

**Subject:** Message from RADM Buchanan

Good evening,

Today reminded me of my first day at Indian Health Service (IHS), 24 years ago. I am deeply honored to have the privilege to serve Indian Health Service—and all of you—as IHS’s acting director. IHS is truly an incredible agency with talented staff dedicated to the IHS mission...to raise the physical, mental, social, and spiritual health of American Indian and Alaska Natives to the highest level. This is a critical time for the IHS. We have seen many successes in the last few months, but still have challenges ahead. To address these challenges and build on success we will need a team approach.

Today, I spoke to several of our Office and Area Directors from around IHS, asking them to help continue identifying solutions to our challenges, while creating new opportunities to better serve our patients and tribal communities. Each relayed their commitment to the IHS mission and to be the best. Over the next several weeks, I intend to meet as many of the staff as possible to listen to your concerns and provide as much communication during this transition process.

To assist during this transition, I am pleased to announce some key staff who will join me to round out IHS leadership team:

**Kelly Taylor, RS, MPH**, (RADM, USPHS) will join the team as acting chief of staff. RADM Taylor began her career with IHS in 1990 as a Service Unit Sanitarian in Pine Ridge, South Dakota. She also served as an Environmental Health Specialist in Albuquerque, New Mexico, and as the Director of the IHS Albuquerque Area Office Division of Environmental Health Services.

**Michael Toedt, MD**, (CAPT, USPHS) will fill the role of acting IHS CMO. As the Acting CMO, Dr. Toedt is IHS’s lead expert on medical and public health topics, giving technical advice and guidance to the IHS Office of the Director and IHS staff throughout the country on American Indian and Alaska Native health care policies and issues. Dr. Toedt currently functions as CMO for the Nashville Area Office where he provided leadership and guidance for the Nashville Area medical services delivery, partnering with 29 Tribes or tribal organizations in 14 states.

**Sarah Linde, MD**, (RADM, USPHS), will fill the acting director for Office of Clinical Preventative Services (OCPS). In this position RADM Linde will be the principal advisor for policy development, budget development, and allocation for clinical, preventive, and public health programs throughout the IHS. OCPS is responsible for national health professional recruitment, health program implementation, emergency services, and the management of several grant programs.

Please join me in welcoming each of these staff to their new roles.

All other leadership positions will remain in place, and I appreciate the leadership team for their dedication, expertise and assistance during this transition. Thank you also for your notes and encouragement. The IHS is too crucial to the communities and patients we serve for us to fail. Together as team, we will accomplish great things.

Respectfully,

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