

THE NURSE'S CAP

NEWSLETTER OF THE INDIAN HEALTH SERVICE HEROES



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SEASON'S GREETINGS!

BY ARDITH ASPAAS, EMSC NURSE CONSULTANT

It is hard to believe the winter season is here. The cozy sweaters have been traded in for woolen hats and mittens, and winter traditions make another cycle for all near and dear.

As we approach a New Year, we are spending

time reflecting on what the past year has meant to us including the challenges we faced and overcame, while turning our focus to the future. One message that has resounded throughout Indian Country is the strength and resilience demonstrated by the healthcare providers across the Indian Health Service health system. The call has been answered many times without hesitation and still your spirit prevails.

Season's Greetings

Continued from cover page

Your dedication is admirable, meaningful, and the honors bestowed upon you are well-deserved.

Resilience has played a tremendous role in how the health care system has navigated the last twenty months. The article *Nursing resilience interventions—A way forward in challenging healthcare territories* states there exists a high demand for nurses, which has been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, and highlights the need for a robust and resilient workforce.

The Division of Nursing Services understands this need and is working to support your efforts by working on initiatives that create impactful partnerships with Academic Medical Institutions such as the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia and Uniformed Services University, and professional organizations such as the American College of Obstetrics and Gynecologists and the American College of Emergency Physicians, in addition to maintaining Public Health Nursing grants with tribes and urban entities and global programs such as the Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative. All of which are designed to bring about training and education to enhance your work at the bedside, in clinics, and home visits; thereby reinforcing your confidence in providing safe, high quality patient care and meeting our strategic goals. The Nurse of the Month recognition program spotlights all of the incredible nurses and the value you bring to the organization. DNS hopes the collective efforts help demonstrate the value and importance of nursing, and share training and education opportunities, nursing stories from partners in the field and other agencies which reinforce positive coping strategies and help build resilience.



Season's Greetings

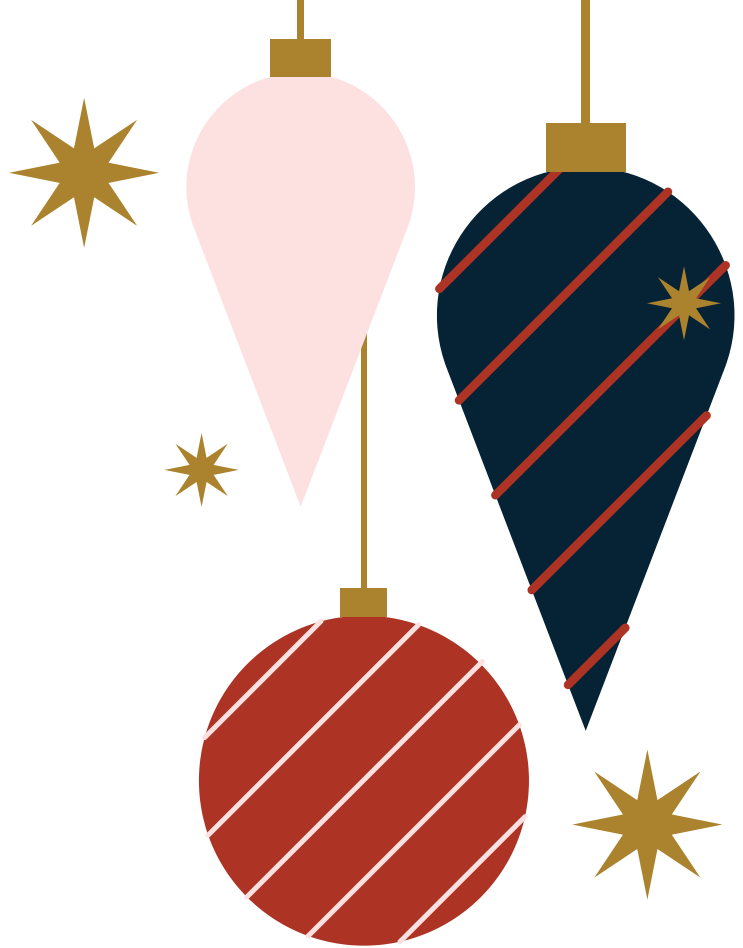
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For the American Indian/Alaskan Native people resilience is intrinsic. Our cultural practices, beliefs, values, teachings and language, and our connection to the environment and "mother Earth" has taught us resilience through decades of hardship and struggle.

