



# Indian Health Service Press Release

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## Indian Health Service and Jicarilla Apache Nation Dedicate New Health Center



The Indian Health Service (IHS), an agency of the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), and the Jicarilla Apache Nation dedicated a new \$10.5 million replacement health care facility today in Dulce, New Mexico. The facility will serve approximately 4,000 American Indians living in the Jicarilla Service Unit area.

"This health center will increase access to health care services for Tribal members living in remote areas of northern New Mexico," HHS Secretary Tommy G. Thompson said. "This will help better address the healthcare needs and improve the health status of the area's Tribal population."

The IHS entered into a Joint Venture Construction Program (JVCP) Agreement with the Jicarilla Apache Nation for the construction of a 65,000-square-foot health center in August 2002. The Jicarilla Apache Nation is the first Tribe nationwide to construct a tribally-owned replacement of a federal health care facility under the JVCP with a formal Joint Venture Agreement. The agreement was entered into under provisions of the Indian Health Care Improvement Act that authorizes an innovative approach to providing health care facilities where a Tribe designs and constructs a tribally-owned health care facility based upon IHS standards. In return, the IHS provides the initial equipment for the health center, and leases the facility from the Tribe under a no-cost 20-year lease. During this period a request for funding for the staffing and operation is made in the same manner as for federally constructed health care facilities.

"This facility demonstrates the successful exercise of self-determination by the Jicarilla Apache Nation and their dedication to improving the quality of health care services provided to their members," stated Dr. Charles W. Grim, Director of IHS. "It also reflects the commitment of President George W. Bush, the HHS, and the IHS to the goal of eliminating health disparity rates for American Indians and Alaska Natives."

The new health center replaces the existing 6,500-square-foot facility that consisted of a health center and maintenance building built in 1963, and several temporary buildings. The Jicarilla Apache Nation named the new health center *NZH'QNA'CH'IDLE'EE*, which means, "A place to get well." It will provide space for comprehensive educational, preventive, curative, and rehabilitative health service programs and will incorporate all available high-tech distance medical services via computer access for this remote northern New Mexico community. It is projected that the new facility will provide over 15,000 primary care provider visits annually and will add approximately 40 new positions to their current staff of 50 employees. The hours of operations will also be expanded from 5 days a week to 7 days a week.



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

