



Indian Health Service Press Release

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IHS Announces New CEO at Pine Ridge Hospital

Experienced health care administrator to provide executive leadership

The Indian Health Service Great Plains Area announces today that a new chief executive officer has joined Pine Ridge Hospital in Pine Ridge, South Dakota.

Mark Meersman, MBA, will be responsible and accountable for managing all administrative and health care activities for the hospital. As chief executive officer, he will provide overall leadership and direction for all professional, administrative, technical and clerical employees, ensuring the delivery of high-quality health care and supporting ongoing quality improvement efforts. He will also work closely with tribal leaders in order to maintain open communication and meet the needs of the local community.

“Mark Meersman brings a wealth of experience and leadership from his career as a health care administrator in the U.S Air Force,” said Capt. Francis Frazier, IHS Great Plains Area acting director. “Mark’s demonstrated leadership, expertise and success in health care policy and management will be invaluable assets as we carry out our mission of raising the physical, mental, social, and spiritual health of American Indians and Alaska Natives to the highest level.”

As part of Phase II of the Pine Ridge Hospital [Systems Improvement Agreement](#) with the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, Meersman will be working with IHS Great Plains Area and national leadership and [a team of coaches and consultants](#) to improve services at the hospital to fully meet safety and quality of care standards.

“I am very excited to be a new member of the Pine Ridge Service Unit team. I look forward to working with the entire staff to deliver safe, high-quality health care and an excellent patient experience to improve the health of our patients – they deserve nothing less,” Meersman said. “I look forward to working with President Weston and the Oglala Sioux Tribe council to address their priorities and those of the community they, and we, serve.”

Meersman retired from the Air Force as a lieutenant colonel after 23 years of service. His most recent assignment was as chief of the Health Benefits Branch in the Air Force Surgeon General’s Office, where he oversaw and directed health policy and programs for 75 hospitals and clinics. He led development and implementation of guidance on outpatient and inpatient medical records, service treatment record management and processing, inpatient coding, admissions and dispositions, patient registration,

medical evaluation board administration, Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), and health benefits policy.

Meersman enlisted in the United States Air Force in 1993 as a pharmacy technician and was commissioned as a Medical Service Corps officer in 1996. In 2007, he deployed to Afghanistan as the patient administration officer for the 455th Expeditionary Medical Group in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

Meersman earned a bachelor's degree from Augustana College in Rock Island, Illinois, and a Master of Business Administration in health care administration from City University of Seattle in Bellevue, Washington. He is an American College of Healthcare Executives fellow and a Board Certified Medical Practice Executive.

Throughout this year, IHS has been collaborating with tribal leaders and local health partners on a series of actions to aggressively confront some of the long-standing health care service challenges in the Great Plains Area, pursuing solutions that will bring sustainable improvements in quality of care at regional hospitals and facilities, like Pine Ridge Hospital, and those across the IHS system:

- IHS awarded a [one-year contract to The Joint Commission for accreditation, training and education services](#) to strengthen quality and patient safety
- IHS expanded efforts to ensure medical equipment used at IHS facilities is up to date, properly maintained, and reliable, through the establishment of a [new policy](#) on the minimum standards for medical equipment management, purchase, maintenance, and replacement.
- IHS announced a [\\$6.8 million contract to Avera Health to expand telehealth](#) in the Great Plains Area. This initiative is intended to bring tele-video ED and specialty services to the Great Plains Area IHS facilities, including emergency medical services.
- CMS awarded a [new contract to help support best health care practices](#) and other operational improvements for IHS federal government operated hospitals that participate in the Medicare program.
- IHS hired a new [Chief Medical Officer](#) and [Deputy Chief Medical Officer](#) for the Great Plains Area, to serve as the lead regional experts on IHS medical and public health services, providing technical leadership and guidance to facility chief medical officers and clinical staff in the region.

The 45 bed Pine Ridge Hospital, serving a Sioux Indian population of more than 17,000, is the largest in the IHS Great Plains Area. A 16 physician staff sees medical, obstetrical, pediatric, and surgical patients. The facility located in Pine Ridge, South Dakota, provides general surgical, obstetrical, pediatric, and dental services. Kyle and Wanblee Health Centers and three health stations (Allen, Manderson, and Porcupine) operate within the Pine Ridge Service Unit. For more information about IHS's Pine Ridge Service Unit, visit www.ihs.gov/greatplains/healthcarefacilities.

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The IHS, an agency in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, provides a comprehensive health service delivery system for approximately 2.2 million American Indians and Alaska Natives. For more information, visit www.ihs.gov. Follow IHS on [Facebook](#).