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The Office of Public Health Support brings you the third IHS CEO Brief in our email series designed to help you address the challenge of retaining our professional and clinical staff.

This case study shows how a health director can improve retention if she takes a genuine interest in her employees and helps them meet their career goals within the IHS mission. The case focuses on the best practices of career development, communication and government-to-government relations.

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CASE STUDY

Health Director

Location: Small Rural Ambulatory Facility

Background: The health director of a small rural Tribal facility knew that hiring and retaining a specialist needed to fill a vacancy might be complicated, because the facility was not located within one of the area's larger cities or near an academic center.

Challenge: The director found a new graduate who she believed would be a great candidate, so she made a point of building a relationship with the individual and securing her employment through Tribal hire. When the specialist expressed an interest in becoming part of the Commissioned Corps, the director realized she needed to help the specialist reach her goal to retain her.

Solution: The director used her experience and contacts in the Commissioned Corps to connect the specialist with individuals who could help her make the career status change. A year and a half later, the specialist reached her goal - and she has remained employed at the facility ever since.

Lessons Learned: The director knew that she was more likely to retain her staff members if she showed a genuine interest in their individual goals. Because she makes herself aware of what her employees aspire to in their careers, she is able to help them accomplish their goals and achieve personal satisfaction while also helping them understand how their career objectives contribute to the IHS mission.

BEST PRACTICES IN ACTION

You can empower your employees by giving them opportunities for career development - whether through the Commissioned Corps or through activities such as public speaking or connections with universities.

Understanding how the IHS system works and utilizing your resources can help you answer any workplace questions that arise, provided you always follow through with good communication.

When you're part of an intertribal agency within the IHS system, it is good practice to involve government-to-government entities in your decision-making. Doing so ensures that your relationships remain intact when changes are taking place.

WORDS TO LEAD BY

All I Really Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten by Robert Fulghum, Ballantine Books, 15 Revised edition (May 4, 2004).

We recognize that you may have successful retention strategies and your own best practices and we value your input. Send your stories or comments. Add a colleague to the mailing list or update us with changes in your email address. Email us at: [IHS CEO Brief](#).



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