



Swearing-In Ceremony for Dr. Yvette Roubideaux

June 29, 2009
Washington, D.C.

by

Dr. Yvette Roubideaux
Director
Indian Health Service

Good afternoon to all of you. Thank you, Secretary Sebelius and Mr. Kevin Gover, for your kind remarks. I also want to thank Mr. Gover and the museum for allowing us to hold this ceremony in this inspiring place. The National Museum of the American Indian provides a special home away from home for the many American Indians and Alaska Natives who visit here and who live in the DC area.

My official swearing-in occurred on May 12, 2009, in a private event with my mother holding a copy of our family bible and serving as the most important witness to the event. I would not be standing here without the support and encouragement of my parents. And while my mother is not able to be here today, I am grateful that she was present at the official swearing-in in May and we have that special memory to share.

I am grateful for the opportunity to serve as the ninth Director of the Indian Health Service and to become the first woman to serve as Director. Although I have been serving as Director since May 12, this ceremony and these beautiful surroundings will definitely give me additional strength and resolve in the months and years to come.

It is clear that we face enormous challenges as we consider how to change and improve the Indian Health Service and how to address the health issues of the population we serve. During my confirmation hearing before the U.S. Senate Committee on Indian Affairs, I laid out four key priorities for our work:

- 1) To renew and strengthen the partnership with Tribes and improve the tribal consultation process.

The text is the basis of Dr. Roubideaux's oral remarks at her swearing-in ceremony in Washington, D.C., on June 29, 2009.

- 2) To bring reform to the IHS in the context of national health reform.
- 3) To improve the quality and access to care for patients who are served by the IHS.
- 4) To have everything we do be as transparent, accountable, fair, and inclusive as possible.

I believe these priorities will help us address ongoing health disparities as well as emerging health issues among American Indians and Alaska Natives. We need to reform our system to meet current and future challenges of providing quality health care services. With the tremendous commitment of the IHS staff and a strong partnership with Tribes, I believe we can make significant progress in improving the health of tribal communities.

President Obama is committed to ensuring that our First Americans have access to quality healthcare. With the strong support of our Secretary of Health and Human Services, I am confident that we can make critical advances in the years ahead.

In this time of hope and change, I look forward to working with all of you to improve the health and wellness of our American Indian and Alaska Native population. Thank you so much for attending today. It means a great deal to me to have you all here to share this important event and I am honored by your attendance. Thank you.