



Indian Health Service Press Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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IHS Announces New Hotline to Report Suspected Abuse

Today, the IHS is announcing a new hotline dedicated to receiving reports of suspected child or sexual abuse within an Indian Health Service facility and/or by an IHS staff member. The hotline will allow personnel who are specially trained to take pertinent information necessary to immediately route calls and reports of suspected child abuse or sexual abuse.

“Protecting our patients and our employees from sexual abuse in a supportive environment is a priority at the Indian Health Service,” said IHS Acting Director Elizabeth Fowler. “At the IHS, we strive for a culture of accountability in everything we do. This new hotline simplifies the reporting process allowing anyone who suspects child abuse or sexual abuse to have a direct line to personnel who are specially trained in responding to, and investigating this type of information.”

In collaboration with the Department of Health and Human Services Office of the Inspector General, the hotline’s experienced Office of Investigations are specially trained staff by law enforcement personnel in obtaining information about suspected abuse. They will answer calls between the hours of 8:00 am and 8:00 pm eastern time Monday- Friday. Outside of these hours, callers may leave a message with information they would like to report.

Callers may report suspected child abuse or sexual abuse by calling the hotline at 1-855-SAFE-IHS (855 723-3447) or by submitting [a complaint online on the IHS.gov website](#). This hotline may be used to report any type of suspected child abuse within the Indian Health Service, or any type of sexual abuse regardless of the age of the victim. The person reporting by phone or online may remain anonymous.

Reporting child abuse to this hotline does not take the place of making a report to local law enforcement or child protective services as required under federal law. When child abuse is suspected or observed, mandatory reporters must still file a report of child abuse with the appropriate local law enforcement agency or the appropriate local child protection agency. Reporting to the 855-SAFE-IHS hotline is an additional step to safeguard patients and alert the agency regarding abuse.

IHS has implemented extensive measures to promote and enhance patient safety and accountability. In 2019, IHS released the [Protecting Children From Sexual Abuse by Health Care Providers policy](#). The policy requires anyone with knowledge or suspicion of child abuse to report this information and provides guidance on where this information should be reported.

The IHS, an agency in the [U.S. Department of Health and Human Services](#), provides a comprehensive health service delivery system for approximately 2.6 million American Indians and Alaska Natives who belong to [574 federally recognized tribes](#) in 37 states. Follow the agency via social media on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [LinkedIn](#).

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