



January 2, 2025

Dear Tribal Leader and Urban Indian Organization Leader:

I am pleased to announce the appointment of Dr. Chris Poole to serve as the Director of the Bemidji Area Indian Health Service (IHS). Dr. Poole is an enrolled member of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma.

As Director of the Bemidji Area IHS, Dr. Poole is responsible for providing leadership in the administration of a comprehensive Federal, Tribal, and Urban Indian health care system for American Indians and Alaska Natives, which includes three federally operated Service Units and six urban health programs in five states. The Bemidji Area IHS, in partnership with Tribes and Tribal Organizations, provides comprehensive health services to 34 federally recognized Tribes.

Dr. Poole has served as the Acting Director of the IHS Headquarters Office of Direct Service and Contracting Tribes for the last year and as the director of Tribal and Urban Services for the Bemidji Area Office. Dr. Poole has been the Bemidji Area IHS Agency Lead Negotiator and Contract Proposal Liaison Officer for 8 years. As such, he holds the operational responsibility for implementing the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act and the Indian Healthcare Improvement Act statutes through managing area Tribal contracting and compacting activities. Dr. Poole previously served as the Bemidji Area IHS Behavioral Health Consultant.

Prior to joining the IHS, Dr. Poole served as the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Military Treatment Facility (MTF) liaison at Ft. Bliss, Texas. As the MTF liaison, he worked with both the Department of Defense and the VA to facilitate and coordinate the transition of soldiers to the VA for health care and community reintegration. In 2009, Dr. Poole was appointed to the Army's Wounded Warrior program as an advocate. In this role, he provided assistance, advocacy, and case management services to the most severely wounded, injured, and ill soldiers returning from combat operations in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Dr. Poole holds a Bachelor's degree in social work from the University of Texas at El Paso, a Master's degree in social work from the New Mexico State University, and a Master's degree in business administration and Doctorate in health care administration from the University of Phoenix.

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I also want to thank Asha Petoskey for her leadership in serving as the Acting Director of the Bemidji Area IHS.

Please join me in welcoming Dr. Poole as the Director of the Bemidji Area IHS.

Sincerely,

/Roselyn Tso/

Roselyn Tso  
Director