



Indian Health Service Press Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Indian Health Service CEO Receives 2006 American Hospital Association Award

Shelly Rae Harris, Chief Executive Officer at the Indian Health Service (IHS) Rosebud Comprehensive Health Care Facility in Rosebud, South Dakota, has been selected to receive the American Hospital Association (AHA) 2006 Federal Health Care Executive Special Achievement Award. This award was presented yesterday, March 22, in conjunction with the American College of Healthcare Executives Congress in New Orleans, LA.

The AHA's recognition program was created by the AHA Governing Council of the Federal Hospitals Constituency Section to recognize federal career health care executives who have distinguished themselves through leadership or innovative achievements that have contributed substantially to the mission of the federal health care system.

Ms. Harris, an enrolled member of the Turtle Mountain Chippewa Tribe, assumed the duties of Chief Executive Officer for the IHS Rosebud Comprehensive Health Care Facility in May 2005. Ms. Harris has been employed with the IHS since 1989. The IHS is an agency within the Department of Health and Human Services and the Rosebud facility is part of the IHS Aberdeen Area.

"Ms. Harris has made positive changes at the Rosebud Comprehensive Health Care Facility that have resulted in improvements in the delivery of healthcare," stated Dr. Charles Grim, IHS Director. "Her management style integrates customer service and satisfaction into the healthcare delivery system. This award acknowledges her leadership, enthusiasm, and commitment on behalf of American Indian and Alaska Native people. We are very proud of her achievements."

Ms. Harris' sense of commitment and dedication to the IHS have enabled her to reduce physician and nursing personnel turnover and vacancy rates within the facility. She has also decreased the facility's financial deficit.

Ms. Harris spearheaded a Community Outreach where she incorporated the assistance and teamwork of not only the IHS employees but that of tribal employees. The Community Outreach involved the IHS and tribal employees going into the surrounding communities and identifying customers who were eligible for Medicare or Medicaid and assisting them in completing the application for assistance. As a result of her leadership, the number of customers seen at the facility who have some form of third-party resources has increased by over 900 since September 2006.

Through various communication strategies, Ms. Harris has formed a good working relationship with the Rosebud Sioux Tribal Council, Rosebud Sioux Health Board, and members of the Rosebud Sioux Tribe. As a result of her efforts, there has been a positive difference in the working relationship between the IHS and the Rosebud Sioux Tribe. She focuses on customer service and the delivery of quality healthcare, resulting in increased productivity.



NOTICE TO EDITORS: To schedule an interview with Shelly Harris, contact the IHS Public Affairs Office at 301-443-3593. Additional information about the IHS is available on the IHS website at <http://www.ihs.gov> and <http://info.ihs.gov>

