



Christopher Poole DHA, LCSW

Bemidji Area Director

Indian Health Service

Dr. Christopher Poole, DHA, LCSW is an enrolled member of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma, is the Area Director for the Bemidji Area Indian Health Service. The IHS, an agency within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, is the principal federal healthcare advocate and provider for American Indians and Alaska Natives.

Dr. Poole was appointed as the Area Director for Bemidji Area Indian Health Service in 2024 and is responsible for providing leadership in the administration of a comprehensive federal, tribal, and urban Indian healthcare system for American Indians and Alaska Natives, primarily members of the thirty-four federally recognized tribes and six urban Indian health programs located in Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, and Wisconsin. He also provides oversight of three federally operated service units in the Bemidji Area and maintains a close working relationship with the Great Lakes Area Tribal Health Board and the Midwest Alliance of Sovereign Tribes.

Dr. Poole has served as the Acting Director of the Office of Direct Service and Contracting Tribes for the last year. He also served as the Director of Tribal and Urban Services for the Bemidji Area Office. Dr. Poole has also been serving as the Bemidji Area Agency Lead Negotiator (ALN) and Contract Proposal Liaison Officer for eight years. As such, he holds the operational responsibility for implementing Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (ISDEAA) and the Indian Healthcare Improvement Act (IHCA) statutes through managing Area Tribal contracting and compacting activities. Previously Dr. Poole Served as the Bemidji Area Behavioral Health Consultant.

Prior to joining the Indian Health Service, Chris served as the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Military Treatment Facility (MTF) Liaison at Ft. Bliss, TX. As an MTF Liaison, he worked with both the Department of Defense (DOD) and the VA to facilitate and coordinate the transition of wounded, injured, and ill soldiers to the VA for healthcare and community reintegration.

In 2009, Chris was appointed to the Army's Wounded Warrior (AW2) program as an Advocate at Ft. Bliss. As an AW2 Advocate, he provided assistance, advocacy, and case management services to the most severely wounded, injured, and ill soldiers returning from combat operations in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Chris holds a Bachelor's Degree in Social Work from the University of Texas at El Paso and a Master's Degree in Social Work from New Mexico State University, a Master's Degree in Business Administration and a Doctorate in Health Administration from the University of Phoenix.