



JUL 03 2002

Dear Tribal Leader

I have been asked to serve as the Acting Director of the Indian Health Service through the transition period preceding the Administration's appointment of a new Director. As Acting Director I will continue to carry out the programs and policies that have been developed with the Tribes and to maintain a positive working relationship as we strive together toward an improved health status for American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) people.

"The mission of the Indian Health Service, in partnership with American Indian and Alaska Native people, is to raise their physical, mental, social, and spiritual health to the highest level." The mission, still vital as a foundation for the direction of the Indian health care system, has fostered effective collaboration and meaningful consultation that will serve us well throughout this time of transition. What began in 1994 as the Director's vision for the Agency has now evolved into the Agency's vision, and that, too, remains unchanged. There is much still to be done. It is my intent that all workgroups and projects currently under way will continue their work as we strive to improve the management and efficiency of the organization to provide quality services throughout the Indian health care system.

As we progress through this transition period, be assured that when there is information to share regarding the directorship or other transition issues, it will be promptly shared in the most expeditious way possible. As always, my door is open to you if you have any questions, and I trust we will continue our important work together in our commitment to improve the health status of our AI/AN people.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Michel E. Lincoln".

Michel E. Lincoln
Acting Director