

**From:** Roubideaux, Yvette (IHS/HQ)  
**To:** Roubideaux, Yvette (IHS/HQ)  
**Subject:** Update  
**Date:** Monday, June 01, 2015 12:08:38 PM

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Dear IHS ALL:

Today, Secretary Burwell sent a message to you to announce that I have informed her that I am leaving the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) at the end of June. I want you to know that I do so with great joy and tremendous pride in all the work and progress we have made together to change and improve the Indian Health Service (IHS) over the last six years. It has truly been an honor to serve with you.

I am so grateful to have served in the Obama Administration with you and to have witnessed history – at IHS, we have experienced strong and historic support for our work from the President, the Administration, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), former HHS Secretary Kathleen Sebelius and our current HHS Secretary Sylvia Burwell, other HHS leadership, and bipartisan support from Congress. This historic support has enabled us to increase our budget by over a third, and accomplish much to improve healthcare for the patients we serve. The list of accomplishments that we have achieved together is far too long to list here, but you know what they are because they are a result of your hard work and commitment to the IHS mission.

I am so humbled by what a privilege it has to be to serve with you as you have done amazing and extraordinary things to ensure that IHS is addressing the health needs of its patients as much as possible. Whether it is the many improvements in business practices we have implemented, the improvements we have made in how we deliver care, the improvements in the quality of care or the stronger partnerships we have formed with Tribes, your commitment and efforts have been truly amazing. And for that I am truly grateful to you. Especially since I know that the work of IHS is often very challenging.

The purpose of this note is really to encourage you to continue to change and improve the IHS. I know that everyone, including employees, Tribes and our patients, wants IHS to continue to improve to better meet the federal responsibility for healthcare. And while the answers and solutions are not simple, and cannot all be done at once, the progress we have made in the last six years has been substantial; even so, we all know that there is much more to do.

I am grateful to Mr. Robert McSwain who has been serving as the Acting Director of IHS since February 10, 2015. That's when the 2009 appropriation act language required that I and some others in the administration across the federal government move from their Acting positions. This was certainly a surprise for all of us, but I am proud of everyone, especially the senior leadership, for adapting to this situation and doing a great job keeping forward momentum and progress. They have my full confidence and support.

Secretary Burwell often says that we will not be satisfied by our efforts until the people we serve actually feel the impact. As I have traveled the country over the last six years, I have

heard about the challenges, but I have also experienced such great joy when someone comes up to me and says, “hey, I went to the clinic, and I didn’t have to wait that long” or “I have a more positive experience at the clinic compared to the past” or a Tribe says “the CEO now meets with us and is sharing information.” I hear great stories all the time about the good work that you do. And when I hear the complaints, since clearly we have not fixed all the challenges, I feel confident that IHS employees are doing everything they can to address those issues since we have acknowledged that we are working to change and improve. Being an organization that is focused on improvement lets the patients know that we are working to make things better, even though that is often constrained by time and resources.

So thank you from the bottom of my heart for all that you do, each and every day, for the Indian Health Service. I will be departing HHS at the end of June, so I am still around for a couple of weeks, but I wanted to take the opportunity now to tell you that I appreciate everything each and every one of you are doing to change and improve the IHS. I am so happy and grateful to have served with you to do all we can to help American Indians and Alaska Natives get the healthcare that they need and deserve. I promise that I will continue to tell the story about all the positive things we have done together over the last 6 years. Keep up the great work, and I look forward to hearing stories about all of your future improvements and accomplishments towards better healthcare for the patients IHS serves.

Thank you for helping us change and improve the IHS!

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