



Indian Health Service Press Release

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IHS announces Dental Preventive and Clinical Support Centers Program awardees

IHS Division of Oral Health funds eight major awards to address dental health program needs.

The Indian Health Service made eight funding awards totaling up to \$10 million over five years to organizations that address some of the most serious and longstanding challenges to high quality dental care in American Indian and Alaska Native communities. The awardees will coordinate regional resources, train dentists and other dental health personnel, and advise health programs in order to improve dental health care for American Indians and Alaska Natives. Five Tribal organizations received funding, as did three IHS federal government programs.

The purpose of the IHS Dental Preventive and Clinical Support Centers program is to combine IHS and Tribal resources and infrastructure in order to address broad challenges and opportunities associated with preventive and clinical dental programs. With the award today, centers receive up to \$250,000 per year for up to five years. Centers may work simultaneously to improve many different dental programs in a region, providing support, guidance, training, and enhancement to these programs, which then provide services to patients. Centers also rigorously measure and evaluate their work with the goal of demonstrably improving dental health outcomes through the technical assistance and services they provide.

“These new awards improve dental care and dental health for tens of thousands of American Indians and Alaska Natives,” said IHS Principal Deputy Director Robert G. McSwain. “They respond to the needs of patients as well as the needs of dental health programs and personnel, so that programs operate most effectively and dental health personnel have the training and resources they need to provide excellent care, even in the most rural and remote settings. IHS Dental Preventive and Clinical Support Centers funding represents a major commitment of resources to these critical health needs.”

A list of funded Dental Preventive and Clinical Support Centers is available at <http://www.ihs.gov/DOH/index.cfm?fuseaction=home.cscannouncement>.

IHS first launched the IHS Dental Preventive and Clinical Support Centers in 2000. The awards announced today build upon the success of these centers. In recent years, the centers helped IHS achieve dental health performance goals which demonstrated improvements in the quality of dental care provided. In part due to support from the centers, during the 2015 reporting year, 29.4 percent of patients ages 1 through 15 for which IHS had data received one or more topical fluoride applications, exceeding IHS’s Government Performance and Results Act goal to deliver fluoride applications to at least 26.4 percent of

these patients. The centers collaborated with the IHS Division of Oral Health on national initiatives such as efforts to reduce early childhood caries. They also assisted with IHS national oral health surveillance, including annual Basic Screening Surveys, and organized continuing education meetings for federal and Tribal dental personnel.

American Indian and Alaska Native people continue to experience tooth decay at a substantially higher rate than other minority populations in the United States. IHS Division of Oral Health data briefs are available at <http://www.ihs.gov/doh>.

The IHS Office of Clinical and Preventive Services, Division of Oral Health serves as the primary source of management and administration of IHS clinical and community prevention programs for oral health. Working in partnership with Tribes, Tribal organizations and Urban Indian health organizations, the Division of Oral Health coordinates national efforts to share knowledge and build capacity. IHS dentistry focuses on one-on-one patient care as well as community prevention programs that include water fluoridation, dental screenings, dental sealants, and fluoride varnishes.

The IHS, an agency within 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.

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