

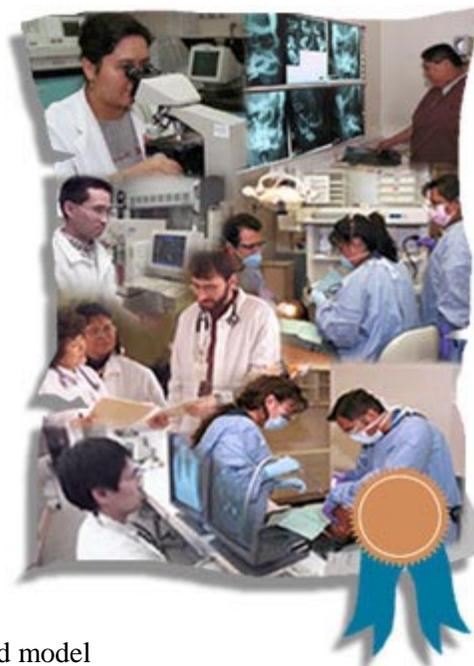
ACCREDITATION ACHIEVEMENTS

ISSUE

The accreditation of facilities demonstrates the level of quality of service being provided to American Indian and Alaska Native communities. Indian Health Service (IHS) and tribally operated hospitals, most large clinics, and many smaller clinics receive Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organization (JCAHO), Accreditation Association for Ambulatory Health Care (AAAHC), or Health Care Financing Administration (HCFA) accreditation.

BACKGROUND

Quality improvement processes within health care organizations are increasingly viewed as important means of identifying problems, proposing improvements, preventing adverse events, and measuring success. The IHS monitors the quality of its services against community and nationally established medical standards. Accrediting organizations such as JCAHO, AAAHC, and HCFA conduct reviews of IHS and tribal health facilities to assess professional services, management support, and actions to prevent and address adverse events. The IHS also uses a community-based or public health-oriented model for monitoring performance and implementing service improvements. A Risk Management/Quality Assurance Manager is responsible for addressing performance improvement activities and maintaining voluntary accreditation at hospitals and clinics. The IHS is also active in governmental, departmental, and other private and national performance improvement activities.



The IHS Quality Improvement (QI) objectives include identifying and ensuring availability of the most appropriate set of primary care services. The “appropriate set” is most often those that engage community members in setting their own health priorities while achieving measurable successes.

SITUATION

The IHS and its tribal contractors would benefit from a system-wide program for monitoring performance and improvement in greater detail. The system-wide program would require little or no substantial increase in total workload to collect this high-quality data. With a national system, the higher risk practice areas occurring in one or more facilities could be identified and analyzed throughout the organization while sharing the best programs with all facilities to improve local activities.

OPTIONS/PLANS

The IHS is a uniquely complex and potentially profitable setting in which to explore and validate selected performance improvement measures and technologies. Limited financial resources continue to restrict the I/T/U access to proprietary products that can assist with this effort and also achieve QI staffing levels.

CONTACT

For referral to the appropriate spokesperson, contact the IHS Public Affairs Staff at 301-443-3593