

Indian Health Service Overview:

Providing comprehensive health-care services to American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) people, the Indian Health Service (IHS) works with Tribes to develop and manage programs that meet their needs. Approximately 15,500 IHS employees provide care directly or through tribally contracted or tribally operated programs, in 33 hospitals, 59 health centers, and 50 health stations throughout the United States. Thirty-four Urban Indian health projects offer additional health care and referral services.

IHS Priorities:

1. To renew and strengthen our partnership with Tribes;
2. In the context of national health insurance reform, to bring reform to the IHS;
3. To improve the quality of and access to care;
4. To make all our work accountable, transparent, fair and inclusive.

IHS Behavioral Health Initiatives:

- The National Suicide Prevention Initiative produces policy recommendations and guidance for preventing, intervening in, and responding to suicides in Indian Country. The National Suicide Prevention Network (NSPN) provides culturally appropriate information about suicide prevention programs and training opportunities to AI/AN communities.
- The Methamphetamine and Suicide Prevention Initiative (MSPI) has resulted in more than 100 communities designing and operating suicide prevention programs. Created by Congress in 2008, the MSPI is a national demonstration pilot project to promote existing or innovative tribally designed and tribally operated methamphetamine and/or suicide prevention or treatment services. There are currently 127 MSPI pilot programs in 21 states and every IHS Area is working to develop best and promising practices to prevent suicide and methamphetamine use.
- The Child and Family Protection Programs provide direct services and collaborate with other Federal agencies to provide child/family protection services to AI/AN children and families. The Domestic Violence Prevention Initiative (DVPI) was created by Congress in 2009 and will fund programs that address domestic violence and sexual assault, including those that train clinicians in conducting sexual assault forensic examinations.
- The Resource and Patient Management System (RPMS) is a national health information system that effectively captures diagnostic, treatment, outcomes, and referral information regarding significant health issues. The RPMS is in more than 350 medical facilities and includes electronic medical records for behavioral health and substance abuse treatment programs. In addition to treatment records, the system records routine clinical intervention screenings for alcohol use in childbearing women, fetal alcohol effects, and depression and domestic violence. The aggregated national data from the combined data systems are used to assess and improve services across the IHS, Tribal, and urban Indian health systems.
- Integrating Behavioral Health Services with Primary Care will increase access to and quality of health care. The IHS is working with its Tribal partners to develop this team approach throughout our health-care system. The Alcohol Screening Brief intervention (ASBI) program, for example, integrates focused substance abuse interventions with emergency departments and primary care settings.