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# Clinton Indian Health Center Groundbreaking Ceremony

Clinton, Oklahoma

“A New Page of History in Indian Health”

by

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Good Afternoon. I am very pleased and honored to be present here today at this historical occasion, as we break ground for the new Clinton Indian Health Center. This day marks the culmination of the efforts of many people dedicated to improving health care services to the Indian people of the Oklahoma City area, and I would like to especially recognize a few people at this time, and thank them for their help in getting this project off the ground:

- John Daugherty, Area Director,
- Terri Schmidt, CEO, Clinton Service Unit,
- Randy Grinnell, Director, Oklahoma Area Office of Environmental Health
- Employees of the Office of Engineering Services- Dallas, and the Oklahoma City Area Office of Environmental Health and Engineering,
- Planning and Development Program staff at the Oklahoma City Area Office,
- Members of the Business Committee of the Cheyenne-Arapaho Tribes of Oklahoma,
- The Chiefs of the Cheyenne-Arapaho Tribes of Oklahoma
- Shawn Scott, construction manager
- C.H. Guernsey and Company, engineers
- Ed G. Bishop Architects
- Members of the Clinton Service Unit Health Board
- And many of my staff in Headquarters

*The text is the basis of Dr. Grim’s oral remarks at the groundbreaking ceremony for the Clinton Indian Health Center in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, on March 11, 2005. It should be used with the understanding that some material may have been added or omitted during presentation.*

This health center certainly begins a new page in the history of Indian health care. The construction of the original facility was completed in 1933, before the IHS existed. We have come a long way since then, and working in partnership with Tribal governments and American Indian and Alaska Native people, we have made great strides in improving Indian health.

This facility is a reflection of the power of Tribal collaboration and self-determination. On May 5, 2004, the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes of Oklahoma entered into a P.L. 93-638 construction management contract with the IHS to design and construct a new \$18.9 million dollar replacement facility for the 72-year-old hospital. The Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes of Oklahoma and the Indian Health Service began planning for the new 5,294-square-meter clinic in 1998. The new facility will have more than twice the total space of the old 11 separate buildings that it replaces.

The new facility is projected to serve an Indian user population of over 3,600 living in the Clinton Service Area, with an estimated 18,300 primary care patient visits per year. The clinic will also serve the Counties of Beckham, Blaine, Custer, Dewey, Roger Mills, and Washita with optometry services for a projected population of 5,900. The new health center will provide a myriad of services, including various ambulatory services, such as audiology, dental care, eye care, and primary care. Ancillary services to be provided include diagnostic imaging, pharmacy, and physical therapy. Behavioral health services will include mental health, social work, and a child behavior unit. Preventive health services will include public health nursing, public health education, and maternal and child health services. Additional support services provided at the facility will include administration, business office, health information management, information management, clinical engineering, facilities management, environmental health and engineering, housekeeping, and property and supply.

This new health center is a direct result of the successful ongoing partnership between the American Indian and Alaska Native people and the Indian Health Service. This project is an impressive achievement, and it reflects the dedication of the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes of Oklahoma and the Indian Health Service to our mutual goal of improving the health and wellness of Indian people.

I think this is why we in the Indian health system have accomplished so much in so short a time; because we are working together, for our people, and for our children.

When the people most directly affected by the services provided are involved in the planning and implementation process, the outcome is always optimal. I do not believe the needs of Indian people can effectively be addressed without their input and collaboration. Together, we have climbed the mountains and met the challenges that many thought could never be overcome. And together, we will continue to write new pages in the history of Indian health.

I would like to take this opportunity to mention another important historical event concerning the Indian Health Service. In July of 1955, the Indian Health Service was officially transferred from the Bureau of Indian Affairs to the Public Health Service, making FY 2005 the 50th anniversary year for the Indian Health Service.

In 2005 we are embarking on a special year of celebrations, and you will see special acknowledgements of our 50<sup>th</sup> year in a variety of places and special events. The specially designed 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary logo is appearing on IHS official documents now, and posters have been provided to each Area Office for display within the Agency. A visual picture of our history will also be made available in the form of a specially designed poster that depicts the history and major accomplishments of the IHS. A 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary reference library of historical

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documents and photographs is being compiled, which will be available on the IHS website and on a special 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary CD. Also, we will be highlighting the successes and accomplishments of the past 50 years at major IHS meetings throughout the year, including my monthly Director's Staff meeting at IHS Headquarters.

As we join you in celebrating the history being made here today, and as we look with hope to the future, I hope all of you here will join us as we also look to the past, and celebrate the establishment of the Indian Health Service.

Today heralds a new beginning, but it is one, like all our accomplishments, that is built upon the efforts and sacrifices of all those who came before us, as well as those who worked directly to make this health center possible. I thank all of you once again, and look forward to working with you as we continue to build a stronger and more effective Indian health system.

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