



Indian Health Service Press Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Indian Health Service Headquarters Begins Reorganization

Effective August 23, 2004, the Indian Health Service (IHS), an agency within the Department of Health and Human Services, will implement a Headquarters reorganization. The IHS is responsible for providing health services to federally recognized American Indian and Alaska Native tribal governments.

On July 12, 2004, after 2 years of planning and consultations with Indian Tribes, the IHS published a *Federal Register* notice describing a reorganized organizational structure. The new structure will reflect current and emerging priorities of the Agency, and will flatten the management structure by eliminating an entire layer.

“A 6-12 month transition period is underway. The transition is anticipated to be smooth, and provision of health care services to IHS patients and beneficiaries should not be disrupted,” stated Dr. Charles W. Grim, IHS Director. “Reorganization does not mean downsizing. Every employee has a place in the new organizational structure. A few positions may shift to a different unit and a few new critical positions may be added to the organization as suggested by tribal leaders during the 2-year planning and consultation effort. We look forward to the benefits that this new structure will bring.”

This reorganization transition will take place over several months before all benefits are fully realized. The reorganization will mainly affect IHS Headquarters administrative components and is intended to have a positive impact on IHS field operations and Tribal health care programs. Continuity of administrative support and leadership is expected while the innovations envisioned in the reorganization plan are introduced.

The goals of the reorganization are:

- Streamlining and reduction of management layers
- Enhanced collaboration with other Health and Human Services programs
- Alignment with and functional linkage to field based IHS Area Offices and programs
- A leadership structure better matched to emerging needs and trends
- Greater emphasis on ensuring access for American Indians and Alaska Natives to non-IHS sources of health care resources and services
- More focus on results rather than bureaucratic oversight
- Minimal changes in IHS Headquarters workforce levels--now half of mid-1990's levels
- Enhanced advocacy to close the health gap of American Indian and Alaska Native people compared to other Americans

Additional information about the IHS Headquarters reorganization can be found at <http://www.ihs.gov/NonMedicalPrograms/HRG/Index.asp>



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>

