



**Indian Health Service
Tribal Self-Governance Conference
May 18-21, 2009**

Welcoming Remarks
Video Statement
by
Dr. Yvette Roubideaux
Director, Indian Health Service

Good morning! My name is Dr. Yvette Roubideaux, and I am honored to be the new Director of the Indian Health Service. I am a member of the Rosebud Sioux tribe and am also part Standing Rock Sioux. I am so sorry that I am unable to join you at this important meeting, but I wanted to make sure that I had an opportunity to talk with you today. I want you to know that I am very much looking forward to working with you in this exciting time of hope and change.

As you may know, I have been a strong supporter of the sovereign right of tribes to self-governance and self-determination and have participated in many tribal consultation sessions and tribal activities and initiatives over the years. I have heard many of you speak eloquently about the needs in your communities and your hopes and dreams for better health care for our people. And I understand the meaning and importance of the trust responsibility of the federal government to provide health care to American Indians and Alaska Natives. I am ready to work with you to do what we can to improve the health of our communities.

While I am transitioning to this new position and getting settled over the next few weeks, I will quickly begin working on my priority areas, which include beginning conversations about improving our partnership with tribes, bringing health reform to the Indian Health Service, improving quality of and access to care, and ensuring that everything we do is transparent, accountable, fair, and inclusive. I am anxious to hear from you about your ideas on what we are doing well and where we need to improve in each of these priority areas.

In the coming weeks, you will hear more about the process for my first task, which is to listen. I plan to consult with tribes about our priorities, as well as to listen and gather input from IHS, tribal, and urban Indian health program health care providers and staff. I encourage you to start

This text is the basis of Dr. Roubideaux's oral remarks at the Tribal Self-Governance Conference on May 18-21, 2009. It should be used with the understanding that some material may have been added or omitted during presentation.

thinking about ideas to improve our Indian health care system. I am looking forward to hearing from you about new and innovative ways we can accomplish our goals, and, with that in mind, I would ask you to “think outside of the box.” We need all of your good ideas.

I want to reassure you that, as we begin planning to make needed changes and improvements, I know that all of you work extremely hard to provide quality health care with very little resources, and that, in some facilities, the care our patients receive is far better than what other health care programs have to offer. I am confident there will be a number of lessons learned from your experiences that we can share with other programs in the system. Having said that, I hope this opportunity to look at what we are doing and find ways to improve will help increase both the confidence our patients have in us and the confidence of the Administration and Congress that any additional resources that come our way will be a good investment in improving the health of our communities. It is clear to me that, in order for us to gain the support we so very desperately need, we need to demonstrate a willingness to change and improve. The challenges we face are great, but I am confident we can find solutions together.

You will be hearing from me frequently over the coming weeks and months as we begin this important work. And I am looking forward to meeting you and listening to your ideas as part of that process. Thank you for all that you are doing to improve the health of our patients. Let’s see what more we can do in this exciting time.