



# Indian Health Service Press Release

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## Indian Health Service Provides Ambulances to Red Lake EMS

The Indian Health Service (IHS), an agency of the Department of Health and Human Services, has announced that two refurbished ambulances have been given to the Red Lake Band of Chippewa Indians of Minnesota.

“Having available ambulances with EMS personnel to provide prompt medical attention and assessment can often mean the difference between life and death for some individuals. Transportation needs are a critical component of health care for underserved tribal populations, especially those in remote and isolated areas,” said Charles W. Grim, D.D.S., M.H.S.A., Director of the IHS. “These two additional emergency vehicles will increase the capacity of the tribal emergency medical service for this community.”

“These ambulances will be a welcome boost to the Red Lake Tribe’s ability to respond to day-to-day emergencies. The Red Lake ambulance service had six ambulances in service at the time of the tragic high school incident on March 21. The ambulances ranged from two to seven years old. All six had accumulated over 100,000 miles and two were above 270,000 miles,” said Kathleen Annette, M.D., Director of the Bemidji Area IHS. “These ambulances will effectively augment access to health care services where transporting the sick and injured is critical to saving lives and preserving quality of life.”

The two ambulances, besides having fewer miles, are of a larger type than the six other ambulances presently in service. They have larger patient compartments that facilitate higher levels of patient care. With these ambulances and advanced training for the emergency medical technicians, Red Lake can now offer Advanced Life Support care.

These EMS vehicles are refurbished vehicles that were procured through the TRANSAM Project. Unlike other material provided through Project TRANSAM, these ambulances are not surplus from closed or decommissioned military hospitals. These ambulances were purchased by TRANSAM from a commercial vendor that refurbishes them to be mechanically sound and reliable to meet state certification requirements. They also ensure that all medical systems in the vehicle are in working order. A new ambulance would cost approximately \$80,000, compared to the cost of these refurbished vehicles at \$46,000 - \$51,000.

The Red Lake Ambulance Service is one of 80 tribal-operated ambulance services across the nation, and these ambulances will help address a critical need for emergency vehicles at the Red Lake community. The EMS vehicles bring the emergency room to the patient and life-saving procedures can be started. These ambulances will reduce the time between the adverse health event and the start of treatment.



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>

