

2008 ANNUAL SELF-GOVERNANCE CONFERENCE
20th Anniversary of Tribal Self-Governance: Celebrating Excellence
Riviera Hotel & Casino; Las Vegas, Nevada
Tuesday, April 29, 2008

BREAKOUT SESSION 5:
**HHS & TRIBAL RECRUITMENT, RETENTION & SCHOLARSHIPS: SERVING NATIVE
AMERICAN AND ALASKA NATIVE NATIONS**

Breakout Description:

Recruiting, supporting and retaining the best workforce will transform the IHS into a high-performance Federal government agency and safeguard high standards of care for Tribally-operated Health programs. This is accomplished through information sharing with Tribes regarding current opportunities in HHS recruitment, retention, and scholarships.

Moderator: Susan Anderson, M.P.A., Emerging Leader, OTP/IHS

Recorder: Wendie Langton, Special Assistant to the Chairman & President/SG Liaison, ANTHC

Panelists:

- Sonya Conant, Director of Human Resources, ANTHC
- Dr. Phillip Smith, M.D., M.P.H., Director, Division of Planning Evaluation & Research, IHS
- Sandra L. Hildane, M.S.N., R.N., Chief Nurse, IHS
- Debra Black, 437 Scholarship Recipient, Emerging Leader, OTSG/IHS

Breakout Summary:

Sonya Conant: Discussed the importance of recruitment, retention, education programs, a few of the tribal health organizations in Alaska and critical success factors, highlights as follows:

- Significance of Recruitment: must ensure capacity to provide services within the communities that are necessary, accessible, timely, culturally sensitive and appropriate. Recruitment must positively impact patient outcomes and quality of life!
- Recruitment Challenges: Community challenges include: geographic location, isolation, weather, local amenities, community acceptance, lack of local labor pools, education programs, and housing. And organizational challenges include: financial constraints, lack of organizational infrastructure, lack of skilled recruiters, pay and benefits, ICPA (Indian Child Protection Act), generational issues, and competition.
- Retaining employees is also a top priority for employers today, yet it is no easy issue to address. In changing manager behaviors and attitudes to respond to the importance of voice, balance, and meaningful work, employees will find that they no longer have to look for greener pastures—they are experiencing the best that organizations can offer: a place where they are valued and respected as not just workers, but as fellow human beings.
- Significance of Retention: retention of competent, motivated, engaged and satisfied staff results in increased quality and customer satisfaction.
- Why people leave: isolation, supervisor/management, community acceptance, cost of living, family, technology, housing and pay/benefits.
- Education is a significant strategy for both recruitment and retention of a qualified and competent workforce. With the anticipated shortfall of qualified workers, the measures we take today to plan for our staffing needs will greatly assist us in meeting and measuring organizational goals. The number of individuals entering and completing medical school and other disciplines is decreasing. We need to focus now to ensure we have an adequate number of health care workers tomorrow.
- Education Programs: scholarships, internships, apprenticeships, certification/vocational training, work study, loan repayment, CHA/P's and DHAT's.

- Native Employment: Our Native people will deliver care and services that are culturally sensitive. They have deep ties to the community and people so have their best interest at heart. Those that we develop serve as role models and will encourage others to become health care providers as well as live healthier lives.
- It is critical to “grow your own”
- Success Factors: infrastructure, mission driven, better hires, grown your own, partner with educational institutions and the community, have competitive pay and benefits and most of all, be realistic!

Dr. Phillip Smith discussed IHS in general, provided an update on current recruitment activities and future plans, retention activities and provided an overview of the IHS scholarship program, highlights as follows:

- Vacancy Crisis: there is a national shortage of health care providers, for IHS, we are unique and location of our clinical services, lack of funding, disjointed recruiting and retention services. It is the vision of the IHS that all vacancies are filled by qualified dedicated professionals.
- Specific Recruitment Improvements: IHS marketing campaign, improved website design, job vacancy database upgrade, improving ability to access vacancy rates through IT application and HR modules, working more closely with HR and provide a conduit for information regarding HR products (e.g., direct hire, quick hire).
- Local Recruitment: local recruitment activities are key, HQ and Area Office and discipline recruiters can provide contacts and applicants to the site, local staff follow-up is what makes the applicant want to go to a particular site, and professionals want to know what community their family is joining.
- IHS Marketing Campaign: professional advertisements, a consistent message and look, and ease in accessing information when applying for positions.
- Loan Repayment: is based on a priority system because the need is great!
- There are two types of Scholarships available: Health Professions Pre-Graduate Scholarship, 103-P; and Health Professions Scholarship, 104.

Sandra Heldane focused on nursing retention and recruitment, highlights as follows:

- The average vacancy rate for nursing in 2007 was 20.75% (note: IHS facilities are required to report vacancy rates quarterly; however, Tribal facilities are not required to report).
- Impact of the Nursing Shortage: quality of work life and quality of patient care is impacted.
- Failure to retain nurses contributes to avoidable patient deaths.
- More nurses at the bedside could save lives.
- The average age of a nurse in the U.S. is 46.8, which means that many are reaching retirement age and the average age for an IHS is higher.
- There are a lot of restrictions on pay for nurses within the IHS, which makes recruitment difficult.
- Growing Our Own Nurses through the 437 Scholarship Program, through Section 112 Grants to Schools of Nursing, Section 118 (not available for Tribes who have taken their Tribal Shares) and Long-Term Training.
- Nursing Mentorship program.
- Nursing Preceptor Program helps the new grad to apply theory to practice, set priorities, organize and evaluate patient care and function independently within the health care team.
- The ANMC has achieved Magnet Status.

Debra Black discussed her experience as a 437 Scholarship Recipient.