

# Appendix I: GAO Methodology for Selecting IHS Areas and Facilities Visited

We used a two-tiered approach to selecting facilities for site visits, which included selecting 3 of the 12 Indian Health Service (IHS) areas and then selecting 13 facilities within those 3 areas.

In the first tier, we selected 3 of the 12 IHS areas to represent a mix in the size of the population served in the areas, geographic location, health status of Native Americans in the areas, the entities operating the facilities (tribal or federal), and the contract care dollars as a percentage of total clinical care dollars (table 8 compares the selected areas to the range across all 12 areas).

**Table 8: Comparison of Three IHS Areas Selected by GAO to the Range across All 12 Areas**

Factors considered	IHS areas			
	12 areas	Aberdeen	Oklahoma City	Portland
Estimated patients served (fiscal year 2004)	From 24,009 in Tucson to 299,622 in Oklahoma City	115,812	299,622	97,501
Age of patients (fiscal year 2001)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>From 8.5% to 11.2% of the population under the age of 5</li> <li>From 8.7% to 13.3% over the age of 54</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>11.2% under the age of 5</li> <li>9.8% over the age of 54</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9.5% under the age of 5</li> <li>13.3% over the age of 54</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9.1% under the age of 5</li> <li>11.3% over the age of 54</li> </ul>
Birth rate (1996 to 1998)	From 21.7 births per 1,000 people in the service population to 29.5 per 1,000	29.5 per 1,000	22.4 per 1,000	25.0 per 1,000
Leading causes of death (1996 to 1998)	Heart disease (21.6%) Cancer (15.9%) Injuries (14.0%) Diabetes mellitus (6.6%) Liver disease and cirrhosis (4.5%)	Heart disease (21.1%) Cancer (15.0%) Injuries (14.4%) Diabetes mellitus (7.5%) Liver disease and cirrhosis (6.3%)	Heart disease (28.8%) Cancer (18.7%) Injuries (8.5%) Diabetes mellitus (7.0%) Cerebrovascular diseases (4.6%)	Heart disease (19.4%) Cancer (15.6%) Injuries (14.7%) Cerebrovascular diseases (5.7%) Liver disease and cirrhosis (5.6%)
Tribally operated facilities (October 2001)	13 of 49 hospitals 172 of 231 health centers 84 of 133 health stations	0 of 8 hospitals 6 of 14 health centers 3 of 15 health stations	3 of 7 hospitals 28 of 38 health centers (0 health stations in area)	(0 hospitals in area) 8 of 15 health centers 28 of 28 health stations
Contract care dollars as a percentage of total clinical care dollars (fiscal year 2003)	From 16% in Alaska to 40% in Portland	27%	19%	40%

Source: GAO summary of IHS and U.S. Census Bureau data.