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## Indian Health Service

November 10, 2003

National Health Information & Technology Week  
November 2 – 8, 2003

“Caring for Clinical Data”

by

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Last week, November 2 – 8, during National Health Information and Technology Week, the Indian Health Service conducted more than 230,000 medical, dental, inpatient, and outpatient health services. The team of approximately 500 health record practitioners of the IHS Health Records Program ensures that the services provided are documented.

This annual event is sponsored by the American Health Information Management Association (AHIMA) and recognizes the contribution of health information management and technology professionals who maintain and protect the health information of Americans nationwide.

Earlier this year, the Final Privacy Rule of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) went into effect. The IHS became HIPAA compliant on April 14, 2003, and health information management professionals were at the forefront of this achievement. Under this new federal regulation, patients now have the right to view, amend, and obtain copies of their health information. HIPAA underscores the importance of properly managed health information and the critical role that health record practitioners play in ensuring that accurate and complete health information is available to patients as well as their providers and other health professionals. In addition, information managers also contribute to maximizing reimbursement rates, remaining compliant with accreditation surveys and standards, protecting patient privacy, and providing information security. The IHS Health Record Program also provides patient scheduling services, data quality control, information in support of medical and legal consultations, and various health-related reports.

Our thanks go out to the more than 45,000 health information management professionals throughout the healthcare industry, and particularly to those who work daily to assist in improving the health of American Indians and Alaska Natives.