



Mark Cruz

Director

Indian Health Service

Mark Cruz, a citizen of the Klamath Tribes, currently serves as the 12th director of the Indian Health Service (IHS), an agency within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). The IHS operates as the 18th largest health care system in the nation and serves as the principal federal health care advocate and provider of health care services for American Indians and Alaska Natives.

In his role as director, Cruz oversees a nationwide health care delivery program that is responsible for providing preventive, curative, and community health care to approximately 2.8 million American Indians and Alaska Natives in hospitals, clinics, and other settings throughout the United States. He assumed his role with IHS in August 2026 and also continues to serve as the senior advisor to HHS Secretary Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. on the department's Tribal programs.

Cruz has a well-established career in Indian Country, starting as a high school English teacher on the Rosebud Indian Reservation in South Dakota and holding several key positions in the State of Oregon and the U.S. House of Representatives. He worked extensively on Tribal policy issues as chief of staff to U.S. Rep. Todd Rokita and legislative fellow in the office of U.S. Rep. Tom Cole. During the first Trump Administration, Cruz served as deputy assistant secretary—Indian Affairs for Policy and Economic Development at the U.S. Department of the Interior.

Cruz holds a Bachelor of Arts in political science from Pepperdine University and earned a master's degree in urban education policy from Brown University.