



Environmental Health Services

● *Healthy Environments = Healthy People* ●

DEHS Directors' Meeting: 05 February 2026

[Meeting recording available](#)

Next conference call 06 August 2026 1:00-2:30PM ET

<u>Area</u>	<u>Representative</u>	<u>Area</u>	<u>Representative</u>
Alaska:	<i>Not on call</i>	Nashville:	Mike Hiles
Albuquerque:	Kimberly Smith	Navajo:	Helena Shannon
Bemidji:	Tim Duffy	Oklahoma:	Danny Walters
Billings:	Darcy Merchant	Phoenix:	Dave Cramer
California:	Carolyn Garcia	Portland:	Chris Fish
Great Plains:	<i>Not on call</i>	Tucson:	Valeria Wyatt

Environmental Health Support Center: Jeff Dickson

DEHS HQ: Matt Albright; Sam Frank; Brian Hroch; Molly Madson; Stephen Piontkowski; Andrea Tsatoke

1. Welcome and Update (Matt Albright)

- a. IHS Organizational Realignment
 - i. No updates
 - ii. Keep eye out for agency communications (e.g. emails, town halls)
- b. Billet Revisions
 - i. No update from DCPS since fall 2025
 - ii. Led by DCPS for all categories in agency
 - iii. DEHS HQ proposed revised billets in unified approach w OEHE ENGs (e.g. same cascading language from HQ to SU)
 - iv. Streamlines number of billets to enable all positions to fit under one of the revised billets & comports with ENG/OEHE unified approach
- c. Force Management
 - i. Led by DCPS
 - ii. When USPHS applicants boarded but need to secure position, IHS & BOP can place them into a vacancy
 - iii. DEHS tried to place one in October 2025, but candidate not interested in available locations
 - iv. DEHS needs to adopt a streamlined approach on how to track vacancies to allow more efficient placement of candidates
 - v. Currently 290 candidates & 136 have 1662 (unsure how many are EHOs)
- d. CC Officer positions only
 - i. Led by DCPS
 - ii. Pilot of process ongoing
 - iii. Guidance to be shared when pilot complete
 - iv. Possible to advertise vacancies for COs only
 - v. Consider being placed on [Commissioned Corps Officers-Vacancy Announcements listserv](#)
 - vi. Phoenix Area trying this approach for one EH vacancy

- e. Area Reviews
 - i. Conducting Nashville Area's this winter
 - In-person site-visit 10-11 February 2026
 - ii. Will present revitalized Area Review approach at our DEHS Annual Meeting in May 2026
 - iii. Please complete [DEHS Area Review Process Naming Survey](#)
- f. Environmental Health Specialist of the Year Award – 2025
 - Congratulations Cori Crocker, Phoenix Area**
 - i. California Area Nominee: William Troy Barker
 - ii. Great Plains Area Nominee: Orlana Schmidt

2. Area Highlights

- a. Alaska – *Not on call*
- b. Albuquerque
 - i. Conducted screwworm & plague training with State of New Mexico
 - LCDR Michell Kerns working on screwworm within IHS
 - ii. Staffing
 - Completed PMAPs
 - Focus on WebEHRS data quality improvement
- c. Bemidji
 - i. Bemidji Area DEHS Annual Report 2025
 - 38% vacancy rate
 - Back to basics with a focus on conducting surveys given the available staff
 - ii. Area Workshop
 - No OEHE workshop in 2026
 - Will conduct DEHS workshop in April w focus on Healthcare Accreditation course from EHSC
 - iii. IP & Sustainability Special Project Funding
 - NTE \$15K per project
 - Request for Proposals due 28 February 2026
- d. Billings
 - i. IEH
 - IHS National Council of Healthcare Safety of Engineering Professionals
 - Conducting I-STAR User Acceptance Testing
 - ii. IP
 - TIPCAP Part 1: 2 sites funded
 - Hosting elder fall prevention *bingocize* training (Epi Info, project management)
 - Reservation-wide traffic law survey to be sent out to the general public

