



## **Richie K. Grinnell**

### **Assistant Surgeon General**

### **Nashville Area Director**

### **Indian Health Service**

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Richie K. Grinnell, R.S., M.P.H., a member of the Sac and Fox Nation of Missouri, is the Director of the Nashville Area of the Indian Health Service (IHS), an agency within the Department of Health and Human Services. He is an Assistant Surgeon General and holds the rank of Rear Admiral in the Commissioned Corps of the United States Public Health Service (USPHS). As Area Director, he administers a comprehensive health care system providing preventive, curative and environmental health services to more than 50,000 American Indians and 28 federally recognized Tribes across 14 states in the southern and eastern United States.

RADM Grinnell oversees a unique Indian health system composed of Tribes that have assumed partial or full responsibility for their own health care programs through Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act, P.L. 93-638 Tribal contracts and compacts. The largest IHS-funded facility in the Nashville Area is the Cherokee Hospital in Cherokee, North Carolina, which is now managed by the Eastern Band of Cherokees under a self-determination compact. Cherokee is also the site of Unity Regional Treatment Center, a residential substance abuse facility for adolescents that focuses on a 12-step program following traditional values. As part of a national Indian health system of Federal, Tribal, and Urban Indian health programs, the Nashville Area also contributes to the support of two Urban health programs located in New York, New York, and Jamaica Plains, Massachusetts.

RADM Grinnell continues a family heritage of professional environmental health service within the IHS first started by his father, Earl F. Grinnell, who was one of the first sanitarians hired by the IHS when it assumed responsibility for Indian Health Care from the Bureau of Indian Affairs in 1957. Beginning in 1980 he served field assignments as an environmental health sanitarian at the Wewoka (Oklahoma) Service Unit, the Shawnee (Oklahoma) Service Unit, the Southern Colorado Ute Service Unit, and the Santa Fe (New Mexico) Service Unit. He served in several mid and upper management assignments with the IHS Albuquerque Area Office as the District Sanitarian; Director of the Division of Environmental Health; Associate Director, Office of Environmental Health and Engineering; Acting Area Executive Officer; and Acting Area Director. In 1999, he relocated to the IHS Nashville Area as the Associate Director, Office of Environmental Health and Engineering. He has also served as Acting Area Executive Officer and Acting Area Director while in Nashville.

RADM Grinnell earned a bachelor of science degree in environmental science from East Central State University in Ada, Oklahoma in 1978 and a master of public health degree from the University of Hawaii in 1990. He is a registered sanitarian with the National Environmental Health Association. RADM Grinnell has received several PHS honors and awards including an Exceptional Capability Promotion to Captain, the Outstanding Service Medal, two Commendation Medals, two Achievement Medals, a Citation, an Outstanding Unit Citation, three Unit Commendations and the Crisis Response Service Award. He received the 2007 Flag Officer Award from the American Indian Alaska Native Commissioned Officer Advisory Committee for his continuous record of outstanding leadership.