



## **Indian Health Service Meeting on American Indian/Alaska Native Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Health Issues**

On July 27, 2015, the Indian Health Service (IHS) held a public meeting to seek broad public input on efforts to advance and promote the health needs of the American Indian/ Alaska Native (AI/AN) Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) community. The meeting was held in Rockville, MD on July 27, 2015 from 9:00 a.m. EST to 4:30 p.m. EST.

The session included 28 participants representing their experiences from six IHS Areas. The Areas represented were California, Nashville, Navajo, Oklahoma City, Portland, and Phoenix. The participants were able to directly discuss their concerns with five senior IHS officials: Principal Deputy Director Mr. Robert G. McSwain, Chief Medical Officer Dr. Susan Karol, Director of the Office of Clinical and Preventive Services Dr. Alec Thundercloud, Director of the Division of Behavioral Health Dr. Beverly Cotton, and Senior Advisor Mr. Geoffrey Roth.

There were five major themes that arose from the discussions, including services and eligibility, clinical services, behavioral health, youth's needs, and organizational strategies.

- **Services and eligibility** concerns included: conception services eligibility, same-sex marriage and its impact on eligibility for services, and the ability for patients to self-identify as LGBT at IHS facilities.
- **Clinical services** concerns included: hormone therapy, Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) for HIV prevention, LGBT-inclusive care training for clinicians and all IHS staff, and implementing models of care that effectively address LGBT patient needs.
- **Behavioral health** concerns included: inclusion of traditional healers and parents in youth suicide prevention, trauma-informed care for LGBT persons, and outreach for persons facing homelessness or unstable housing.
- **Youth** concerns included: resources for young people who want to self-identify but face stigma and discrimination, wide availability of public service announcements that include LGBT voices/ faces, and year-round or routine ways to include youth voices in agency-wide planning.
- **Organizational strategies** concerns included: engaging Tribes in addressing LGBT persons' needs, and continued ways for LGBT people to share their experience and suggestions with the agency.