Resilience is like a glowing light inside of us - sometimes strong, sometimes weak, but it is always there. And although we are in the midst of a global pandemic, and the situation seems dark at times, each one of us carries that glowing light of hope and resilience passed on to us by our ancestors, and we carry it on for the generations ahead.

One of the many ways resilience has manifested amongst American Indian/Alaskan Native communities is the high rate of acceptance of the COVID-19 vaccine. Indian Health Service, Tribal, and Urban Indian health centers are doing an outstanding job of vaccine administration. This is a victory and this is in part because of all the amazing nurses, doctors, and ancillary team efforts.

Use your internal light! Reflect on the accomplishments of the last year, and the wisdom that was gained. Allow yourself to laugh or cry, it was tough. But you did it. Keep going! Know that you did your best. Continue to take care of yourselves, your families, your communities; that is what our ancestors did for us, and we will continue to do for others. Keep being resilient!





DIVISION OF NURSING SERVICES NURSE OF THE MONTH PROGRAM

In this holiday edition of the Nurses' Cap the Division of Nursing Services (DNS) highlights this special recognition program. Since its inception DNS has received so many nominations that have illustrated the impactful work of nurses across the Indian Health Service health system. Each month we enjoy reading the submissions and all the awesome efforts taking place in the field and the positive effects on the health care provided to our communities. With so much great work happening on every level at every facility it has been tough to select just one recipient each month - every nurse is truly a healthcare hero!

Keep the nominations coming and help us to continue to grow this program! If your nursing hero is not selected, you can resubmit the nomination. The Division of Nursing Services is committed to highlighting nursing and all those that perform the critical clinical work that serves as the crux of the IHS mission. We would like to keep this program going until every nurse is recognized for the value they bring to the healthcare provided to American Indian/Alaska Native people. Your work is meaningful and deserves recognition!

Visit the IHS Nursing webpage at <https://www.ihs.gov/nursing/nurseofthemonth/> for more information on how to submit a nomination.



NURSE AMBASSADOR PROGRAM

**By Lieutenant Rachel Sabatura
ICE Health Service Corps**

Nearly two years into a global pandemic, dedicated Public Health Service Officers have answered the call to duty to serve the needs of our nation. In addition to increased deployments and local emergencies, PHS Officers have continued to face the additional life stressors of permanent change of station moves, new agencies, and positions of increased responsibility. Moving and changing jobs have been proven to be two of the most significant stressors that individuals can experience in their lifetime. PHS Officers are unique in that they move more frequently than the average American for diverse career opportunities. Now more than ever resilience is vital to the health and wellness of officers and their families.

The Nurse Ambassador program seeks to fill a vital need for officers transitioning to locations within Indian Health Service, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Health Service Corps (IHSC), and the Bureau of Prisons by providing support to enhance resilience during this stressful time.

Area Nurse Ambassadors are

individuals who volunteer to serve as liaisons to newly assigned officers and their families to support their transition in a personal and professional capacity.



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Areas of support can include information on their new agency as well as assistance with needs such as housing, schools, and community resources in the local area. Assistance is tailored to each officer and their unique needs during the stressful time of moving and integrating into a new organization and

community. Though originally designed for the Nurse Category officers, the Nurse Ambassador program is able to offer resources and a supportive network to officers in all categories who are transitioning to a high need organization.

