

IHS Alzheimer's Program Update

February 2025

Indian Health Service
Jolie Crowder, PhD, MSN RN, CCM



Our Mission

To raise the physical,
mental, social, and spiritual
health of American Indians
and Alaska Natives to the
highest level.





About IHS

- 18th largest health system in the U.S.
- Primary care and prevention for ~ 2.8 million American Indian and Alaska Native people
- 575 federally recognized Tribes
- 12 IHS Areas
- 37 States
- Many in reservation or rural communities lack reliable means of transportation or telehealth capacity

I/T/U System



I/T/U Services



- Dental services
- Nutrition services
- Pharmacy
- Community health
- Injury prevention
- Sanitation (water supply and waste disposal)
for 39,000+ homes
- Facilities management
- **Tribes can and do offer other services**

Purchased/Referred Care (PRC) Program

May purchase needed services through private health care providers in cases where an IHS or tribal facility does not exist or does not provide the required care

The Workforce

14,000 IHS employees plus Tribal and Urban staff

IHS and Tribal:

- 43,036 inpatient admissions
- 14,365,764 outpatient medical care visits

Difficulty recruiting and retaining health care staff

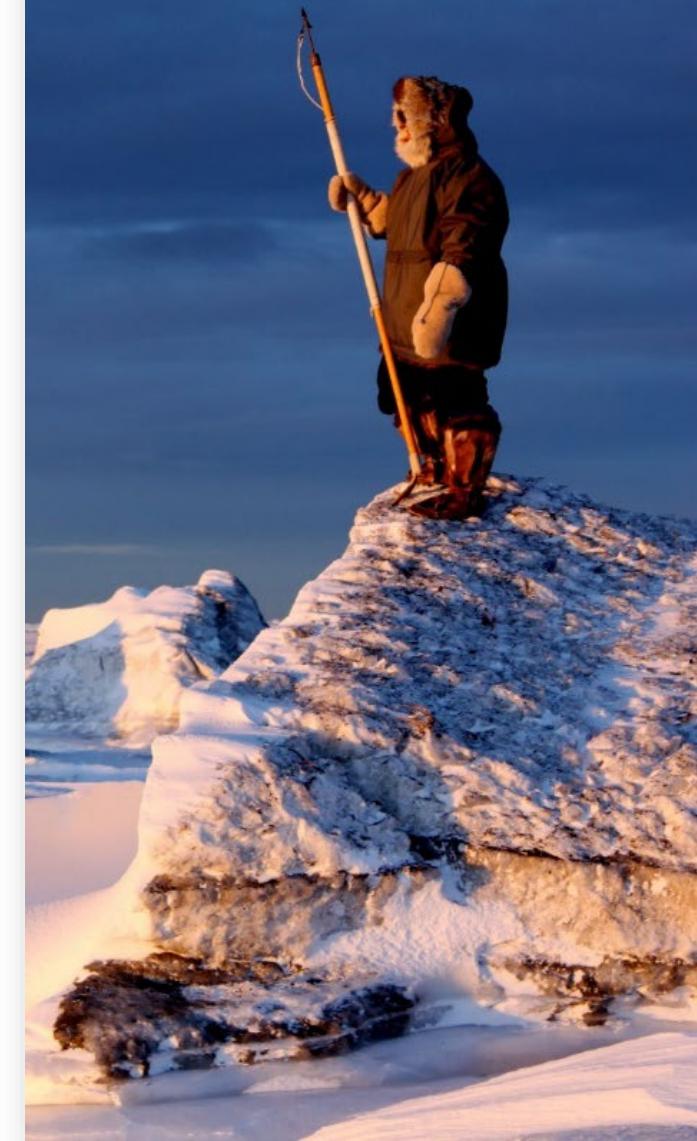
Staff shortages in all areas, particularly:

- Primary care providers
- Behavioral and mental health



Cultural Context

- **“You’ve seen one Tribe, you’ve seen one Tribe.”**
- Cultural Significance of Elders in Tribal Communities
 - Role of elders
 - Traditional respect and reverence for elders





