



Indian Health Service Press Release

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Department of Health and Human Services and Oklahoma Tribes Dedicate a Health Center for Pawnee, Oklahoma

The Indian Health Service (IHS), an agency in the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), and the Iowa, Kaw, Osage, Otoe-Missouria, Ponca, Sac and Fox, Tonkawa, and Pawnee Nations of Oklahoma dedicated a new \$19.3 million replacement facility in Pawnee, Oklahoma.

“This new center will provide long needed health care and services and will make a real difference in improving the health and well being of those living in this area of north-central Oklahoma,” stated HHS Secretary Tommy G. Thompson. “Its construction reflects the effective, government-to-government partnership between HHS and American Indians and Alaska Natives.”

The initial facility was constructed by the U.S. Public Health Service in 1929, and had a 55-bed capacity with a ward for tubercular patients. In 1981, the hospital closed its inpatient portion of the facility due to the failing structure. In 1995, the request for a new replacement facility was approved.

“This impressive accomplishment is a reflection of the spirit of cooperation, partnership, and mutual trust and respect that has been built between the IHS and American Indian and Alaska Native people,” said Dr. Charles W. Grim, IHS Director, in his remarks at the dedication ceremony on Saturday, March 24, 2004. “We have come to the point where we stand side-by-side, heart-to-heart, in advocating for our people, and in striving to eliminate the disparity in health status between American Indian and Alaska Native people and the rest of the U.S. population.”

The Pawnee Nation is the first tribe in the Oklahoma Area IHS to construct a government replacement facility under Public Law 93-638, the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act. This Act gives tribes the authority to contract or compact the direct operation of programs serving their tribal members and for construction management contracts. The new clinic is estimated to serve an Indian population of 14,500 living in the Pawnee Service Area counties located in north-central Oklahoma. It is projected that the new facility will provide 46,500 primary care patient visits per year. The health center will add 64 new staff to their current 44 employees. The clinic will provide outpatient services, such as, medical imaging, laboratory services, pharmacy, physical therapy, audiology, dental, optometry, behavioral health, public health nutrition, and health education.



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

