



## **Indian Health Service Press Release**

**July 27, 2016**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **IHS Awards Contract for Hospital Surveys, Education and Training**

*Federal-government-operated hospitals in 8 states to benefit from accreditation services*

The Indian Health Service has awarded a one-year contract for \$700,000 to The Joint Commission for accreditation services for IHS federal-government-operated medical facilities and training and education services to strengthen quality and patient safety. Training and education will benefit IHS facilities in Arizona, Minnesota, Montana, Nebraska, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oklahoma and South Dakota.

Like other hospitals in the private and public sectors, IHS hospitals are “surveyed,” or inspected, by independent experts so IHS can identify and correct any issues before they affect patients. IHS hospitals will benefit from this new contract that will test their readiness for compliance surveys conducted by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), another part of the Department of Health and Human Services. CMS surveys assess hospital compliance in meeting Medicare program requirements.

“This new contract underscores the IHS commitment to enhancing patient safety and ensuring high quality care for our patients,” said Mary Smith, principal deputy director of the IHS. “IHS is working with our tribal partners and with independent hospital quality experts to ensure that uniform processes for identifying any potential issues are in place, consistent with best practices in hospital administration.”

This contract is part of ongoing IHS efforts for quality improvement in patient care in federally operated IHS hospitals. IHS is proactively ensuring that all federally operated IHS hospitals meet the standards required for CMS certification and are prepared for CMS surveys. IHS has previously announced that it is beginning a system-wide mock survey initiative at its hospitals to assess compliance with Medicare program requirements and readiness for re-accreditation.

With this contract, IHS is also responding to requirements of the Systems Improvement Agreements between IHS and CMS for Rosebud and Pine Ridge Hospitals in South Dakota. These hospitals are two of those covered by the contract announced today. IHS will provide training on the CMS Conditions of Participation for the Medicare and Medicaid programs and expand its capacity to support quality improvement work through this contract, as required by the agreements.

Sixteen IHS federal-government-operated hospitals are currently accredited by The Joint Commission.

The IHS, an agency in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, provides a comprehensive health service delivery system for approximately 2.2 million American Indians and Alaska Natives.

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