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Indian Health Service
Rockville MD 20852

A Message From the Director of the Indian Health Service

The Indian Health Service (IHS), a Department of Health and Human Services agency, is the principal Federal health care provider and advocate for the health of American Indians and Alaska Natives (AI/AN). Employing a community-based system of care, the IHS is the primary source of personal and public health care services for the majority of the Nation's estimated 2.4 million AI/ANs. The IHS is the only source of care for the many AI/AN people who live on or near a reservation in a remote and poverty-stricken area of the country where other sources of health care are less available.

Child abuse and neglect are serious problems in AI/AN communities as they are in communities across the United States. Today at the IHS, employees are working in collaboration with AI/AN child abuse and neglect programs throughout the country to address this serious social and public health issue. We know that such efforts require a well-coordinated, multi-disciplinary approach, and we are working in collaboration with local Tribes, other agencies, and various social and public health disciplines to bring about positive change. At local IHS hospitals and clinics, staffs are involved in child protection teams and multi-disciplinary teams to maximize efforts to diminish the ongoing problem of child abuse and neglect.

As a participant in the national effort to significantly reduce child abuse and neglect, the IHS hopes that this handbook will serve as a useful tool in addressing what we believe is a very important issue in our country.

Charles W. Grim, DDS

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