



Volume 1, Issue 5

The Office of Public Health Support is pleased to bring you the fifth IHS Executive Digest in our bi-weekly email series designed to help you address the challenge of retaining our professional and clinical staff.

This issue talks about how important good interactions are in the workplace. For instance, when issues arise and you must make a decision that others do not like, your delivery of the information can positively impact how your staff responds. This also holds true when you ask customers for their opinions and ensure that both your employees and patient population feel valued. Your communications will have a definite affect on your ability to retain them for the long term.

L E A D E R S H I P

Make the Right Decisions

Sometimes, you have to make difficult or unpopular choices that your staff doesn't fully understand. In these situations, keep in mind that your top priority as a leader in the health care community is the patient population IHS serves. Take the opportunity to emphasize your role as the patients' advocate by making decisions based on what is best for them. This will depersonalize the decision-making process and ensure that your staff does not interpret your actions in relation to themselves. It may not be agreeable to everyone, but they will be more likely to accept it.

C O M M U N I C A T I O N

Get Feedback and Use It

Customer satisfaction is imperative in the health care arena. An easy way to discover how your customers feel about the services you provide is to develop a customer satisfaction survey. Use a brief, simple form that offers room for open comments of up to 25 words; allowing too much writing space can lead to complaints that are more appropriately addressed in another forum. When you do receive feedback, be sure to personally respond to any pertinent comments and common complaints. Post your responses in the waiting room so patients can see that you've considered and handled their concerns.

R E C R U I T M E N T

Show Your Appreciation Before You Hire

A pre-hire orientation package is a great way to introduce all that IHS has to offer to new employees. It can contain a description of the Indian Health Service, as well as area housing - information you can get from your local chamber of commerce. Additional helpful information includes contacts for real estate agents, schools and local businesses. This welcome package could be the final selling point for a career with IHS, showing just how much the organization cares about who it brings on board, and helping them settle in.

GOVERNMENT TO GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

"Every Patient Is Chief"

When individuals are in need of health care, they want to experience the utmost concern of their caregiver during every patient visit. It's incumbent on you, therefore, to acquire and maintain a philosophy that every patient who enters your facility is the chief or tribal chair - and respond to them accordingly. Then, if there is a complaint from the person that they need a treatment that is not being supplied because of some limitation or issue, you must make a point of sitting down with the patient to explain the situation. Always treat them with the utmost respect and concern.

We recognize that you may have successful retention best practices and we value your input. Send your best practices, comments or add a colleague to the mailing list. Email us at: [IHS CEO Brief](#)

People  Smart
It's the People You Keep



The policy of the IHS is to provide preference to qualified American Indian/Alaska Native applicants and employees who are suitable for Federal employment in filling vacancies within the IHS. IHS Circular # 87-2, July 9, 1987. IHS is an equal opportunity employer.

Indian Health Service 801 Thompson Ave Rockville, MD 20852