- e. California
 - i. Staffing
 - 33% vacancy rate
 - Working w DCPS to fill Area IEHO/Deputy position & field EH position
 - Troy Barker applying to USPHS
 - ii. Area Performance Measures 2025
 - Priority 1 establishments: goal 80%, actual 73%
 - Priority 2 establishments: met survey target
 - 42% increase of trainings conducted (high total number recorded)
 - Standard 9: goal not realistic but will continue to pursue
 - Establishment w CFPM = 87% (increase over past several years)
 - iii. OEHE Area Workshop
 - June 2026
 - EHSC provide Healthy Homes training
 - iv. IP Special Projects
 - \$73K over 12 sites (~ \$6K per site)
 - Increase of \$1300 per site
- f. Great Plains – *Not on call*
- g. Nashville
 - i. Staffing
 - CAPT Woodlee retirement TDY to IHS DAES
 - LCDR Mike Hiles, Acting Director, DEHS, Nashville Area
 - CAPT Woodlee retirement
 - End of May 2026
 - Terminal leave prior to that
 - Trying to backfill position to allow overlap
 - Focusing on DEHS work
 - Making process to support 3rd EH position
 - ii. IEH
 - Providing TA to several facilities whose HVACs were impacted by Winter Storm Fern
 - Supported successful reaccreditation of a Service Unit in Massachusetts
 - iii. Nashville Area DEHS Program Review
 - Conducting w DEHS HQ this winter
 - In-person site-visit 10-11 February 2026

- h. Navajo
 - i. Staffing
 - Vacancy announcements forthcoming
 - Area DEHS Director
 - Area DEHS Deputy Director
 - ii. IP
 - CDR Shannon attended IP Course 1 this week
 - TIPCAP: 2 sites funded
- i. Oklahoma City
 - i. Will conduct CFPM training this winter
 - ii. Staff doing great job providing services where there are vacancies
 - iii. Infectious Disease & Sampling course along side county health department this month
 - iv. Reaccreditation support ongoing
 - v. Area OEHE succession planning occurring
 - OEHE Director retiring August 2026
 - Six leadership positions anticipated to become vacant
 - vi. Area DEHS Workshop
 - April 2026
 - Planning ongoing
 - vii. TIPCAP: 1 site funded
- j. Phoenix
 - i. New Phoenix Area Director – Dixie Gaikowski
 - ii. Staffing
 - Special Duty Pay for USPHS: was lowered for 2026 & communicated with staff
 - Trying to utilize CC Officer position only approach to backfill GS 13 O6 DEHO in Show Low, AZ vacancy
 - 2 applicants
 - Selection made
 - It was a good process & recommended
 - iii. EH
 - USPHS Veterinarian to work a rabies vaccination clinic this summer
 - iv. IP
 - Phoenix & Navajo Areas partnering to improve data from Arizona Department of Health Services
 - Staff helped EHSC conduct Injury Prevention Course 1 and Playground Safety training this week
 - Collaborating w Governor's Office of Highway Safety & Safe Kids to establish CPS program in Hualapai

- v. IEH
 - CDR Hansen completed lead-based paint inspector training
 - Novel consult to a household w a human leg found in a freezer
 - No foul play; interesting scenario
 - Worked w tribe to facilitate culturally appropriate burial
- k. Portland
 - i. Governing Board
 - Creating standardized safety report across Service Units
 - ii. EH
 - Flooding in March 2025 caused re-connection with FEMA tribal liaison, strengthening partnerships
 - LCDR (ret.) Blackshear co-conducting EHSC Healthy Homes course in February 2026
 - iii. IP
 - TIPCAP: 1 site funded
 - iv. IEH
 - Hosted EHSC's Fundamentals of Safety course in October 2025
- l. Tucson
 - i. Developing Tucson Area DEHS Annual Report
 - ii. EH
 - Conducting casino & commissary plan reviews
 - Supporting the opening of early childhood learning centers
 - iii. Supporting Pascua Yaqui who is partnering with Country on a "schools to cools" grant
- m. EHSC
 - i. Thanks to Phoenix Area for hosting three course in one week
 - ii. Healthy Homes Assessment Principles
 - Scheduling additional courses
 - Need instructors if anyone interested
 - iii. Competency Model
 - Available to DEHS in May 2026
 - Working finalize
 - Significant delays with IT
 - iv. District EH Office Hour
 - Monthly
 - Encourage your District EHOs to attend
 - v. CDR Sarah Snyder is onboard as the IVP Consultant
 - vi. Training/Travel Approval
 - Trying to get courses advertised 4+ months in advance to accommodate SF182 & travel approval process
 - EHSC drafting unified travel justification for all course participants proves helpful

