



# Indian Health Service Press Release

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## Indian Health Service Executive Inducted into Women's Hall of Fame

Dr. Kathleen Annette, Director of the Bemidji Area Indian Health Service (IHS), has been selected as an inductee into the Northwest Minnesota Women's Hall of Fame. The induction ceremony will take place on March 4, 2006, at Bemidji State University (BSU). This event kicks off National Women's History Month.

The Hall of Fame is a collaborative project sponsored by the Northwest Minnesota Women's Fund, a component of the Northwest Minnesota Foundation, and BSU. The Hall of Fame provides permanent recognition for women of northwestern Minnesota who have made significant contributions to art, athletics, business, government, philanthropy, humanities, science, or education.

Dr. Annette has been the IHS Bemidji Area Director since 1990. Dr. Annette manages a varied health care program. She works with 34 federally recognized Tribes and five Urban Indian programs that provide health care to over 95,000 beneficiaries in a five-state region. She is directly responsible for the federal oversight of these health programs and works in collaboration with tribes, local, state, and federal entities on public health, prevention, and intervention activities and initiatives. Within the greater Bemidji community she continues to be a strong advocate for public health initiatives and addressing health disparities for all citizens.

"Dr. Annette continues to provide exemplary leadership that has made improvements to the health care for American Indians and Alaska Natives," stated Dr. Charles Grim, IHS Director. "We are very proud of her achievements. This award acknowledges her professionalism, enthusiasm, commitment, and her outstanding work on behalf of American Indian and Alaska Native people."

Dr. Annette is a member of the White Earth Band of Chippewa Indians. She grew up on the Red Lake Indian Reservation and graduated from Red Lake High School. A graduate of the University of Minnesota,

Dr. Annette holds a bachelor of arts degree in chemistry and a doctor of medicine degree. She obtained her residency training at the Duluth Family Practice Center, receiving board certification in 1986 from the American Board of Family Medicine. She is the first female Ojibwe Indian physician in the state of Minnesota.

Dr. Annette is involved with the development and implementation of an annual Health Care Providers conference that focuses on health issues impacting American Indians. She also serves on a national strategic planning committee for the IHS, and is a frequent speaker on Indian health topics at medical schools and other institutions. Dr. Annette is a member of the

IHS Director's Executive Council (DEC), which is a decision-making body for the Agency on broad issues of policy, programs, and public health advocacy. The DEC is composed of senior leadership from Headquarters, Area Offices, and the four IHS National Professional Councils.

In 2005, she was bestowed honorary membership in the Red Lake Nation, an honor given three times in the past. She is the first woman to be so recognized. In FY 2000, Dr. Annette was selected as a recipient of the Presidential Rank Award. These prestigious awards are presented annually to top federal managers for extended, exceptional performance in the Federal government. Dr. Annette's other honors, awards, and recognitions include the U.S. Public Health Service Outstanding Service Award; the American Indian Service Awards; the IHS Group Award for the National IHS Quality Management Health Professionals Workgroup on Recruitment and Retention; the Mead Johnson Award from the American Academy of Family Physicians; the Association of American Indian Physicians Recognition Award for Endeavors in American Indian Education on AIDS; the Jake White Crow Award for outstanding lifetime achievements dedicated to health care advocacy for American Indians and Alaska Natives; and induction into the Academy of Science and Engineering at the University of Minnesota (she is the first woman to be so honored).

She has impacted Indian health locally through her work as a physician and has engaged in civic activities that develop American Indian leaders. She served for 12 years on the Blandin Foundation Board of Trustees and is an inspirational role model, committed to mentoring and encouraging Indian youth to complete their education and consider health careers. She currently is serving on the Boys and Girls Club Board of Directors in Bemidji as well as the Blue Cross Blue Shield Foundation board. She is a member of the Association of American Indian Physicians.

An original oil portrait of each honoree has been commissioned and will be unveiled at the induction ceremony. Following the event, the portraits and a record of each woman's contributions will be added to the Hall of Fame, which hangs on the fourth floor in the A.C. Clark Library at BSU. A traveling display is available, on loan, to interested groups throughout the region.