

**INDIAN HEALTH SERVICE
2015 ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SPECIALIST OF THE YEAR
LCDR SARAH SNYDER**



Introduction

LCDR Sarah Snyder is proudly nominated by the California Area (CA) Division of Environmental Health Services (DEHS) for the IHS Environmental Health Specialist of the Year. In 2015, she has demonstrated outstanding leadership, professionalism, dedication, superior technical expertise and innovation while serving as the Sacramento District Environmental Health Officer (EHO), acting DEHS Director, CA Injury Prevention (IP) Specialist and the Emergency Management Coordinator for the CA DEHS program which serves approximately 104 federally recognized American Indian tribes with a service population of 86,959 persons.

Special Accomplishments

In addition to her significant responsibilities in 2015 as the Sacramento District EHO, CA IP Specialist, Acting DEHS Director, and serving as the Project Officer for 2 IHS Tribal IP Cooperative Agreement Program sites, LCDR Snyder demonstrated initiative, dedication, creativity and collaborative leadership when she accepted being the project lead for a CA DEHS initiative to implement the FDA Voluntary National Retail Food Regulatory Program Standards in 2015. In collaboration with CA DEHS staff, she completed a program audit and identified key areas where opportunities for the greatest impact on improving retail food safety resided in the CA DEHS food safety program. One significant outcome of this process was a project co-created by LCDR Snyder which involved a systematic risk assessment of all tribal retail food venues for risk factors associated with Vibriosis. Vibriosis is an increasing food safety issue for pacific coast states due to a recent trend of unusually warm coastal water conditions. Furthermore, the reduction of Vibriosis infections is one of the DHHS “Healthy People 2020” food safety objectives. As a result of this project, 21 high risk retail food establishments were identified in California. These facilities were subsequently targeted by CA DEHS staff for the implementation of proven intervention strategies such as the training of tribal food managers on the use of the “interstate Shellfish Shippers List”.

In early 2015, LCDR Snyder completed an intensive 12 month FDA standardization process which is intended to strengthen competencies in retail food auditing and reporting. As 1 of 4 FDA-Certified Standardization Officers in the IHS, LCDR Snyder again demonstrated her leadership and dedication by volunteering to be the lead for the FDA standardization of all CA DEHS personnel. In this capacity, LCDR Snyder audited the performance of risk based surveys by two candidates in CA DEHS and provided direct mentoring and hands on training as necessary to improve staff risk assessment skills and knowledge of the 2013 FDA Food Code.

As the CA DEHS representative to the Tribal Child Care Association of California (TCCAC) in 2015, LCDR Snyder performed a detailed analysis of the health and safety elements included in TCCAC’s ‘Tribal Child Care Standards for Sovereign Nations’. These standards are designed to be a model which CCDF funded tribal child care programs in California may voluntarily adopt. With the 2014 reauthorization of the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) Act, the TCCAC standards also represent the first tribal standard in the nation that is specifically designed to meet the new health and safety requirements included this Act’s reauthorization. LCDR Snyder completed a detailed comparison of the TCCAC draft standards against

existing references such as the IHS Model Head Start Code and Caring for our Children to identify gaps and inconsistencies. Her recommended revisions were incorporated into the final draft of TCCAC model standard. In January, 2016, the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) Office of Child Care (OCC) sought out the TCCAC standards and formally requested the use of this document as a template for the development of a national model tribal child care standard. LCDR Snyder, demonstrating her dedication and professionalism, volunteered to serve as the IHS DEHS representative on the national ACF OCC team who will be developing a national model tribal child care standard in 2016.

Professionalism

LCDR Snyder received her BS Degree in Environmental Health in 2004 from Old Dominion University. She is currently in her first year of the MPH program at George Washington University. She earned her REHS/RS from the National Environmental Health Association in 2005. She is a certified child passenger safety technician and a 2009 graduate of the IHS IP Specialist Fellowship. She is a ServSafe Certified Food Safety Instructor/Proctor and the only IHS EHO who is a Certified Lead Inspector/Risk Assessor in EPA Region 9.

After two initial assignments with the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality, LCDR Snyder began her career with IHS in 2007 as an Environmental Health Officer stationed in Parker, AZ. In her relatively short time as an IHS Commissioned Corps Officer, LCDR Snyder has quickly become recognized as a leader and subject matter expert by her peers and serves on the WebEHRS e-survey national IHS workgroup and the IHS IPP Academic Review Committee. She also contributed to the Centers for Disease Control Model Aquatic Health Code, first published in 2014.

Innovation

LCDR Snyder has managed to excel while managing a much larger than usual workload typical of an IHS District Environmental Health Officer. In 2015, LCDR Snyder successfully balanced her routine assignments along with serving as the acting DEHS Director and the California Area Injury Prevention Specialist. She consistently utilizes the public health approach and ten essential services to inform and prioritize her day to day activities to ensure that services delivered are targeted to satisfy core program elements and address known and emerging environmental health risks. For example, LCDR Snyder's injury surveillance efforts for the California Area led to the identification of low seatbelt usage amongst teens in tribal communities as a key target area for the CA Injury Prevention Program. In response, she sought out new methods and resources to assist tribes contenting with this issue. As a result, the Arizona Battle of the Belt program was tapped as a resource to use as intervention strategy for the 2016-2020 GPRA indicator for injury prevention in the California Area. In addition, LCDR Snyder designed a survey for use at the annual Health Program Leaders meeting which served to market services available through the CA DEHS program and create a baseline inventory of the occupational health risk factors in CA typical of tribal health care facilities (e.g. nitrous oxide, x-ray radiation). Such facilities were subsequently targeted for regular survey assessments of these risk factors.

Summary

LCDR Snyder exemplifies the highest qualities of leadership and commitment to the mission of the Indian Health Service. She has become a cornerstone of the CA DEHS program and a role model among staff/peers. Her extraordinary knowledge, expertise, creativity, and dedication have contributed to elevating the health status of Indian people. Foremost, her contributions to the CA DEHS program have had a major positive impact on the lives, health, and well-being of thousands of Indian people throughout California. It is without reservation that LCDR Sarah Snyder is proudly nominated for the IHS Environmental Health Specialist of 2015.