



# Indian Health Service Press Release

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## Indian Health Service Nurses Receive National Awards

Two Indian Health Service (IHS) nurses have been selected as the recipients of national awards from the Nursing Professional Advisory Committee of the U.S. Public Health Service (USPHS). The IHS, an agency within the Department of Health and Human Services, provides a comprehensive health service delivery system for approximately 1.8 million of the nation's estimated 3.2 million American Indians and Alaska Natives.

CDR Amy Buckanaga of the Commissioned Corps of the USPHS and Senior Staff Nurse assigned at the Cass Lake IHS Hospital in Cass Lake, Minnesota, is the 2005 recipient of the *McLaughlin Award for Clinical Services*. CDR Buckanaga is recognized for improving immunization rates and developing a well woman program within the Cass Lake Service Unit in Minnesota. Due to her efforts in coordinating activities among IHS, tribal, county, and state health programs, immunization rates increased by 13 percent for the Greater Leech Lake Service Unit. In addition, influenza vaccination rates for high-risk patients increased last year through her efforts, despite the vaccine shortage. This award recognizes CDR Buckanaga's exceptional contributions to improving the overall health of the over 12,000 patients served at the Cass Lake Indian Hospital.

Cassandra Williams, RN, Nurse Educator at the Alaska Native Medical Center, Anchorage, Alaska, is the 2005 recipient of the *Petry Leone Award for Health Promotion and Education*. She is being recognized for her exceptional leadership skills in coordinating the provision of Advanced Cardiac Life Support (ACLS) education to health care providers throughout Alaska. Using her understanding the educational and practice needs of rural Alaska health care providers, she has developed an innovative teaching technique called "What's This Rhythm?" for use in ACLS courses. This interactive, integrated review of arrhythmias, pharmacology, and algorithms that encourage critical thinking has now been in use in rural Alaska for more than 10 years. Since she initiated this exceptional teaching technique, students have reported improved understanding of the importance of context in evaluating cardiac arrhythmias, choosing treatment modalities, and following algorithms. Through her leadership, healthcare providers have been better able to provide emergency response services to the Native population in Alaska.



NOTICE TO EDITORS: Additional information about the IHS is available on the IHS Web site at <http://www.ihs.gov> and <http://info.ihs.gov>