If you are interested in becoming involved in the Nurse Ambassador program or know an officer who can benefit from services, please contact Lieutenant Terrin Ramsey at ntb6@cdc.gov and Commander Qiana Coffey at Qiana.L.Coffey@ice.dhs.gov for more information. We look forward to having you as a part of this growing program to support our Officers and increase resilience across the Corps!





FROM THE FIELD

By **Lynette Figueroa RN, BSN,**
Hopi Tribe, Sand/Snake Clan from Mishungnovi Village

I am a proud Hopi woman and member of the Nursing workforce at the Hopi Health Care Center. I have the opportunity to care for my community on the Hopi reservation serving as the Supervisory Clinical Nurse in the Emergency Department (ED). The staffing shortages and COVID-19 crisis we find ourselves in, exacerbates an already stressful environment in the emergency setting. My self-awareness and cultural roots as a Hopi woman help me recognize the impact of stressors before they reach critical levels.

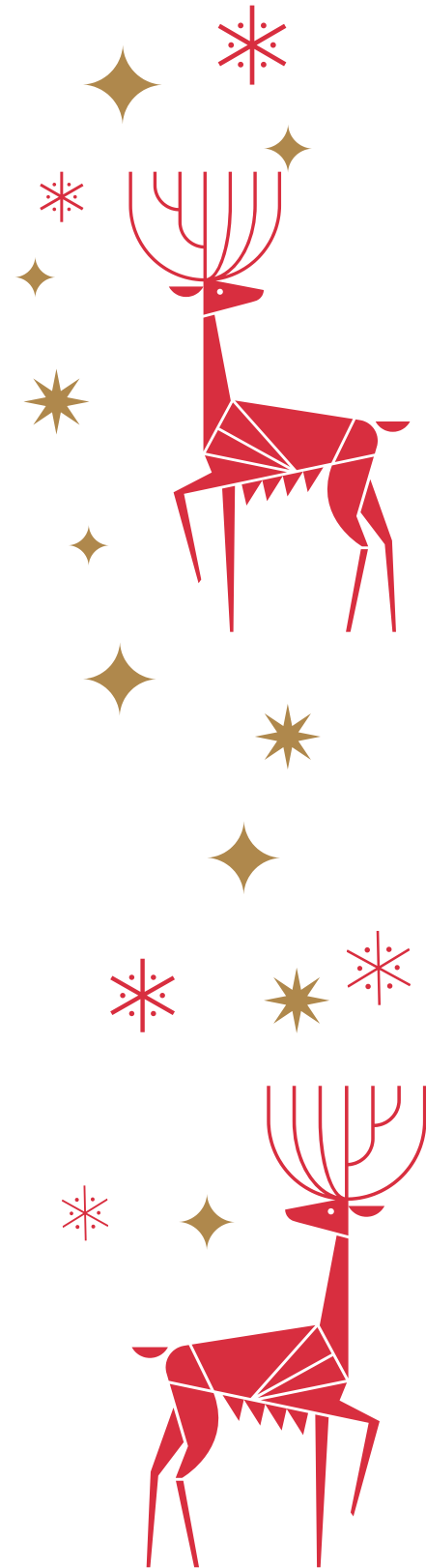
The risk for nurse burnout is extremely high in the ED. I advocate for the mental health of my staff and support them by working alongside them providing direct patient care. These teachings are already part of our traditional Hopi ways of taking care of oneself, and not just a nursing practice. We are taught that as Hopi people, we are to care not only for our own families, children, and elders but for all people, as each person has purpose on this earth.

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...EACH PERSON HAS A PURPOSE ON THIS EARTH.

I apply these same thoughts to my position as an ED Nurse, Supervisor, with my staff and patients. I have been able to maintain a supportive network with my family and staff which provides me the strength to grow and adapt in my position. This has made me more resilient than I could have ever imagined. Every day is a humbling experience. It is a privilege and an honor, in which I have deep compassion and pride in my ability to provide care for the Hopi people. My heart will always belong to serving them. Askwali (Thank You)

Lynette Figueroa is the Emergency Department Supervisory Clinical Nurse at Hopi Health Care Center in Polacca, Arizona.





