

# Overview of the Indian Health Service

Division of Oral Health  
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## A health care system for the first Americans

About the IHS

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## IHS mission, goal, and foundation

- raise the oral health status of Indian people
- Provision of high quality preventive treatment services at community and clinic level
- Program traditionally oriented toward preventive and basic care

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## Diverse people, cultures, languages, lifestyles, and locations

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## Population is diverse, geographically dispersed, and often disadvantaged

- 32% of Indian people fall below poverty standard
- Unemployment is 2.5 times the US rate
- Many live in some of the most remote places in the US
- Health status lags behind that of other Americans
- 55% of Indian people rely on IHS as the only source of health care coverage

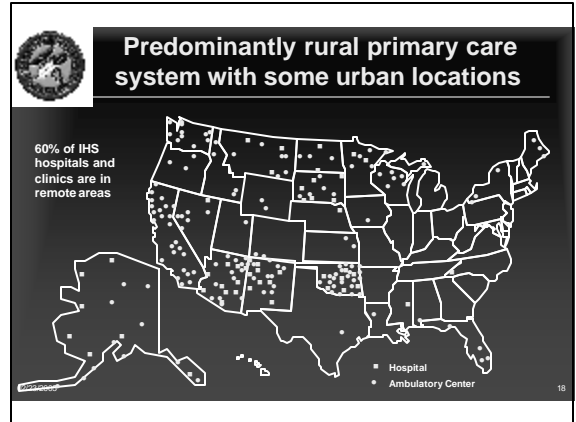
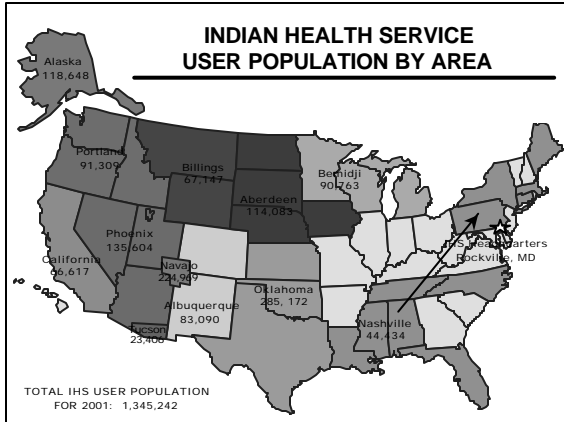
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## THE INDIAN POPULATION WE SERVE

Year	Population
1981	1,200,000
1984	1,300,000
1988	1,400,000
1991	1,450,000
1994	1,500,000
1997	1,550,000
2000	1,600,000
2001	1,650,000
2002	1,700,000

9m AI/ANs (others)  
1.6m AI/ANs Served  
2.5m AI/ANs

- 32% of AI/ANs fall below poverty standard
- Unemployment is 2.5 times the US rate



### Oral Health Disparities in American Indians/Alaska Natives

American Indian and Alaska Native oral health findings from past surveys

- one out of three children report missing school because of dental pain
- one out of four children avoid laughing or smiling, one out of five avoid meeting other people because of the way their teeth look
- one out of four adults are unable to chew hard foods, 20% report difficulty sleeping, and 15% limit their activities (i.e. work and leisure) as a consequence of dental pain

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### Oral Health Disparities in AI/ANs - *continued*

- three out of four of the elderly experience dental problems, and half perceive their dental health is poor, or very poor and are unable to chew hard food
- almost half of the adults avoid laughing, smiling, and conversations with others, because of the way their teeth look

These findings are 200-400% more severe than other sites in past National surveys (NHANES)

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### Accomplishments

- The President's FY06 Budget Request for the Indian Health Service Division of Oral Health: **\$119M**
- This is a 7% increase over the FY05 appropriation
- During FY04, the IHS field staff exceeded, by 17%, the IHS objectives for the number of dental sealants placed on AI/AN Children
- IHS established water fluoridation pilot projects in three of our twelve geographic regions

