



MAR 23 2016

Indian Health Service  
Rockville MD 20852

Dear Great Plains Area Tribal Leader:

I am writing to notify you of my plan to schedule and personally meet with tribes within the Great Plains Area from April 5-7, 2016. Attached is an itinerary of the trip. We encourage you to invite your health directors and others who work on health care issues in your tribe so that we can have conversations that lead to action items, in the short term and in the longer term, that will improve health care for tribal members in the Great Plains Area.

As you know, I have only been the Indian Health Service (IHS) Principal Deputy Director for about three weeks. In this short time, however, I have been working diligently on the challenges we have in the Great Plains Area, including the systemic issues that face IHS such as staff and housing shortages. I am committed to making sustainable changes to ensure that we are providing quality health care to the patients we serve not only in the Great Plains Area but throughout the country. I fully support our treaty obligations and the federal obligation to provide access to health care not only in direct-service facilities but through tribal and urban centers.

In order to move forward, we need your help. We want to craft solutions with you in partnership with tribal leaders, tribal health directors, and other tribal members with health care expertise. I intend to have staff present from IHS Headquarters, Area and local service units to chart a course forward. It is my intention to have participation in the forum from all perspectives as we listen to concerns and seek your ideas and input on ways we can continue to improve the Great Plains Area IHS.

We value your feedback and advice, especially since the challenges we face are significant. Your input is vital for driving change and improvement. While our goal is to continue to move swiftly and deliberately, we honor and respect our Government-to-Government relationship to meet the needs of our patients.

We will be visiting with Tribes across the Great Plains Area during this 3-day visit. We will hold an IHS Update and Briefing session on Tuesday, April 5, 2016, at the Best Western Plus - Ramkota Hotel and Conference Center, 3200 West Maple Street in Sioux Falls, South Dakota 57107. This session gives us as a chance to meet in person, and we want to make sure our work reflects the input from all of the Tribes of the Great Plains Area (See Attachment – Agenda). As part of this briefing, there will be breakout sessions on issues such as staffing, staff quarters, telemedicine, delivery of services, and behavioral health. During these breakout sessions, we will solicit ideas for action items for both the short and long term.

On Wednesday, April 6, 2016, we will conduct tribal delegation meetings at the same location.

Page 2 – Dear Great Plains Area Tribal Leader

Please contact Chris Buchanan, Director, Office of Direct Service and Contracting Tribes at [Chris.Buchanan@ihs.gov](mailto:Chris.Buchanan@ihs.gov) or by phone at (301) 443-1104 to schedule tribal delegation meetings at time to discuss specific issues.

We also plan to hold calls with our partners at the Great Plains Tribal Chairman's Health Board, National Indian Health Board, National Congress of American Indians, and the IHS Direct Service Tribes Advisory Committee. You are always welcome to provide your input or recommendations at any time via postal mail or e-mail at [consultation@ihs.gov](mailto:consultation@ihs.gov).

Thank you for your partnership and I look forward to seeing you soon.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mary Smith".

Mary Smith  
Principal Deputy Director



**Indian Health Service  
2016 IHS Principal Deputy Director's Great Plains Area Briefing  
With Tribal Leaders**

Best Western Plus - Ramkota Hotel and Conference Center  
3200 West Maple Street, Sioux Falls, South Dakota 57107 April 5-6, 2016

Moderator: RADM Kevin Meeks, Acting Director, Great Plains Area

**AGENDA**

<u>Day 1 - Tuesday, April 5, 2016</u>		<u>Location</u>
10:00 AM	Introductions	Washington Room
10:30 AM	IHS Updates and Briefing	
12:00 PM	Lunch - On you own	
1:00 -2:15 PM	Breakout Session – 1	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff Quarters</li> <li>• Staffing</li> <li>• Behavioral Health</li> <li>• Healthcare Service Delivery</li> <li>• Tele-medicine</li> </ul>	Amphitheater 1 Jefferson Room Amphitheater 2 Viking Room Harvest Room
2:30-3:45 PM	Breakout Session – 2 ( <i>Repeat of Session 1</i> )	
4:00 PM	Summary of Breakout Sessions and Next Steps	Washington Room
5:00 PM	End of Day	
 <u>Day 2 - Wednesday, April 6, 2016</u>		
9:00 -11:30 AM	Tribal Delegation Meetings ( <i>TBD</i> )	Jefferson Room
11:30 AM	Lunch	
1:00 – 3:30 PM	Tribal Delegation Meetings ( <i>TBD</i> )	Jefferson Room
4:00 PM	End of Day	