



## **Charlene Red Thunder**

### **Aberdeen Area Director**

### **Indian Health Service**

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Charlene Red Thunder, an enrolled member of the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe, began her career with the Indian Health Service (IHS), an agency within the Department of Health and Human Services, in 1986 as a budget analyst at the Aberdeen Area Office. Ms. Red Thunder subsequently held various positions of increasing responsibility and in a variety of progressively technical positions, including administrative officer for the Fort Yates Service Unit, subject matter expert in the Aberdeen Area Business Office, and Associate Director executive level at both the Phoenix Indian Medical Center and at the Bemidji Area Office. Ms. Red Thunder has also served as the Acting Bemidji Area Director. In 2006, her commitment to the Aberdeen Area brought her home to Cheyenne River as Chief Executive Officer of the Eagle Butte Service Unit.

As Area Director for the Aberdeen Area, Ms. Red Thunder has administrative responsibility for 19 service units consisting of 7 hospitals and 10 health centers. She manages a varied health program for more than 118,000 American Indian people eligible for IHS services. The Aberdeen Area IHS serves 17 Tribes and supports two urban Indian health programs; one located in Pierre, S.D., and the other in Omaha, Neb. The Aberdeen Area employs more than 1,900 employees and has an annual operating budget of more than \$302 million.

Ms. Red Thunder oversees a unique Indian health system composed of direct health services provided primarily through the IHS owned and operated facilities, but also through tribes that have assumed partial or full responsibility for their own health care programs through contractual arrangements with the IHS Aberdeen Area under the authority of the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (Public Law 93-638, as amended).

Ms. Red Thunder has received many awards and honors throughout her career, including two HHS Secretary Awards for Distinguished Service, two Special Act Awards from the Bemidji Area Office, Aberdeen Area Employee Award, and numerous special and superior performance awards.

Ms. Red Thunder graduated from the Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah, and received a master's degree in education from Northern State University in Aberdeen, South Dakota.