



Rear Adm. Kelly Battese, PharmD, MBA

Deputy Director for Field Operations

Southern Tier

Indian Health Service

An enrolled member of the Miami Tribe of Oklahoma, Rear Adm. Kelly Battese is the deputy director for field operations, Southern Tier, at the Indian Health Service (IHS). The IHS, an agency within the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), is the principal federal health care advocate and provider for American Indians and Alaska Natives.

Battese began his career as a clinical pharmacist in Lawrence, Kansas. Over the past two decades, his leadership and dedication have earned him several key positions within the IHS Oklahoma City Area, culminating in his role as chief executive officer of the Haskell Indian Health Center. He later served as director of the Division of Commissioned Personnel Support at IHS Headquarters. Battese is active in shaping the future of health care leadership, serves as a faculty member for the IHS Pharmacy Leadership Training Course, and is a member of the IHS Health IT Modernization Executive Committee. He previously served as vice chair of the National Council of Chief Executive Officers.

As pharmacy chief professional officer, Battese serves and leads the largest professional category of the U.S. Public Health Service (USPHS). In this role, he advises the Office of the Surgeon General and HHS on the recruitment, assignment, deployment, retention and career development of pharmacy officers. He currently serves as chair of the USPHS CPO Board.

In addition to his service in the IHS, Battese cultivated his leadership experience in public health emergency response. He served on the USPHS Rapid Deployment Force 4 for 14 years, ultimately serving as team commander. His extensive deployment experience includes supporting border missions, hurricane responses and Remote Area Medical missions. Among his many accolades, Battese received the Chief Executive Officer Award from the IHS Direct Service Tribes Advisory Committee, the IHS Director's Award, the Rear Adm. George Bruce Jr. Flag Officer Award, the 2025 University of Kansas Pharmacy Distinguished Service Award and the 2026 APhA Distinguished Federal Pharmacist Award.

Battese graduated from Tabor College with a Bachelor of Arts in Biology, a Doctor of Pharmacy degree from the University of Kansas and a Master of Business Administration in Healthcare from Southern Nazarene University.