



FACT SHEET

Indian Health Service Sexual Assault Response Efforts

The Indian Health Service (IHS) established its first formal sexual assault policy in March 2011 that will enable more American Indians and Alaska Natives (AI/AN) to get the care they need to heal and will aid the justice system in holding perpetrators accountable by:

- Standardizing the care for sexual assault survivors at IHS hospitals and clinics;
- Improving access to trained sexual assault forensic examiners 24 hours a day, 7 days a week;
- Encouraging personnel to collect accurate evidence in a timely manner and to assist the patient, law enforcement, and prosecution in adjudicating criminal acts;
- Ensuring survivors' needs are addressed; and
- Supporting community efforts to participate in a sexual assault response team.

Partnerships:

The IHS and the Department of Justice (DOJ) Office for Victims of Crime entered into a partnership involving the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Department of the Interior to develop the AI/AN Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner-Sexual Assault Response Team (SANE-SART) Initiative. The goal of the SANE/SART Initiative is to address the needs of sexual assault victims in Indian Country.

IHS planning recommendations for ongoing improvements for domestic violence and sexual assault services:

- Continue revisions of the IHS Sexual Assault Policy based on comments received from Tribes, Urban Indian leadership, the DOJ, and Government Accountability Office;
- Develop an IHS Sexual Assault Policy Implementation and Monitoring Plan;
- Given the focus of the current IHS Sexual Assault Policy on hospital-based care, develop a sexual assault policy for all IHS facilities, such as outpatient clinics and health stations;
- Offer SANE-SAFE-SART training and provide forensic examination equipment for all 28 IHS and 17 Tribal hospitals by December 2012;
- Develop and offer domestic violence/sexual assault training and curriculum for Indian Health System facilities; and
- Develop new/updated IHS policies and procedures for domestic violence, child sexual abuse, and elder abuse.

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