



**Remarks by RADM Chris Buchanan
Desert Sage Youth Wellness Center
Wednesday March 1, 2017, 1 p.m. | Hemet, CA**

Remarks as prepared

- Good afternoon. It is a pleasure to join you here at the grand opening of the Desert Sage Youth Wellness Center.
- I'm RADM Chris Buchanan, the acting director of the Indian Health Service. And I'm honored to be here with all of you to celebrate this occasion.
- I'd like to start by recognizing some people:
 - All California tribal leaders and members in attendance
 - The Tribal Advisor from Governor Brown's office, Ms. Cynthia Gomez

We thank you for taking the time to join us today.

- I also have several IHS colleagues with me today:
 - Beverly Miller, the IHS California Area Director
 - Ben Smith, our Deputy Director for Intergovernmental Affairs
 - RADM Kelly Taylor, our acting Chief of Staff
 - Jennifer Buschick, Director of Public Affairs
 - And many of our California Area Office staff members
- I'd like to personally thank the California tribal members and Beverly and her staff for all the work that went into this project.
- We would not be standing here today at this grand opening if it were not for the dedication of so many people. I commend you for your hard work and commitment to making this happen.
- Because of you, many Native American youth will receive a culturally relevant, holistic model of care.
- IHS is pleased to announce that this is the first of two youth regional treatment centers that will serve our youth in California.

- The IHS is working towards the construction of a second YRTC in California. The estimated completion date for the Sacred Oaks Healing Center in Davis, Calif is early 2019.
- With the opening of Desert Sage, we now have 11 centers across the US.
- Our YRTCs provide the support needed to strengthen families and help youth overcome challenges and recover their lives.
- And the support will not end once they leave the facility. The youth that receive treatment here will leave with the skills and tools needed to assist them in maintaining their sobriety.
- Desert Sage demonstrates our commitment to our American Indian and Alaska Native youth and families by offering culturally-centered, evidenced-based, individualized behavioral health services.
- Desert Sage Youth Wellness Center will treat approximately 100 tribal youth annually. The center is the first federally-owned and operated health care facility in California to serve American Indians and Alaska Natives.
- Currently, most of California's Native American youth who receive residential chemical dependency treatment are sent out-of-state to non-IHS or non-tribal facilities that do not always meet the unique cultural needs of Native American youth.
- I am so proud of what we've all accomplished today in collaboration with the 104 federally-recognized tribes of California.
- The mission of the Indian Health Service is one that I take seriously. Our mission is to raise the physical, mental, social, and spiritual health of American Indians and Alaska Natives to the highest level.
- I believe this new facility will support and work to achieve this important mission.
- The IHS looks forward to a continued partnership with the California tribes as you work to promote healthy lives for all your members. I can assure you that the IHS remains committed to creating a culture of quality, leadership and accountability.
- IHS is committed to working with tribes to provide the best care for patients.
- We look forward to our continued work to ensure quality health care is delivered consistently across all facilities in the Indian health system.
- We are working to infuse quality into everything we do.

- Through sustained effort over time working side-by-side with our tribal partners, like yourselves, we will be able to achieve real and sustainable change to transform health care for American Indians and Alaska Natives across the country.
- On behalf of the Indian Health Service, I want to thank you, again, for inviting me to share in this special occasion.