



APR 20 2005

Dear Tribal Leader:

I am writing to inform you that the Indian Health Leadership Council of the Indian Health Service (IHS), established in June 1997, and the Executive Leadership Group of the Indian Health Leadership Council, also established in June 1997, have been superseded by the Director's Executive Council (DEC). Information about the DEC's purpose, responsibilities, priority issues, reports, and Tribal consultation follows.

The DEC serves as a policy advisory group to the Director, IHS, and as such, focuses on issues related to strategic direction, policy, and organizational adjustments called for by changes in the health systems environment. The council's responsibilities include: (1) establishing and maintaining a continuous liaison among the Director's office, Headquarters executive staff, and Area Directors on systems issues involving strategic direction and policy; (2) developing recommendations for Agency-wide policy in matters that directly affect the mission of the IHS, as requested by the Director; (3) monitoring and facilitating workgroups formed to address strategic issues and policies for the Agency; and (4) providing regular communication on work plans and activities to the Director, Headquarters executive staff, and Area Directors. The DEC will carry out these responsibilities assigned by the Director and commensurate with the authorities delegated by the Director.

The members of the DEC are appointed by the Director from the following groups: A) Three Area Directors, one of whom will serve as the Chairperson and one as Co-Chairperson. Each Area Director will serve a 3-year term, except for the initial appointments, which shall be for a 3-year term, a 2-year term, and a 1-year term. B) Three Office Directors at Headquarters, one each recommended by: 1) Deputy Director for Indian Health Policy, 2) Deputy Director for Management Operations, and 3) Chief Medical Officer. Each Office Director will serve a 3-year term, except for the initial appointments, which shall be for a 3-year term, a 2-year term, and a 1-year term. C) Chairperson, or designee from IHS in the event that the Chairperson represents a Tribal organization, of the following professional councils: 1) National Council of Chief Medical Officers, 2) National Council of Chief Executive Officers, 3) National Council of Clinical Directors, and 4) National Council of Nursing.

The DEC's initial assignments for 2005 are to fully examine and develop recommendations by December 2005 for new or modified policies conducive to accomplishing the objectives of four priority issues:

1. Health Promotion/Disease Prevention - Recommend policies to guide current and future IHS initiatives in Health Promotion/Disease Prevention, including policies that emphasize the use of

proven interventions and measurable outcomes; encourage increased efforts by staff and community members; dedicate resources in a constrained fiscal environment; and improve outcomes throughout Indian Country.

2. Administrative Consolidations - Recommend policies to govern any consolidation of administrative functions undertaken by the Agency, including human resources, acquisitions, personal property, finance, and others designated by the Director. These policies will help ensure the cost-effective, timely delivery of quality administrative services to support the mission of the Agency at the service unit, Area, and Headquarters operational levels.

3. Inherent Federal Functions and Residual - Recommend a uniform policy to identify, quantify, and perform inherent Federal functions consistently throughout the Agency with the support of adequate and appropriate residual resources.

4. Strategic Human Capital initiative - Recommend policies to guide the development, enhancement, and utilization of human capital, including the growth of management, professional, and leadership capabilities in key positions throughout the Agency to ensure effective management now and, through appropriate succession planning, into the future.

Finished work products for the DEC will include a comprehensive set of recommendations for new or amended policies or strategic direction for each priority issue along with supporting information derived from analyses.

I assure you that the work of the DEC will be carried out consistent with the IHS Tribal Consultation Policy. I look forward to conducting Tribal consultation and to collaborating with you on these priority issues before adopting recommendations that significantly affect the Indian health system. Our policies and strategic direction should always contribute to the improvement of the health of all American Indian and Alaska Native people.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Charles W. Grim, DDS". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Charles W. Grim, D.D.S., M.H.S.A.
Assistant Surgeon General
Director