



Lawton Indian Hospital Grand Opening

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Lawton, Oklahoma

Building a Healthy Future

by

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Good morning and greetings to all of you on this very exciting and happy occasion. One of the most rewarding parts of my job is to be present for nearly all of the dedications and opening ceremonies for new and renovated Indian Health Service and tribal health facilities. New hospitals and clinics help us in our quest to provide the very best health care for American Indian people. I firmly believe that each new facility moves us closer to our shared mission of raising the physical, mental, social, and spiritual health of American Indians and Alaska Natives to the highest level.

As the former director of the IHS Oklahoma Area Office, I know firsthand how badly needed the expansion and renovation of the Lawton Indian Hospital was for your community and the eight Tribes it serves. Today it is a great pleasure to open this beautiful new 36,000-square-foot expansion of the hospital that will speed and enhance your medical care in many ways.

Those of you who had to walk to outlying trailers for various services will find that all clinics are now located on the first floor of the Lawton Indian Hospital. The General Outpatient Medical Clinic, a new Pediatrics Clinic, Family Practice Clinic, Women's Clinic, Mental Health Clinic, Internal Medicine, and Surgery are all conveniently accessible on one level now, and there are plans that the Diabetes Program will soon be relocated to the new building in a final step of unification.

The text is the basis of Dr. Grim's oral remarks at the Grand Opening of the Lawton Indian Hospital in Lawton, Oklahoma, on January 17, 2007. It should be used with the understanding that some material may have been added or omitted during presentation.

A new, larger pharmacy will reduce waiting times and will enhance the new facility's impact on patient flow. We also hope the hospital's thoughtful design, symbolic use of colors, and exterior of native stone will be a comfort to those who are treated here.

Much creativity and strategy was used to fund and design your new hospital. Approximately 70 percent of the \$11 million overall cost was paid for through third-party collections. The building's new capacity includes 36 exam rooms and 6 treatment rooms. In this era of rising energy costs, we are grateful that the building conforms to leading energy and environmental design standards.

I would also like to mention that this new and expanded facility includes state-of-the-art information technology equipment for the IHS Electronic Health Records system. This system, which has won national awards and has even been adopted by NASA, ensures that your medical records can be accessed instantly by all your IHS health professionals to ensure the very best care.

Because of the overwhelming support and need for this project, there are literally too many people to thank today who were critical in getting this project funded, designed, built, and staffed. I would like to express our appreciation for the efforts of

- The Southwest Oklahoma Intertribal Health Board, especially Dr. Everett Rhoades and Mr. Howard Roach
- Former Congressman J.C. Watts,
- Former U.S. House Committee on Interior Appropriations staff member Loretta Beaumont,
- FLINTCO Construction and Dyron Murphy Architects, and
- Numerous people throughout the IHS Oklahoma Area Office and the Lawton Service Unit including:
 - John Daugherty,
 - CAPT Dale Keel,
 - Bobbie Gonzalez,
 - Mitch Baroff,
 - Sara Marcus,
 - Bryce Poolaw,
 - Hickory Starr,
 - CAPT Harry Taylor,
 - Kevin Meeks,
 - Frank Williams,
 - Marjorie Rogers,
 - Randy Grinnell, our retired deputy director, and
 - The late Marie Whiteman.

Today should be a special time of pride, reflection, and thanks for this beautiful new structure dedicated to maintaining and improving the health of members of this Area's eight Tribes.

Those of you who have advocated, planned, designed, built, and even prayed for this hospital can feel justifiably proud today of what you have accomplished for our Indian patients and for future generations.

I thank you for the opportunity to be here today with you to share in this historic occasion.

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