3. HQ Announcements

- a. Injury prevention (Molly Madson)
 - i. Fellowship [2025-2026 cohort]
 - Symposium: 16-17 June 2026
 - Rockville, MD
 - Please ensure fellowship mentors are fulfilling their obligations
 - ii. IPS Specialist/PO Meeting
 - 18 June 2026
 - Rockville, MD
 - iii. National Conference on AI/AN Injury and Violence Prevention
 - 15-17 July 2026
 - Green Bay, WI
 - iv. [2025 Rick Smith Injury Prevention Award](#)
 - Nominations due to [CDR Molly Madson](#) by 06 February 2026
 - v. TIPCAP (Andrea Tsatoke)
 - Workshop
 - 16-17 June 2026
 - Rockville, MD
 - 2026-2030 cycle
 - 70 applications received
 - 25 Notice of Awards
 - 15 Part I's and 10 Part II's
 - Increase in funding
 - Executive Summary in Grant Solutions
 - PO assignments & PO meeting
 - TIPCAP Kick-off meeting
 - Evaluation Advisory Contract Update

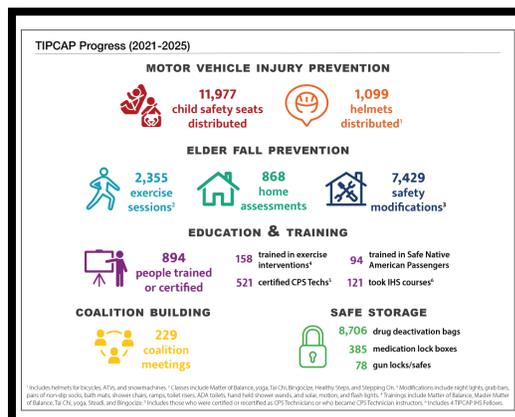
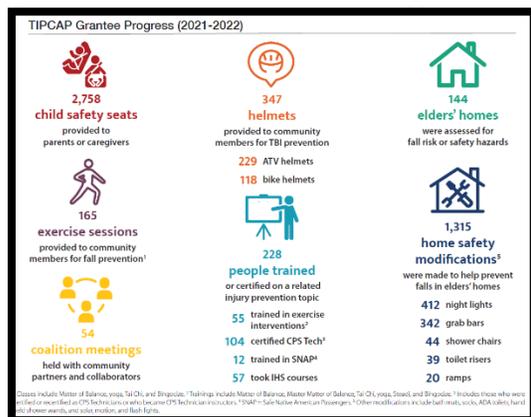
2026-2030 TIPCAP sites		
IHS Area	Site	Part
Alaska	Norton Sound	Part 1
	Dena Nena Henash dba Tanana Chiefs Conference	Part 1
	Southcentral Foundation	Part 1
	Aleut Community of St. Paul	Part 2
	Bristol Bay Area Health Corporation	Part 2
Bemidji	Lac du Flambeau Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Indians	Part 1
	Ho-Chunk Nation	Part 1
	Match-e-be-nash-she-wish Band of Pottawatomis Indians	Part 2
	Stockbridge-Munsee Community	Part 2
	Hannahville Indian Community	Part 2
Billings	Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes	Part 1
	Rocky Boy Health Center	Part 1
California	Tuolumne Me-Wuk Indian Health Center, Inc.	Part 2
	Sacramento Native American Health Center	Part 2
	California Rural Indian Health Board	Part 1
Great Plains	Winnebago Comprehensive Healthcare System	Part 1
Nashville	Narragansett Indian Tribe	Part 2
Navajo	Fort Defiance Indian Hospital Board, Inc	Part 1
	Tuba City Regional Health Care Corporation	Part 1
Oklahoma	Indian Health Care Resource Center of Tulsa	Part 2
Phoenix	Fallon Paiute-Shoshone Tribe	Part 1
	Salt River Pima Maricopa Indian Community	Part 1
	Reno-Sparks Indian Colony	Part 1
	Native Health, Inc.	Part 2
Portland	Northwest Portland Area Indian Health Board	Part 1



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- 2021-2025 funding cycle
 - TIPCAP team received IHS Director's Award 2024
 - Closeout reports due 01 March 2026 or after NCE
 - See posters below for illustration of TIPCAP grantee progress



b. Institutional EH (Brian Hroch)

i. Annual meeting

- 05-08 August 2026, Minneapolis, MN
- Follows American Society for Health Care Engineering conference

ii. IEH Workforce Development

- USUHS IEH Residency
 - 2026 Academic Year
 - Application window closed 17 November 2025
 - No selections
- Filed-based Residency
 - 2026 Academic Year
 - Application window closed 02 February 2026
 - Reviewing applicants

iii. Professional development

- SOFR Office Hours held monthly
- Fundamentals of Hospital and Ambulatory Safety Management
- Accreditation 360 in development
 - February 2026: Parker & Gallup
 - March 2026: Billings
 - May 2026: Oklahoma City
- Competency development for SOFRs & IEHOs
 - Conner, Cook, Hiles

iv. IH Protocols

- Calvert, Collins, Cook, Kates, Murga, Strauss, Hroch
- In progress
 - Nitrous oxide (near completion & distribution)

