



Indian Health Service Statement

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IHS Principal Deputy Director Michael Weahkee statement on announcement of contract for medical quality assurance review

The Indian Health Service is committed to ensuring a culture of quality, leadership and accountability. We prioritize a workforce that is dedicated, caring, competent, and trustworthy. Protecting our patients is a key element of delivering quality care.

I have made it a top priority to make sure IHS is doing everything we can to protect patients in our care from sexual abuse and hold accountable anyone who has abused patients or failed to protect them.

On May 10, 2019, IHS awarded a contract to Integritas Creative Solutions LLC to conduct a medical quality assurance review to examine whether laws, policies and procedures have been followed with regard to protecting patients from sexual abuse. The contractor will also identify any further improvements IHS can implement to better protect patients. The review is expected to take 6 months to complete.

This review will complement [work being done by the Presidential Task Force on Protecting Native American Children in the Indian Health Service System](#) and a separate review by the HHS Office of the Inspector General, each with a different focus. This medical quality assurance review will be a retrospective review to evaluate actions taken from 1986, when former IHS pediatrician Stanley Patrick Weber began working at IHS, to the present. Weber, who left IHS in 2016, was convicted in September 2018 of sexually abusing patients while he was a pediatrician at an IHS hospital in Montana, and is facing similar charges in South Dakota. The OIG review focuses on the sufficiency of policies and procedures in place now to adequately respond to complaints of patient abuse and to protect IHS patients. The Presidential Task Force will develop and recommend policies, protocols, and best practices for future implementation. Outside reviews provide the Indian Health Service with another opportunity to demonstrate accountability.

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 the Inspector General](#). When reporting something they see or suspect, IHS employees can be confident that leadership will take the allegations seriously and without reprisal.

At IHS, we believe in providing a safe and caring environment for our patients. Improving and sustaining the culture of care throughout the IHS is a top priority. We are moving forward in delivering quality care to achieve the IHS mission to raise the physical, mental, social and spiritual health of American Indians and Alaska Natives to the highest level.

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