



Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

Media Contact: Tozier - Int. 4306 | Information Service

For Immediate Release: June 26, 1955

[Print PDF](#)

In a major step designed to improve and expand Federal health services to Indians in the United States and Alaska, the Bureau of Indian Affairs of the Department of the Interior will transfer its entire health program to the Public Health Service on July 1.

Involved in the transfer will be about 3,600 Indian Bureau employees and about 970 buildings. The real property inventory, estimated to be worth about \$40,000,000, includes 56 hospitals, 21 health centers, 13 boarding school infirmaries, and numerous other structures used in the health program.

Acting Secretary of the Interior Clarence Davis said that it is believed that the transfer is the largest shift of Government installations and personnel made in recent years. "It is in keeping with the earnest aim of the administration to provide the best possible health services for our Indian citizens," he said.

The transfer will take place under legislation strongly urged by the Bureau of Indian Affairs and endorsed by the Department of the Interior in recognition of the chronic difficulty facing the Bureau in recruiting and retaining qualified doctors, nurses, and other medical personnel for service in its field hospitals and other installations.

Public Law 568, which was passed by the 83rd Congress and approved by President Eisenhower, was also supported by many prominent medical groups and by Indian tribal organizations.

The first congressional appropriation specifically designated for Indian health was passed in 1911 and totaled \$40,000. In fiscal 1955, the appropriation totaled \$23,418,898 and accounted for about one-fourth of the Indian Bureau's budget and about the same proportion of its personnel.

In the 31 years since the Indian health program was established on a formally organized basis, many important achievements have been made in meeting the health problems of the Nation's 400,000 Indians.

These include the development of an effective treatment for the eye disease, trachoma; the widespread use of BCG vaccination for protection against tuberculosis and of isoniazid for control of the disease; and the provision of hospitalization for thousands of Indian tubercular and other patients through contracts with non-Federal hospitals.

Recently, a greatly expanded preventive medicine program was launched with the aim of bringing the benefits of modern sanitation directly into Indian homes and communities.

During the first century of relationships with the Indians, some health services were provided by the War Department and later under the Department of the Interior.

In 1924 a Health Division was established with a chief directly responsible to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs.

Later, arrangements were made with the Public Health Service to provide health personnel for certain

key positions, and these assignments have been greatly increased in recent years. The July 1 transfer is a culmination of this process.

A list of the Bureau's hospitals being transferred July 1 follows:

| STATE AND HOSPITAL | LOCATION | RATED BED CAPACITY |
|------------------------|----------------------|--------------------|
| Arizona | | |
| Colorado River | Parker, Ariz. | 32 |
| Fort Apache | Whiteriver, Ariz. | 41 |
| Hopi | Keams Canyon, Ariz. | 35 |
| Phoenix Medical Center | Phoenix, Ariz. | 200 |
| Pima | Sacaton, Ariz. | 30 |
| San Carlos | San Carlos, Ariz. | 35 |
| San Xavier | Tucson, Ariz. | 32 |
| Navajo Medical Center | Ft. Defiance, Ariz. | 208 |
| Western Navajo | Tuba City, Ariz. | 75 |
| Winslow | Winslow, Ariz. | 73 |
| Fort Yuma | Yuma, Ariz. | 22 |
| California | | |
| Hoop Valley | Hoop Valley, Calif. | 19 |
| Minnesota | | |
| Cass Lake | Bemidji, Minn. | 30 |
| Fond du Lac | Cloquet, Minn. | 14 |
| Red Lake | Red Lake, Minn. | 21 |
| White Earth | White Earth, Minn. | 13 |
| Mississippi | | |
| Choctaw | Philadelphia, Miss. | 27 |
| Montana | | |
| Blackfeet | Browning, Mont. | 38 |
| Crow | Crow Agency, Mont. | 32 |
| Ft. Belknap | Harlem, Mont. | 39 |
| Ft. Peck | Poplar, Mont. | 23 |
| Nebraska | | |
| Winnebago | Winnebago, Nebraska | 32 |
| Nevada | | |
| Walker River | Scurz, Nev. | 32 |
| Western Shoshone | Owyhee, Nev. | 16 |
| New Mexico | | |
| Albuquerque Sanatorium | Albuquerque, N. Mex. | 108 |
| Eastern Navajo | Crownpoint, N. Mex. | 56 |
| Mescalero | Mescalero, N. Mex. | 33 |
| Northern Navajo | Shiprock, N. Mex. | 41 |

| | | |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|-----|
| Santa Fe | Santa Fe, N. Mex. | 54 |
| Zuni | Zuni, N. Mex. | 35 |
| North Carolina | | |
| Cherokee | Cherokee, N.C. | 25 |
| North Dakota | | |
| Standing Rock | Fort Yates, N. Dak. | 42 |
| Turtle Mountain | Belcourt, N. Dak. | 36 |
| Oklahoma | | |
| Clinton | Clinton, Okla. | 28 |
| Kiowa | Lawton, Okla. | 80 |
| Pawnee-Ponca | Pawnee, Okla. | 33 |
| Shawnee Sanatorium | Shawnee, Okla. | 106 |
| Claremore | Claremore, Okla. | 69 |
| Wm. W. Hastings | Tahlequah, Okla. | 64 |
| Talihina Medical Center | Talihina, Okla. | 231 |
| South Dakota | | |
| Cheyenne River | Cheyenne Agency, S. Dak. | 25 |
| Pine Ridge | Pine Ridge, S. Dak. | 27 |
| Rosebud | Rosebud, S. Dak. | 36 |
| Sioux Sanatorium | Rapid City, S. Dak. | 140 |
| Sisseton | Sisseton, S. Dak. | 30 |
| Yankton | Wagner, S. Dak. | 24 |
| Washington | | |
| Colville | Nespelem, Wash. | 36 |
| Tacoma Sanatorium | Tacoma, Wash. | 330 |
| Alaska | | |
| Anchorage Medical Center | Anchorage, Alaska | 406 |
| Barrow | Point Barrow, Alaska | 13 |
| Bethel | Bethel, Alaska | 65 |
| Juneau | Juneau, Alaska | 45 |
| Kanakanak | Kanakanak, Alaska | 51 |
| Kotzebue | Kotzebue, Alaska | 35 |
| Mt. Edgecumbe Med. Center | Mt. Edgecumbe, Alaska | 365 |
| Tanana | Tanana, Alaska | 31 |