



Indian Health Service Statement

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Statement from Rear Adm. Michael Weahkee on World AIDS Day

On World AIDS Day, I want to highlight the important partnerships between the Indian Health Service, tribes, and urban Indian organizations to end the [HIV epidemic in Indian Country](#). Since President Trump announced *Ending HIV Epidemic: A Plan for America* earlier this year, IHS has been a key part of national efforts to address the ongoing public health crisis of HIV by leveraging tools, data, leadership and partnerships to focus efforts and achieve results. This includes [partnering with the Cherokee Nation for a pilot project](#) focused on raising community awareness of HIV, expanding HIV screening and improving retention in care. The IHS also [awarded \\$2.4 million to nine Tribal Epidemiology Centers](#) to support Native communities in reducing new HIV transmissions and relevant co-morbidities, specifically hepatitis C and sexually transmitted infections. We have also worked to expand access to pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) medication by adding it to the IHS National Core Formulary.

This year's World AIDS Day theme is *Ending the HIV/AIDS Epidemic: Community by Community*. This community-based approach is especially important in Indian Country, as each tribe has different beliefs, challenges, priorities and opportunities. Please join me today in raising awareness of HIV in our communities and reducing stigma as we work together to end the HIV epidemic in Indian Country.

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