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Indian Health Service National Nurses Recognition Week

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“The Heart of Healthcare”

by

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Today begins a week to honor and thank the nurses of the nation for the work that they do in caring for us and our families.

Of the 2.2 million actively employed Registered Nurses in the U.S., over 5000 Registered Nurses, Advanced Practice Nurses, Licensed Practical Nurses, and Nursing Assistants provide care in our IHS, Tribal, and Urban health programs. At bedsides, in exam rooms, at offices, in nursing homes and schools, and in communities, nurses give to those who are in need, those who are in pain, and those who are nearing the end of their lives. Every day nurses save lives, heal the sick and injured, comfort families during times of loss, as well as work to prevent illness and protect the health of those who are in their care. Around the clock, throughout the year, nurses exemplify dedication and commitment.

The theme of this year’s recognition week is: “Nurses: Your Voice. Your Health. Your Life.” Nurses in many places and positions are advocating for healthcare for every individual, exploring ways to improve the health and wellbeing of the people they serve and with whom they work, and helping promote health and treat disease.

The National Nurses Week 2004 begins on May 6th and concludes May 12th, the birthday of Florence Nightingale. During this week, National Student Nurses Day is May 8th, and the National School Nurse Day is May 12th. Throughout the week I encourage the Indian Health Service to recognize and honor the nurses who serve our people. They are a critical component of our health team and make it possible for us to meet our goal of raising the health status of American Indian and Alaska Native people to the highest level.

We in Indian health are fortunate to have some of the best and brightest nurses who have touched our lives, the lives of our families, and the life of our communities with safe and compassionate care; sometimes under difficult conditions. To our 5,000 nurses – we thank you for your work, your dedication, and your excellence. You have comforted many with your kind hands and caring hearts.

Thank you.