



National Director's Awards Ceremony

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Welcoming Remarks

by

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Welcome to the Indian Health Service (IHS) National Director's Awards ceremony. I am Dr. Yvette Roubideaux, Acting Director of the Indian Health Service, and it is a real pleasure to have the opportunity to host our event in the beautiful National Museum of the American Indian here in the nation's capital. Thank you for joining us here today.

I would first like to thank everyone who helped make this event possible; the members of the IHS Awards Committee, Area Awards Coordinators, the Service Unit and Facility Coordinators, and everyone who took the time to nominate the awardees. I especially appreciate Carol Lincoln for her leadership role in the coordination of this event.

I also would like to thank the staff here at the National Museum of the American Indian for welcoming us to their beautiful building and for their generous support of the important work we do. I understand that we are live streaming the event today for the first time ever, so thank you to those joining us from afar.

And thank you to our awardees for joining us here today. And I want to especially thank you for your patience! These are the 2012 IHS National Director's Awards, so you're being recognized for contributions in calendar year 2012, which seems like a long time ago. We've had many things delay this ceremony, including a government shutdown, but we are finally here to celebrate your accomplishments! While we will be releasing the nomination forms for the 2013 awards soon, today we are here to celebrate your accomplishments.

We are here to honor those who have inspired us with their extraordinary contributions to our mission of raising the health status of American Indian and Alaska Native people to the highest level.

It truly is an honor and a pleasure to be able to acknowledge the contributions of so many individuals and groups today. I think one of the best parts of my job is having the opportunity to recognize and show appreciation for some of the many hard-working, creative, and skilled employees and partners of the Indian Health Service.

This year I received quite a few nominations and enjoyed reading all of the award justifications, even though it was very difficult to select from such a great group of nominees.

You should know that you survived a very competitive selection process. It is great to know that we have so many individuals and teams providing exceptional leadership, offering compassionate medical care, developing projects to improve program operations, and providing outstanding customer service.

Providing quality health care and good customer service is both an individual and a team effort. Our ability to work together helps us make the best use of our limited time and resources. It is even more critical as we move toward a more patient-centered approach to care.

Our agency also works in collaboration and coordination with many other partners to help us achieve our mission. So in addition to our regular awards, we have the IHS Director's Special Recognition Awards to help us recognize our colleagues and partners outside of IHS who have demonstrated extraordinary achievements in public health leadership, federal partnership, tribal leadership, and organizational leadership. I am very pleased to be able to acknowledge these partners for their contributions.

Every year we honor one individual with the Luana Reyes Leadership Award. This award is presented to a person whose professional or community involvement demonstrates the kind of leadership that Ms. Reyes exemplified. She was a leader among leaders and a lifelong advocate for improved health care opportunities for American Indians and Alaska Natives. Only individuals with exceptional initiative are considered for this prestigious award. We will present this award later in the program.

So, congratulations to all of the 2012 IHS National Director's awardees. We make these awards and hold this ceremony to help ensure that your hard work and exceptional service do not go unnoticed or unappreciated. I am grateful for all you do for the IHS each and every day. You have all done an outstanding job.

Thank you for helping us change and improve the Indian Health Service, and for ensuring that our patients get the health care that they need and deserve.