



JUL 14 2021

Dear Tribal Leader and Urban Indian Organization Leader:

I am writing to share information about a new incentive program available to eligible United States Public Health Service (USPHS) Commissioned Corps Officers assigned to Tribal and Urban Indian health programs. This new incentive program can be an effective recruitment and retention strategy to meet ongoing health care needs at certain locations. I hope you would consider participating in this program.

On January 8, 2021, the Department of Health and Human Services approved Commissioned Corps Directive 151.06, "Assignment Pay." On January 13, 2021, the Assistant Secretary for Health approved Commissioned Corps Instruction 633.06, "Assignment Incentive Pay," and on January 18, 2021, the Surgeon General approved Personnel Operations Memorandum (POM) 821.79, "Assignment Pay Locations, Rates, and Agreements."

Assignment Pay (AP) is an incentive pay for eligible Commissioned Corps officers who are assigned to specific duty locations within the Indian Health Service (IHS), Bureau of Prisons, and the Department of Homeland Security, Immigration Health Services Corps. The following factors are considered in designating a location eligible for AP and establishing the amount of AP by category: the geographic remoteness of the site; the availability of adequate secondary level of medical care and other services; and the historic vacancy rates by site and category. Assignment Pay is paid monthly and the AP rates are based on the Commissioned Corps officer's duty assignment location, category/profession/specialty, and length of the AP agreement. To receive AP, Commissioned Corps officers are required to enter into a written agreement to serve on active duty for a specified period. The Surgeon General has issued the monthly AP rates in POM 821.79, Appendix A, which includes a listing of all eligible locations/categories/professions/specialties.

If you would like to participate in the incentive program and your location has been designated as an eligible location, please provide the requested vacancy data to the Area Office point of contact. However, if your location has not been designated as an eligible location, then please work with local Area Office leadership and/or the Division of Commissioned Personnel Support Regional Liaison to identify the required documentation needed for designating a location eligible for AP. This information will be submitted by IHS leadership annually on July 31 to Commissioned Corps Headquarters.

We are committed to expanding recruitment and retention efforts throughout our communities. Ensuring we have quality staff to deliver health care is our top priority. I hope you will consider this annual opportunity within your health care program to sustain and expand your workforce.

Sincerely,

/Elizabeth A. Fowler/
Acting Director