



**Remarks by RADM Chris Buchanan
Fort Yuma Dedication Ceremony
Wednesday, April 11, 2018, 10:00 am-noon| Winterhaven, California**

Remarks as prepared

Good morning. It is a pleasure to join you here at the dedication ceremony of the Yuma Health Center.

As you heard, I am Rear Admiral Chris Buchanan, the deputy director of the Indian Health Service. On behalf of our Acting Director, Rear Admiral Michael Weahkee, I'm honored to be here with all of you to celebrate this occasion.

What an exciting day! This project has been a long time coming. I'm so happy I can be here to join in your celebration.

Before I begin, I'd like recognize a few people.

- All tribal leaders and members in attendance especially the leaders and members here from the Cocopah and Quechan tribes. Chairwoman Cordova and President Escalanti, I know this is a special day for your tribal members.
- Thank you also to the tribal council members who are here today. We appreciate your support.
- Thank you to the IHS Service Unit leadership and staff for your ongoing dedication to our mission.
- Thank you to our IHS Phoenix Area Office Staff members and our Area Director, Rear Admiral Ty Reidhead.
- And finally, thank you to the IHS Office of Environmental Health and Engineering and Division of Engineering Services who administered the construction contract and designers and contractors for this project.

Today, we are pleased to announce that the Yuma Health Center that will serve American Indians residing in the Fort Yuma Service Area is now complete.

With greatly expanded space and staffing, this new health center will contribute to better health and wellness for the Cocopah and Quechan communities.

This new 76 thousand square foot state-of-the-art health center replaces the former Yuma Clinic which, at approximately one-third the size of the new facility, was not able to meet the needs of the entire service population. The buildings used at the current clinic are some of the oldest used by the IHS. The Administration building was built in the 1850s and the main clinic in the 1930s.

In addition to the wide range of services this health center will offer, I'm excited to say that the new facility will produce significant energy savings over conventionally constructed buildings.

This is mostly due to the solar power system and upgrades made to the cooling system. The solar power system will produce 50 percent of the energy for the building saving over \$65,000 annually.

We would not be standing here today at this ceremony if it were not for the dedication of so many people – many of you who are in the audience today. I commend you for your hard work and commitment to making this happen.

The Yuma Health Center demonstrates our commitment to our American Indian families. I am so proud of what we've all accomplished today in collaboration with all of you.

The mission of the Indian Health Service is one that I take seriously. Our mission is to raise the physical, mental, social, and spiritual health of American Indians and Alaska Natives to the highest level.

I believe this new facility will support and work to achieve this important mission.

The IHS looks forward to a continued partnership with the tribes as work to promote healthy lives for all your members. I can assure you that the IHS remains committed to creating a culture of quality, leadership and accountability. We are committed to working with tribes to provide the best care for patients.

We look forward to our continued work to ensure quality health care is delivered consistently across all facilities in the Indian health system. We are working to infuse quality into everything we do.

Through sustained effort over time working side-by-side with our tribal partners, like yourselves, we will be able to achieve real and sustainable change to transform health care for American Indians and Alaska Natives across the country.

On behalf of the Indian Health Service, I want to thank you, again, for inviting me to share in this special occasion. Congratulations!