



# AAIP

## Association of American Indian Physicians

### **Desired Qualifications for the Director of the Indian Health Service**

The national organization of the Association of American Indian Physicians (AAIP) supports the following qualifications for the future Director of the Indian Health Service. The critical decisions upon which the health and, indeed, lives of American Indian/Alaska Native people depend cannot be left to political appointees who do not possess a comprehensive, experiential understanding of American Indian/Alaska Native health any more than the Nation's other health related organizations, such as the CDC and the NIH, can be directed by those without knowledge and expertise in health, research and epidemiology.

#### **Qualifications:**

1. Health profession, preferably an MD or DO, degree and at least five years of clinical experience.
2. Demonstrated long-term interest, commitment, and activity within the field of Indian Health.
3. Lived on tribal lands or rural American Indian or Alaska Native community or has interacted closely with an urban Indian community.
4. Leadership position in American Indian/Alaska Native health care or a leadership position in an academic setting with activity in American Indian/Alaska Native health care.
5. Experience in the Indian Health Service or has worked extensively with Indian Health Service, Tribal, or Urban Indian health programs.
6. Knowledge and understanding of social and cultural issues affecting the health of American Indian and Alaska Native people.
7. Knowledge of Indian Health Disparities including the pathophysiological basis of the disease process and the social determinants of health that affect disparities.
8. Experience working with Indian Tribes and Nations and an understanding of the Trust Responsibility of the Federal Government for American Indian and Alaska Natives as well as an understanding of the sovereignty of American Indian and Alaska Native Nations.
9. Experience with management, budget, and federal programs.

AAIP, as a national Native physician organization established in 1971, wishes to stress how important it is for the next IHS Director to substantially meet the majority of these qualifications. Nowhere in Indian health is the quality and the preparedness of leadership more important than in the Indian Health Service. Critical decisions regarding health care for Native people are made daily and these decisions must be made by leadership knowledgeable in medicine, community health, social and cultural issues in health care for Native people. The Director of the Indian Health Service must have specific knowledge or experience

in health care delivery to American Indian and Alaska Native communities to deliver effective, meaningful healthcare to Indian Country.

In closing, the Indian Health Service Director who substantially meets the above essential qualifications will be able to truly lead the large health care agency that is the Indian Health Service and inspire and lead the Nations American Indian and Alaska Native people back to good health.

Respectfully



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President, AAIP  
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