian Health Service Press Release

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Workgroup Issues 2002 IHS Strategic Plan: Improving the Health of American Indian and Alaska Native People Through Collaboration and Innovation

The Indian Health Service (IHS) has released its 10-year strategic plan to use appropriate strategies and activities to achieve the IHS mission.

The IHS addresses the health care needs of American Indian and Alaska Native people through the larger Indian health network, comprised of IHS, Tribes, tribal organizations, urban Indian programs and organizations, other Federal agencies, State agencies, city and country governments, colleges and universities, private organizations, and others who share a responsibility or interest in the health care of Indian people.

The IHS Strategic Plan defines the IHS role, responsibilities, and strategies within the network as well its role as a partner and collaborator in improving the health of American Indians and Alaska Natives.

Dr. Charles W. Grim, Interim IHS Director, stated, "There are opportunities within the Department, and outside as well, for coalitions and partnerships to accomplish the goals of the IHS Strategic Plan. Seeking out partnerships to increase resources will benefit our families, our communities, and the future of Indian Country."

Based upon the most recent health trend data, the disparity in health status between the American Indian and Alaska Native population and the general population is widening. This Plan was developed in response to this trend and the need to develop a more proactive and broad-based Indian health network. The Plan will also provide the IHS leadership a road map to measure improvements in the health and quality of life of the American Indian and Alaska Native people. The Strategic Plan is structured around 4 strategic goals:

Strategic Goal 1: Build Healthy Communities

Health care is partially determined at the community level; lifestyles established at that level profoundly influence health. Public health models can help empower communities to identify their own health problems as well as actively involve them in developing the solutions.

Strategic Goal 2: Achieve Parity in Access by 2010

Achieving parity in access to essential health care services requires a more focused advocacy effort coordinated across an expanded Indian health network. It also requires improving efficiencies, increasing collections, and tapping alternative revenue streams across IHS, tribal, and urban programs. It requires appropriate organizational capacity and expertise within the Indian health system.

Strategic Goal 3: Provide Compassionate, Quality Health Care

Providing quality, safe, effective, and acceptable comprehensive health care for American Indians and Alaska Natives remains a management priority. Comprehensive strategies that enhance cultural sensitivity within the provider system will be implemented. In addition, policies and information technology infrastructure that supports the distribution of evidence-based standards of care and health information to providers and consumers will be implemented.

Strategic Goal 4: Embrace Innovation

To achieve the previous three goals, the IHS will emphasize its proactive and entrepreneurial corporate culture, and expand the Indian health network. To achieve this goal, the IHS will encourage and support the development of new structures that can assist the Indian health network advocacy efforts.

A copy of the [Strategic Plan](#) and the [Executive Summary of the Strategic Plan](#) is available by clicking on the titles of those documents.



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