

# National Indian Health Board

## **Indian Health Service to Undergo Investigation**

The Senate Committee announced during its business meeting June 30, 2010, its intent to investigate serious issues regarding health care delivery in facilities located in the Aberdeen Area, Indian Health Services (IHS). The Committee has requested documents from the IHS and during the business meeting, have declared their formal right of subpoena if the request is not answered within 30 days.

Senate Committee Chairman Byron Dorgan (D-ND) commends the cooperation of Dr. Yvette Roubideaux, Director, IHS, in the questions that have been raised thus far, but also stated, "I believe this type of mismanagement in the region over a long period of time has negatively affected health care provided to Native Americans. These problems must be remedied."

During remarks, Senator Dorgan indicated some of the concerns include physicians refusing to treat patients, transferring patients to other facilities, gross incompetence and serious mismanagement. Senator Dorgan indicated that he and Senator John Barrasso (R-WY) believe it may become prudent and necessary to issue formal subpoenas to the Agency if the IHS does not respond in a timely manner to their requests. He said, "The problems are unbelievable, and we are looking at Aberdeen regarding the overall management of the Area and IHS in their lack of response to the issues."

Dr. Yvette Roubideaux, in the recent '*Directors Blog*' post July 1, 2010 on this issue states, "IHS is focused on changing and improving the IHS, which includes taking aggressive steps to address problems such as those identified at the Quentin N. Burdick Memorial Hospital located on the Turtle Mountain Indian Reservation in North Dakota. With respect to the Quentin N. Burdick Hospital, while certain "convenience services" were briefly disrupted, I became personally involved to ensure that clinical services were restored to the levels of service prior to recent events at the facility." Additionally, the Director indicates that she has sent the IHS Deputy Director of Field Operations to Turtle Mountain to further assess the issues at the facility last week. The Director has also indicated a commitment to assist the process in an effort to achieve progress as quickly as possible.