

SUMMARY REPORT

Indian Health Service Meeting with Tribal Advisory Committees *Strategy Session and World Café: The Road Ahead and Improving Leadership & How Will You Lead It?*

Phoenix, Arizona – October 9, 2016

The Indian Health Service (IHS) utilized a *World Café* model to address workforce ideas. The *World Café* model fosters conversations by focusing on exploring themes, rather than on problem-solving. This summary report captures the themes and ideas generated during this meeting to address leadership challenges at IHS for medical and non-medical staff in the short-term and in the longer term.

Short-term Recommendations

Short-term recommendations consider a time frame of one to three months.

Workforce Recruitment and Retention

- Utilize a variety of hiring practices (e.g., head-hunters, social media, and screening USA Jobs Web sites.
- Develop an IHS fact sheet for Tribes to illustrate the IHS hiring process and timelines, including instructions for applying for IHS jobs through the USA Jobs Web site.
- Increase collaboration and communication between IHS, Tribal, and Urban programs by targeting application collection and sharing of applications.
- Develop a centralized repository of employment vacancies and scholarship/loan repayment opportunities.
- Leverage partnerships with universities and Tribal colleges.
- Prioritize partnering with the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), National Institutes of Health (NIH), and other Federal agencies to recruit health providers via agency-specific loan repayment program.
- Build partnerships to recruit returned volunteers from the Peace Corps and AmeriCorps.
- Leverage partnerships with non-governmental organizations, for example, Doctors Without Borders.
- Contract with non-IHS providers.
- Determine employees who are interested in upward mobility and invest in these individuals by training them for higher level assignments and/or positions to fill position vacancies on and off the reservation.
- Provide spousal support for IHS employees, e.g. job opportunities.
- Community engagement – Ask community members what they want to see changed.

Loan Repayment and Scholarship Program

- Create a fact sheet on repayment and scholarship opportunities within the Federal Government.

Training/Skills/Education

- Provide training and mentorship for entry-level and mid-level positions specific to working with American Indians and Alaska Natives (e.g., courses on the Indian Health Care Improvement Act, Purchased/Referred Care, etc.).
- Identify senior staff who are willing to mentor professional colleagues in rural areas.
- Provide meaningful support for professional employees and students in medicine, dentistry, nursing, and health administration.

Grow Your Own: Educating and Creating Awareness for Youth

- Target youth early to educate and mentor professional development, prevent negative influences, and encourage healthy life styles.
- Utilize community public relations to create awareness among school-aged youth (elementary, middle, and high schools) about the need for American Indian and Alaska Native health professionals.
 - Increase opportunities for internships, externships, and fellowships.
 - Engage community members.
 - Share history of Tribal professionals.
- Develop partnerships to share resources and opportunities for youth, such as:
 - Partner with science, technology, engineering and mathematics programs (STEM) to assist with building elementary and middle school student support from the community.
 - Develop partnerships with educational institutions.
 - Provide high school research opportunities.
 - Partner with UNITY, a national network organization promoting personal development, citizenship, and leadership among Native American youth.
- Encourage American Indian and Alaska youth to pursue post-high school education. Identify youth who might be interested in pursuing health careers, nurture their talents, and provide student preparation and support.

Long-term Recommendations

Long-term recommendations consider a time frame of more than three months.

Workforce Recruitment and Retention

- Provide competitive wages for categories of employees (e.g., health administrators and physicians) at IHS and Tribal communities.
- Provide other incentives (e.g., increase annual leave).
- Use telemedicine to provide support to and enhance the delivery of health care services.
- Utilize Intergovernmental Personnel Act agreements with the Department of Defense and Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).
- Contract the hiring process to Tribes using Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act authority.
- Remove barriers (e.g., provide professional or clinical orientation/training/credentialing opportunities for new employees).
- Include a box on the IHS application to indicate if spouse is a Tribal member (e.g., for preferential hiring in remote areas).

- Recruit from other jurisdictions.
- Increase mobile health care and public-private partnerships.
 - Establish a travel nursing program in Indian Country.
- Improve and develop infrastructure (e.g., housing) to attract recent graduates and employees in general.
- Provide child care services.

Loan Repayment and Scholarship Program

- Assess and improve IHS Scholarship and Loan Repayment Programs to make them competitive with Health Resources and Services Administration's National Health Service Corps program and the VA.
 - Increase loan forgiveness amounts and scholarship awards in the IHS Loan Repayment and Scholarship programs to be equitable with other agencies' programs and increase IHS capacity to compete with market standards.
 - Change IHS Scholarship and Loan Repayment Programs' awards to be tax exempt.
- Provide loan forgiveness to IHS employees who work at IHS for 6 years.
- Include the health administrators as an eligible professions within the IHS Loan Repayment and Scholarship programs.
- Provide higher loan forgiveness in targeted rural areas to attract providers.
- Mandate Tribal members who receive Tribal and/or IHS scholarships to return to community to provide services.

Training/Skills/Education

- Provide clinical experiences, internships, and/or fellowship programs.
- Establish nurse residency programs in Indian Country.
- Create an IHS/Bureau of Indian Affairs Career Academy.
- Partner with top five hospitals for training in hospital, clinical and program administration.
- Utilize Tribal colleges and universities to provide hospital, clinical and program administration training.
- Hire retired professionals into long-term training programs in their areas of expertise.
- Create an IHS medical school with a unique curriculum for IHS, Tribes, and Urban Programs.
- Develop leadership mentoring programs in management and clinical fields based on best-practices and successful programs (for example, Alaska Dental Health Aide Program).

Grow Your Own: Educating and Creating Awareness for Youth

- Need funding for Kindergarten through 12th grade to develop early health professions awareness and education opportunities.
- Develop mentorship programs and school-to-work programs for youth, such as hands-on youth medical programs.
- Develop distance learning to connect youth with health care programs, colleges, and universities to provide students with support.
- Create opportunities for students to work between school terms.

Legislative

- Exploring flexibility in Indian Preference as it applies to vacancies within the IHS for recruitment (e.g. waivers).
- Create legislative fixes (e.g., tax exemption for IHS scholarships) through the Indian Health Care Improvement Act.
- For those reforms that require legislative change, the IHS should issue statements of support and protect simplicity and flexibility in legislative proposals.

IHS Organization and Culture Transformation

- Current perception of an adversarial relationship needs to change (“IHS versus Tribes”). Many IHS employees are Tribal members.
 - Customer/patient experience affects the community’s perception of IHS.
 - Lack of resources does not equal to lack of caring. IHS employees must show a caring attitude.
 - IHS needs to explore ways to create and maintain a positive work environment that attracts and retains skilled employees.
 - Positive experiences will improve the public’s perceptions of IHS as a good employer.
- Positive attention will lead to positive outcomes and a healthy organizational culture.
- Identify/Promote IHS successes, and share ideas/best practices.
- Environment – change the culture of the organization in support of employees.