FROM THE FIELD

**By Tara Peterson, Nurse Executive
Billings Area**

In mid-October the Blackfeet Service Unit (BFSU) in Browning, Montana had the opportunity to host the Critical Care Response Team (CCRT). Having this highly-skilled team to lend a supportive hand, provided great return and was very beneficial for the staff, as the BFSU is a fast-paced facility, meeting the needs of more than 13,000 active user patient population. The CCR Team consisted of one Medical Doctor, a Respiratory Therapist, and two Critical Care RNs, all from different areas of the country. During the 7-day deployment, the team provided a vast array of training opportunities for all available clinical staff across the Emergency, Inpatient, and Ambulatory Departments. Focus areas for training and assessment included: departmental and facility operations, especially those pertaining to COVID response efforts; critical care equipment, clinical protocols and policies, staffing, documentation, electronic health record, and public health efforts. Nurses and Providers at the BFSU were enthusiastic and receptive to the educational opportunities provided by the team. Through one-on-one, small group and scenario-based drill sessions, there was a wealth of informat-



-ion sharing packed into the week. The BFSU extends their appreciation to the CCR Team members for all of their efforts, as well as to all those who took part in the planning efforts to make the deployment possible. The Blackfeet Community Hospital, facility and staff, welcomes future collaborations with Tribal Health CCRT!



NURSE OF THE MONTH

Dedication / Leadership / Teamwork / Innovation



SEP

**Dr. Diana DeLeon,
PhD, MPH, RN**

Dr. DeLeon demonstrated exceptional devotion, dedicated work and selfless responses in supporting the service unit as Incident Commander and guided the ICS team to execute COVID-19 safety plans for staff and patients. For more of her accomplishments, click on link:

https://www.ihs.gov/sites/nursing/themes/responsive2017/display_objects/documents/DNSNOM092021.pdf .



OCT

**Dr. Melissa Hubbard,
DNP**

Dr. Hubbard continues to lead the Billings Area in revamping the Governing Board process, sustaining accreditation readiness and working with multiple service units to improve the credentialing and privileging process.

Follow link for more
https://www.ihs.gov/sites/nursing/themes/responsive2017/display_objects/documents/DNSNOM102021.pdf.



NOV

**Dorothea Begaye,
MHA, MSN, RN**

Ms. Begaye successfully implemented a plan to provide patient service clinics external to the hospital which centered on making health care accessible for patients to be seen in their vehicles, to be 'seen' by a telehealth provider or to be allowed in the facility (in limited numbers) for regular provider visits. To read more on Ms.

Begaye's contributions, see link:
https://www.ihs.gov/sites/nursing/themes/responsive2017/display_objects/documents/DNSNOM112021.pdf.



Resilience

Whisper

By Indigenous Poet *Andreanna Escamilla*

I've sat atop my boulders of woe, peering across a sun bit desert landscape, where clouds hung from its sky like cotton balls. Reflecting upon the years, they settled deep within the forsaken canyon carved within my chest. Here is my escape...my rest. I closed my eyes and let the ancient winds kiss my skin. "Breathe", it said in a whisper, "and leave your troubles here. Resign your fear, for these boulders eventually will crumble too, and the woes that you carry soon will be few." I did as my ancestors said, and left it all to erode, carrying away with me, a heart light with hope.

Resilience Tools:

Take a moment to watch this 3 minute video for ways to build resilience:

<https://www.healthwise.net/magellanhealth/Content/StdDocument.aspx?DOCHWID=abo2794>

Or try this interactive tool on how well you may bounce back from life's setbacks:

<https://www.healthwise.net/magellanhealth/Content/StdDocument.aspx?DOCHWID=tx4365>

For IHS resources for healing go to: <https://www.ihs.gov/mentalhealth/resourcesforhealing/>

