



# Indian Health Service Press Release

IHS-12 -2005

May 13, 2005

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## Indian Health Service Opens New Health Care Center

The Indian Health Service (IHS), an agency of the Department of Health and Human Services, held a grand opening ceremony today for the new Idabel Indian Health Care Center in Idabel, Oklahoma. The new health care center will serve over 7,500 members of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma and other Tribal members living in McCurtain County.

“This \$15 million facility was constructed with Tribal funds under a Joint Venture Project between the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma and the Indian Health Service,” stated Dr. Charles W. Grim, IHS Director. “This is a mutually beneficial partnership for the Choctaw Nation, its Tribal members, and the federal government, and represents one of the successes of our ongoing efforts to partner directly with Tribal governments to provide the best possible health care services to American Indian and Alaska Native people.”

The IHS entered into a Joint Venture Construction Program Agreement with the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma for the construction of this facility under a provision of the Indian Health Care Improvement Act that authorizes an innovative approach to providing health care facilities in which 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.

The new center is a 2-story, 50,000 square-foot (4,500 square-meter), state-of-the-art health facility that will replace or supplement the existing health programs. This much needed facility will provide comprehensive ambulatory medical and dental services for the isolated communities of Idabel and Broken Bow, Oklahoma, including new mammography, physical therapy, and optometry services. The facility will also have a diabetes wellness center. Staffing increases will include two new physicians and a dentist.

Since the nearest alternative IHS medical facility available for McCurtain County residents is the Talihina Hospital, which requires more than an hour and a half driving time, this new facility will answer a great need for accessible, modern health care services for the Tribal members it will serve.

“This facility is a result of yet another successful partnership effort between the Indian Health Service and Tribal governments,” stated John Daugherty, Jr., Director of the IHS Oklahoma City Area. “The construction of the Idabel Health Care Center represents a new era of collaboration and partnership for the Oklahoma Area Indian Health Service.”



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>