- v. Safety management
 - Safe Patient Handling & Mobility (complete)
 - Hansen, Hiles, Hroch
 - HFAC/OEHE A/E Design Guide updated
- vi. Staffing management
 - IEH position templates, including PDs, other HR documents
 - Hroch, Lewelling, Murga, Peaches, Williams, need a lead
 - SOFR position templates, including PDs, other HR documents
 - Hansen, Hroch, Lewelling, Murga, Peaches, Williams, need a lead
- i. EC/LS Dashboard Development & Pilot Testing (in progress)
 - Conner, Franks, Hroch, Wiggins, Woodlee, Williams
 - Areas: BE; BI; GP; NV (with plans for AQ & PO)
- ii. PCRA/ICRA 2.0 (new for 2026)
 - PCRA - Pre-Construction Risk Assessment
 - ICRA - Infection Control Risk Assessment
 - Cook, Box, Conner, Denherder, Fish, Franks, Strauss, [Bryan] Reed
- iii. I-STAR (on-going)
 - Hroch, Franks, Woodlee
 - RL6 migration & rollout
 - February 2026: User Acceptance Testing
 - March 2026: training & system launch
- iv. Accreditation readiness
 - EC/LS Workgroup
 - Conner, Cook, Franks, Hansen, Hroch, Murga, Peaches, Williams, Woodlee
 - National Council of Healthcare Safety and Engineering Professionals (NCHSEP)
- v. Water Management Sprint Workgroup
 - Franks, Calvert, Conner, Cook, Hroch, Peaches, Williams
 - Managed by OQ
- vii. Workplace Violence Sprint (Planning) Workgroup
 - Kerns, Franks, Conner, Hroch, OQ Staff
 - In prep for actual WG, contributions already made by Bales, Kates, Murga, Peaches, Williams, Woodlee
 - Managed by OQ
- viii. Survey for EHS Healthy Homes and IEH IEQ/IAQ
 - Hickey, Hroch, Conner with input from DEHS & IEH reviewers
 - Undergoing reviews
 - Instruments, references, & resources



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- c. DEHS Annual Meeting 2026 (Matt Albright)
 - i. 05-07 May 2026
 - ii. Denver, CO
 - iii. Hotel: Hilton Garden Inn secured ([reservation link](#), make reservation by 13 April)
 - iv. Agenda: distributed in January
 - v. Email CAPT Albright your attendee list
 - vi. Verify you can access [SharePoint](#)
- d. DEHS Awards 2025
 - i. [2025 Environmental Health Specialist of the Year](#)
 - Nominations due to [CAPT Stephen R. Piontkowski](#) by 06 January 2026
 - ii. [2025 Gary J. Gefroh Health and Safety Award](#)
 - Nominations due to [Brian Hroch](#) by 06 February 2026
 - iii. [2025 Rick Smith Injury Prevention Award](#)
 - Nominations due to [CDR Molly Madson](#) by 06 February 2026
- e. Miscellaneous (Molly Madson)
 - See emails sent to Area DEHS Directors for details*
 - i. 30 January
 - Area description
 - Posters
 - ii. 06 February
 - Gefroh Health & Safety Award nominations
 - Smith Injury Prevention Award nominations
 - iii. Upcoming WebEHRS Updates
 - Updates to aquatic facility e-Surveys (MAHC 5th Ed.) and establishment types (Small and Large)
 - New functionality to manage multi-venue aquatic facilities
 - Demo and overview during February EH Office Hours



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- f. Reminders (Matt Albright)
 - i. Take great pics
 - DEHS photo contest
 - EHOs in Action Photo Book
 - ii. Area DEHS & Week-in-Review
 - Submissions
 - Email to ihspublicaffairsstaff@ihs.gov
 - Due Thursdays by 1300 ET
 - January: Alaska
 - February: Albuquerque
 - March: Bemidji
 - April: Billings
 - May: California
 - June: Great Plains
 - July: Nashville
 - August: Navajo
 - September: Oklahoma City
 - October: Phoenix
 - November: Portland
 - December: Tucson

Next conference call 06 August 2026 1:00-2:30PM ET