



AUG 01 2003

Dear Tribal Leader:

I extend to you my sincere appreciation as the newly confirmed Director of the Indian Health Service (IHS). The ongoing effective leadership that you have provided to our American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) communities has been invaluable. Your unflagging support and cooperation during my tenure as Interim Director have contributed greatly to my full assumption of this critical leadership position.

During the past year as Interim Director, I have come to realize and understand the tremendous challenges we face, as partners, in our mission to elevate the health status of Indian people to the highest possible level. I take on this challenge with you as my partner, and I am committed to respect and uphold the government-to-government relationship that is an integral part of our foundation. I am committed to acknowledging and promoting the principles and laws of Tribal sovereignty. This is at the very core of the IHS's responsibility to provide high quality and comprehensive health care to our Indian people and to our Indian communities throughout this great Nation.

I am excited about what the future holds for us as partners. I see the collaborative efforts between the Tribal Leaders and the IHS as a foundation to achieving the best quality health care for our AI/AN people. I will continue to lead the charge to establish collaborative relations with our sister agencies within the Department of Health and Human Services, other departments of the Federal Government, and outside organizations. I am confident that I have the support of the Secretary and the President in pursuing this important endeavor to ensure every possible resource is identified to support our goal and mission to elevate the health status of Indian people to the highest possible level.

I eagerly look forward to continuing our partnership to work together to achieve our common goals in all areas of health. I sincerely thank each and every one of you for your past and future support.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Charles W. Grim, DDS". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Charles W. Grim, D.D.S., M.H.S.A.
Assistant Surgeon General
Interim Director