



JUN 28 2002

Dear Tribal Leader:

The Restructuring Initiatives Workgroup (RIW) was formed in January 2002 to assess the functions of the Indian health care system, composed of the Indian Health Service (IHS) direct, Tribal, and Urban programs, and make restructuring recommendations. The diligent and sometimes difficult work undertaken by the RIW over the past several months has resulted in the enclosed "Transitions 2002- A 5-Year Initiative to Restructure Indian Health," a preliminary report that has been submitted to the IHS for consideration.

In keeping with the IHS Tribal Consultation and Participation Policy and the processes developed over recent years, I am submitting the enclosed report to you. Consultation meetings on the RIW preliminary report will be scheduled by each Area Director in collaboration with their respective Tribal Leaders. Area Directors and their key staff will meet with the Tribal Leaders and/or their representatives resulting in a formal review and comment, and recommendations regarding the RIW report. The information resulting from these sessions should be sent by the Area Directors to Mr. Cliff Wiggins at IHS Headquarters no later than July 26, 2002 for compilation and distribution of the information to the RIW.

As stated in the announcement of the RIW effort, before adopting any recommendations that significantly affect the Indian health system, representative views from Indian Country will be considered. Any design changes to the IHS should result in the improvement of the health of all American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) people.

Your time and diligent efforts have been critical to the strides we have already made together toward improving of the health status of our AI/AN community. I anticipate that our continuing to work together through consultation and collaboration will further enhance this progress.

Sincerely yours,

/Michel E. Lincoln/

Michel E. Lincoln  
Acting Director