



Indian Health Service Press Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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IHS Announces New CEO at Omaha Winnebago Hospital

Experienced IHS administrator to provide hospital leadership

The Indian Health Service Great Plains Area announces today that a new chief executive officer has joined Omaha Winnebago Hospital, in Winnebago, Nebraska. This staff addition follows the [announcement](#) of many other new hires at Omaha Winnebago Hospital this year.

Gary Wabaunsee, MPH, will be responsible and accountable for managing all administrative and health care activities for the hospital. As chief executive officer, he will provide overall leadership and direction for all professional, administrative, technical and clerical employees, ensuring the delivery of high-quality health care and supporting ongoing quality improvement efforts. He will also work closely with tribal leaders in order to maintain open communication and meet the needs of the local community.

“Gary Wabaunsee has served IHS for many years, demonstrating his abilities as an administrator and a leader. He will bring experience and stability to Omaha Winnebago Hospital,” said Capt. Francis Frazier, IHS Great Plains Area acting director. “We have made great strides in recruiting highly skilled individuals to Omaha Winnebago Hospital this year, enabling us to better carry out our mission of raising the physical, mental, social, and spiritual health of American Indians and Alaska Natives to the highest level.”

Wabaunsee will oversee ongoing efforts at Omaha Winnebago Hospital to improve services at the hospital to fully meet safety and quality of care standards.

“I’m honored to be part of the team of IHS professionals trusted with ensuring access to reliable, high-quality health care for patients at Omaha Winnebago Hospital. It is my personal mission to make Omaha Winnebago Hospital a model of success,” Wabaunsee said. “I’m excited to work with leaders from the Winnebago and Omaha tribes, IHS leadership and experts in health care as we build on the progress that has been made and continue quality improvement efforts.”

Wabaunsee served four years in the U.S. Navy and 18 years in the U.S. Public Health Service Commissioned Corps, retiring as a captain. All of Wabaunsee’s assignments with the Commissioned Corps were with the IHS. He served in a variety of roles at IHS facilities around the country.

Wabaunsee’s previous IHS positions include CEO at Schurz Service Unit in Schurz, Nevada; Sisseton Service Unit in Sisseton, South Dakota; Fort Yuma Service Unit in Winterhaven, California; Red Lake

Service Unit in Red Lake, Minnesota, and most recently the Crow Service Unit in Crow Agency, Montana. He was also CEO of the Absentee Shawnee Tribe of Oklahoma Health System.

Wabaunsee is an enrolled member of the Seneca-Cayuga Tribe of Oklahoma. He earned a bachelor's degree from Northeastern Oklahoma State University in Tahlequah, Oklahoma, and a Master of Public Health in health administration and planning from the University of Oklahoma in Norman, Oklahoma.

Throughout this year, IHS has been collaborating with tribal leaders and local health partners on a series of actions to aggressively confront some of the long-standing health care service challenges in the Great Plains Area, pursuing solutions that will bring sustainable improvements in quality of care at regional hospitals and facilities, like Pine Ridge Hospital, and those across the IHS system:

- IHS awarded a [one-year contract to The Joint Commission for accreditation, training and education services](#) to strengthen quality and patient safety
- IHS expanded efforts to ensure medical equipment used at IHS facilities is up to date, properly maintained, and reliable, through the establishment of a [new policy](#) on the minimum standards for medical equipment management, purchase, maintenance, and replacement.
- IHS announced a [\\$6.8 million contract to Avera Health to expand telehealth](#) in the Great Plains Area. This initiative is intended to bring tele-video ED and specialty services to the Great Plains Area IHS facilities, including emergency medical services.
- CMS awarded a [new contract to help support best health care practices](#) and other operational improvements for IHS federal government operated hospitals that participate in the Medicare program.
- IHS hired a new [Chief Medical Officer](#) and [Deputy Chief Medical Officer](#) for the Great Plains Area, to serve as the lead regional experts on IHS medical and public health services, providing technical leadership and guidance to facility chief medical officers and clinical staff in the region.

The Winnebago Service Unit provides comprehensive health care to American Indians and Alaska Natives in the Sioux City area, including members of the Winnebago and Omaha Tribes. For more information about IHS's Winnebago Service Unit, visit www.ihs.gov/greatplains/healthcarefacilities.

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The IHS, an agency in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, provides a comprehensive health service delivery system for approximately 2.2 million American Indians and Alaska Natives. For more information, visit www.ihs.gov. Follow IHS on [Facebook](#).