



A Helping Hand

The IHS Office of Public Health Support brings you the third Retention Brief in our series designed to address the challenge of retaining health professionals and clinical staff.

In this issue, you'll learn how one Tribal health director improved retention by taking a genuine interest in the staff and helping them meet their career goals. The case focuses on the *best practices* of *career development* and *communication*.

Words to Lead By

*All I Really Need to Know
I Learned in Kindergarten*

Robert Fulghum. Ballantine Books, 2004.

Case Study

Health Director | Small Rural Ambulatory Facility

Background: The director of a small Tribal facility knew that hiring and retaining a medical specialist needed to fill a vacancy might be complicated due to the facility's remote, rural location.

Challenge: The director found a new health profession graduate who she believed would be a great candidate, so she made a point of building a relationship with the individual and securing her employment through direct Tribal hire. Later, when the specialist expressed an interest in joining the USPHS Commissioned Corps, the director realized that in order to retain the valued clinician, she would need to help her reach her goals.

Solution: The director encouraged the specialist to contact a USPHS recruiter to learn more about how to apply. Within less than two years, the specialist became a Commissioned Corp officer and has remained at the Tribal facility ever since.

Lessons Learned: The director realized that she was more likely to retain staff members if she showed a genuine interest in their individual goals. She eagerly sought to help the specialist, recognizing that her personal goal would benefit the Indian health program. In doing so, the director found both personal and professional satisfaction from helping others, retained a valued practitioner and enabled the specialist's career objectives to contribute to the overall benefit of Indian health.



Best Practices in Action

Understanding how the Indian health system works and using your resources to help guide your employees is key, provided you always follow through with good **communication**. By listening to employees, learning about their career goals and helping them to pursue

those goals will not only show your appreciation for their skills, but will also empower staff members to seek those objectives within the Indian health program, further benefitting the facility and patient community.