

NARRATIVE

CAPT Chris Kates is nominated for the Gary J. Gefroh Safety and Health Award for his significant contributions resulting in improved healthcare safety and infection control conditions for the Indian Health Service (IHS) Oklahoma City Area (OCA).

CAPT Kates has served as the IHS OCA Institutional Environmental Health Officer since January of 2015. His duties include providing comprehensive environmental health and institutional environmental health services to 31 direct service tribes and 4 urban Indian Health Centers. In addition to his regularly assigned duties, he serves as the IHS OCA Emergency Management point-of-contact, OCA Mock Healthcare Accreditation Survey Team member, and the IHS OCA Safety Officer.

Outcomes from his contributions and initiatives include:

- Coordinated the development of an OCA wide radiation dosimetry passive monitoring program. This program included 7 federal and 13 tribal health facilities, which provide passive dosimetry monitoring services to over 400 employees. Previously, the administration of this program was a headquarters function. CAPT Kates provided technical assistance to each site to determine the exact number of dosimeters needed, to decrease cost and ensure all employees who were required to be monitored received a dosimeter.
- Coordinated the purchase of additional radiographic monitoring equipment, to evaluate dental panoramic radiographic units. Currently, there are 23 panoramic units located within 7 IHS and 15 tribal health facilities being evaluated. CAPT Kates received advanced training from a certified health physicist to assist in evaluating these units, which results in a total savings of at least \$10,000 annually to the OCA dental program.
- Instrumental in revising the IHS OCA emergency preparedness codes to address active shooter. CAPT Kates coordinated with the Federal Protective Service, which made on-site training available to all IHS OCA employees increasing the emergency preparedness and reducing safety risk.
- Coordinated with IHS headquarters to allow the IHS OCA to become the alternate site for IHS headquarters operations during a disaster increasing the emergency preparedness of the IHS at the National Level.
- Collaborated with the National Weather Service to allow the IHS OCA in becoming a participating partner, which provides real-time weather monitoring updates for all IHS OCA facilities in times of severe weather increasing the emergency preparedness of the OCA facilities and reducing safety risk patients, staff and visitors.
- Partnered with the Oklahoma State Department of Health, which resulted in providing a reserved section for the IHS OCA at the state's Emergency Operations Center during emergencies that potentially affect tribes within the state.

- Created a Tribal Emergency Point-of-Contact list for every tribe within the IHS OCA. This list is used to quickly communicate and gain status updates from tribes during severe weather or other emergencies.
- Assisted in creating a new dental sterilization training session, designed to provide hands-on training to IHS, Tribal and Urban dental support staff in proper sterilization techniques. The initial training event was attended by 38 staff members from 13 facilities throughout IHS OCA resulting in a reduction of infection control hazards.

CAPT Kates work in the area of institutional environmental health has been significant in addressing DEHS program goals and objectives. He has consistently demonstrated a high degree of leadership in the comprehensive environmental health services he provides to the Tribes within the OCA IHS.

Therefore, CAPT Kates is nominated for the Gary J. Gefroh Safety and Health Award significant contributions resulting in improved healthcare safety and infection control conditions for the Indian Health Service (IHS) Oklahoma City Area (OCA).