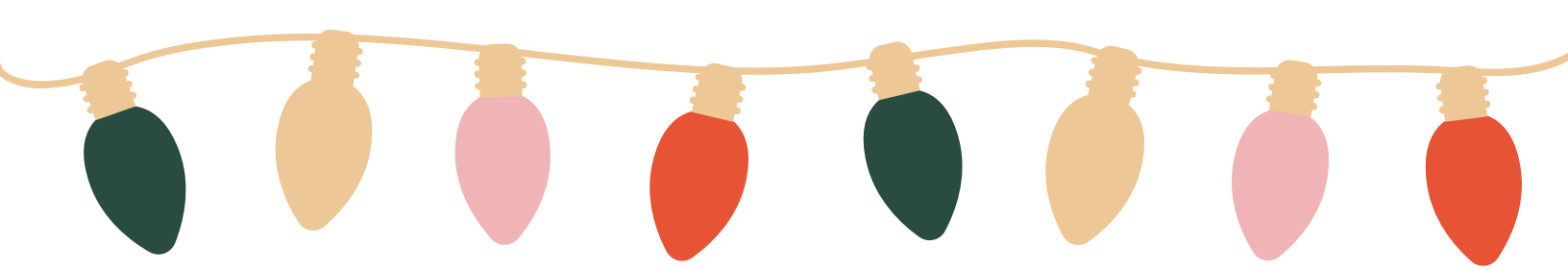
Community Wellness: #ResilienceThroughMeditation

Join CAPT Indira Harris every Wednesday from 8:35-9pm EST for a weekly meditation. "Stealing a moment for yourself during the day can be a challenge, so this is a good way to come down from the rigors of the day and reset the mind before you retire for the evening". – CAPT Harris. These sessions are for beginning and seasoned meditators, and during these weekly sessions you will practice various meditation techniques that you can use anytime.

Call in number: 1-866-880-0098

Passcode: 6699159





GET TO KNOW DNS STAFF

What is your favorite winter activity?



Capt. Carol Lincoln:

Every year my daughters and I drive to San Felipe Pueblo on Christmas Eve to look at everyone's light decorations. Nearly every house has amazing and creative decorations and lights and we drive through the Pueblo ooh'ing and ah'h'ing at what people have put together. As we make our way to church for midnight mass, we are surrounded by the scent of cedar in the air, this activity is the same every year and reminds us that we are truly home. It is always such a beautiful night and one of my favorite things to do for Christmas.

Ardith Aspaas:

We enjoy holiday music while the baking begins, using grandma's coveted sugar cookie recipe. All the kids gather around the table to decorate cookies. Laughing, playing, and competing for the best decorated cookie. My family loves playing in the snow, whether it is sledding, skiing, or snowboarding. The best part is ending our day warming up with hot cocoa, lattes, and hot Native tea.



Tina Tah:

I enjoy outdoor winter activities such as ice skating and skiing. The cool air is refreshing and getting outdoors during the winter months offers a physical benefit which is a plus. Walking my dogs in the winter is another favorite activity, we experience the outdoors and nature in a different way (so I usually take plenty of photos).

Jolene Tom:

I love to attend Christmas theater productions like the Nutcracker or enjoy the Trans-Siberian Orchestra with family. I love a quiet drive or stroll through the community to admire the Christmas lights, decorations, and the zoo lights while enjoying a cup of hot coco. There is something magical about lights and Christmas! Happy Holidays to all!

Capt. Stacey Dawson:

As a child I would make and decorate cookies with my grandmother over my winter break. She has since passed, but I have her "old-fashioned" metal cookie cutters now, and love reminiscing about those times as I make and decorate cookies with my children. Seems like I am sweeping up sprinkles for days after they decorate, but they have so much fun!

Wishing you a warm and joyful holiday season!



Jolene Tom
Nurse Consultant
PHN Grant Program



CAPT Carol Lincoln
Director



CAPT Stacey Dawson
Nurse Consultant
MCH



Ardith Aspaas
Nurse Consultant
EMSC



Tina Tah
Nurse Consultant
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