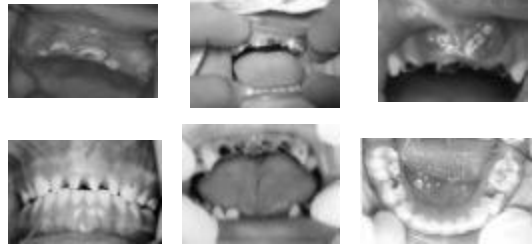
### Accomplishments

- The IHS Division of Oral Health utilized appropriated funding to assist dental provider volunteers in expenses incurred while providing services at IHS sites
- Increased emphasis on the use of dental student volunteers and student externs
- Development of periodontal oral health programs and denture fabrication programs in recognition of the fact that improved oral health can lead to improvement in general medical conditions

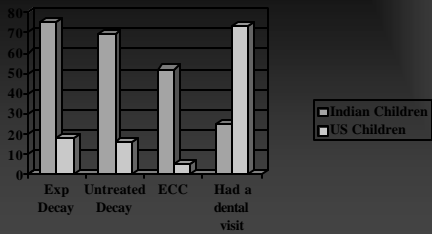
## Dental Caries/Decay



## High Caries Rates in American Indian and Alaska Native Population

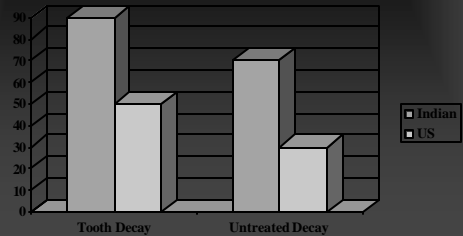


## Oral Health Status of Indian Pre-School vs. U.S. Children



Source: NHANES, IHS Oral Health Survey, 1999

## Caries Experience - Indian vs U.S. 6-8 Year-Old Children



Source: NHANES, IHS Oral Health Survey, 1999

## Caries Experience - Indian vs U.S. Adolescents Age 15 years



Source: NHANES, IHS Oral Health Survey, 1999

## SUMMARY

- Very young children experience tooth decay
  - 78% of the children aged 2-5 years had a history of tooth decay
- The prevalence of tooth decay increases with age
  - 87% of the 6-14 year olds and 91% of the 15-19 year olds had a history of decay

## SUMMARY

- 68% of the 2-5 year olds, 62% of the 6-14 year olds, and 67% of the 15-19 year olds had untreated decay
- Most children have dental sealants and those children with sealants have less decay
  - 65% of 8 year olds and more than 75% of older teenagers had sealants

## SUMMARY

- Most children throughout IHS have dental sealants and those children with sealants have less decay (continued)
  - School-based sealant programs are effective strategies to reach the children and adolescents and make referrals for dental care
- The use of tobacco products among AI/AN youth starts at about 13 years and steadily increases with age
  - 2 percent of 13 year olds and 34% of the 19 year olds use tobacco on a regular basis

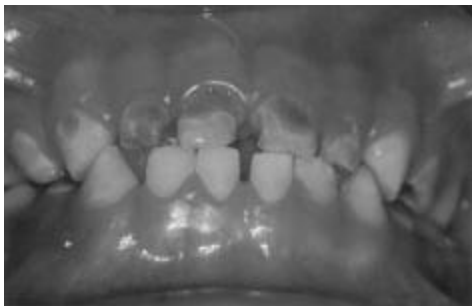
## Access To Dental Care for American Indians and Alaska Natives

- Compared to the general U.S. population, the American Indian and Alaska Native dental patients experience more oral disease, including both tooth decay and periodontal disease
- Oral Disease Rates and Recruitment Difficulties: The combination leads to unique challenges that are being addressed by the IHS Division of Oral Health

## Access To Dental Care for American Indians and Alaska Natives – *con't.*

- Dentists per capita rate about one-half the national average
- High oral disease rates affect access
- What it takes to obtain an appointment and how we counter such challenges: sanitation facilities construction, oral health promotion/disease prevention programs

## Early Childhood Caries (ECC)



## Early Childhood Caries (ECC)



## **Contact Information**

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