



Indian Health Service Statement

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Statement by the IHS Principal Deputy Director, Rear Adm. Michael D. Weahkee, on new training that focuses on reporting procedures and organizational safeguards for preventing abuse

The Indian Health Service is committed to ensuring a culture of quality, leadership and accountability. Providing a safe and caring environment for our patients is a top priority as we work to improve and sustain the culture of care throughout the agency.

Sexual assault and abuse will not be tolerated in the Indian Health Service. Earlier this year, IHS released new professional standards and stronger requirements for IHS employees to report suspected sexual abuse and exploitation of children. As part of this new policy, [Protecting Children from Sexual Abuse by Health Care Providers](#), IHS is announcing the availability of employee training on protecting children from sexual abuse in health care settings.

This training is mandatory for all IHS employees and must be completed by September 30. The training includes information on indicators of abuse and warning signs, organizational safeguards used to ensure patient safety, and the process for reporting suspected sexual abuse. The training was developed under the review and guidance of IHS clinical subject matter experts and the IHS Office of the General Counsel.

We prioritize a workforce that is dedicated, caring, competent, and trustworthy. IHS health care practitioners, administrators and other personnel have a legal duty to report known or suspected abuse. While all IHS employees must report in accordance with applicable laws and policies, anyone else with knowledge or suspicion of abuse is encouraged to report such information to local law enforcement, [the IHS Headquarters Division of Personnel Security and Ethics](#), or the [HHS Office of Inspector General](#). When reporting something they see or suspect, IHS employees can be confident that leadership will take the allegations seriously and without reprisal.

IHS will continue to work in partnership with tribes and urban Indian organizations across the nation to raise the physical, mental, social, and spiritual health of American Indians and Alaska Natives to the highest level.

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