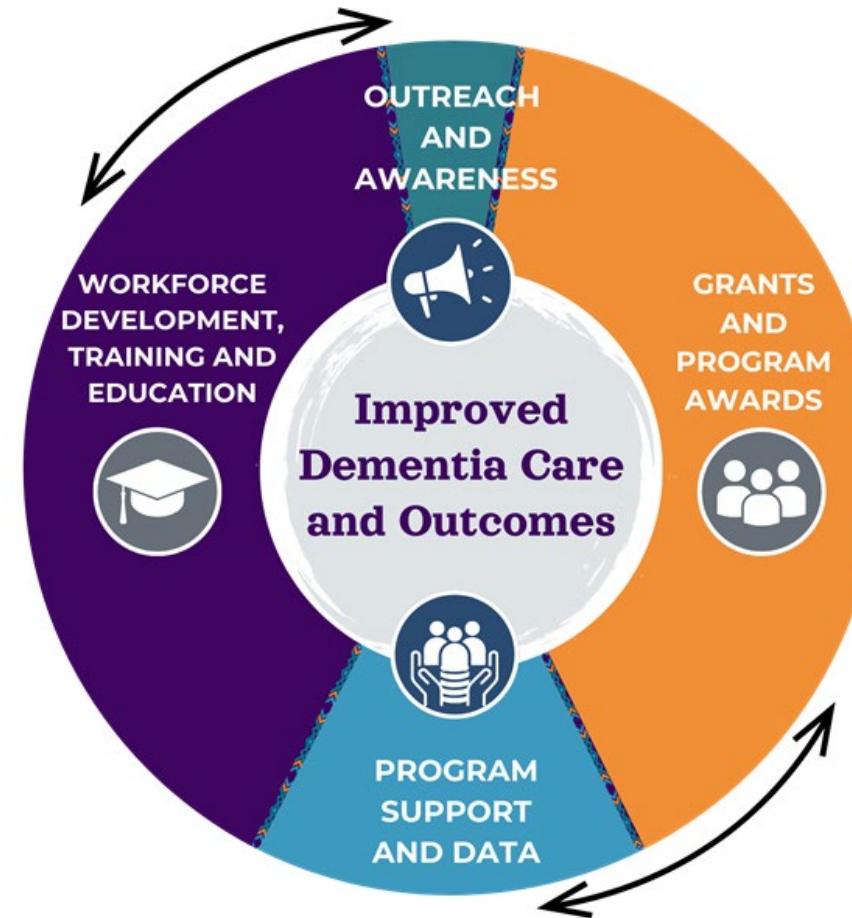
IHS ALZHEIMER'S PROGRAM





IHS Alzheimer's Program

2021: IHS received first-time funding to address the growing need for Alzheimer's and dementia care in American Indian and Alaska Native communities → developed with input from tribal and urban Indian leadership



IHS Alzheimer's Program Team



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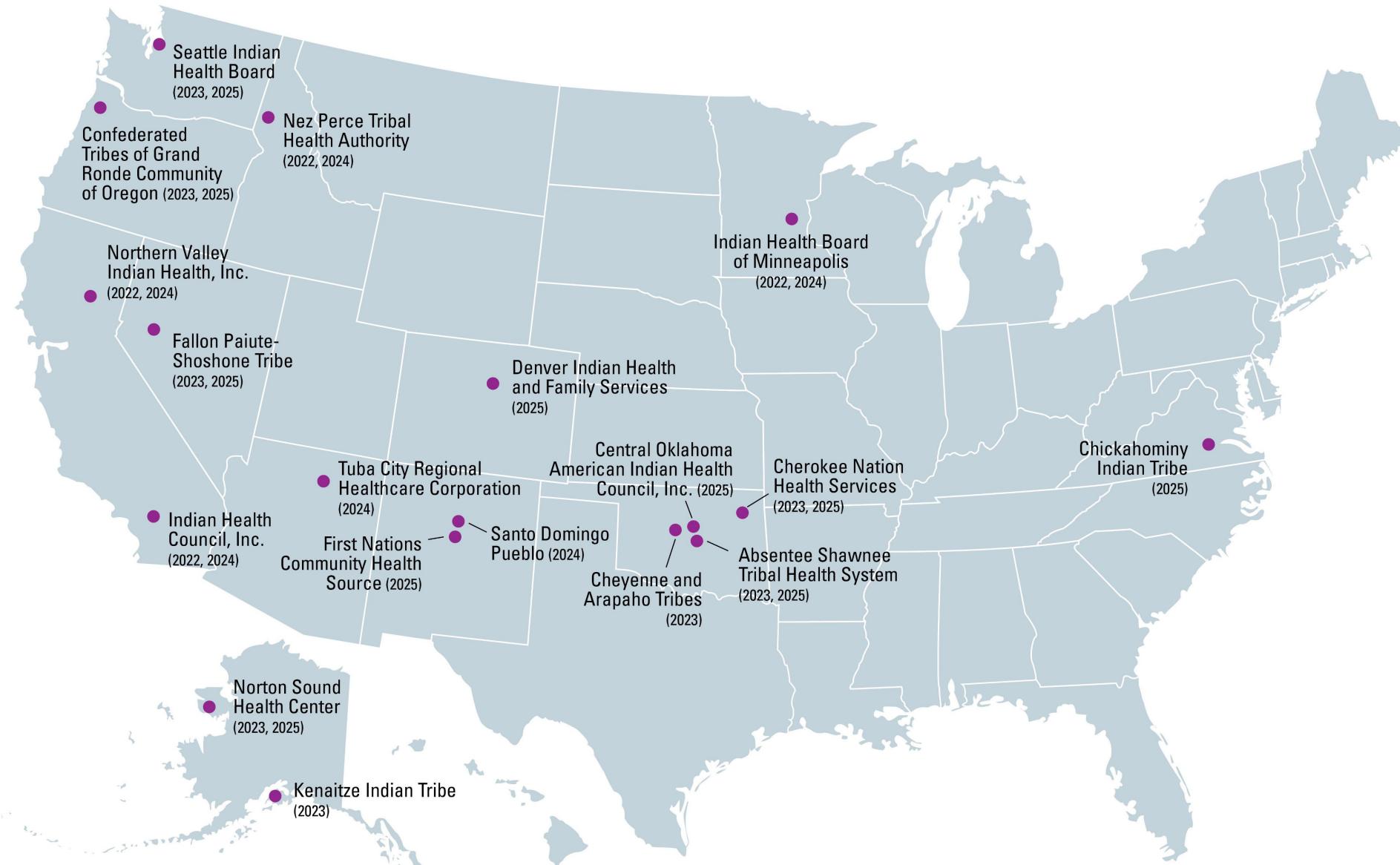
Jamie Olsen
Management
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Grants & Program Awards

IHS Alzheimer's Program

IHS Dementia Models of Care Grants



IHS Dementia Models of Care Grants



Thanks to our
grantees for
creating tailored
solutions that
meet real needs!

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Models of Care
grantees are using
tools that honor
caregivers and
deliver culturally
relevant care



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Workforce Development, Training, & Education

IHS Alzheimer's Program



IHS Dementia Care Pathway

NEW TOOL **ALERT!**

The IHS Dementia Care Pathway offers step-by-step support.

IHS DEMENTIA CARE PATHWAY

Primary Care

This pathway is intended to provide guidance to clinicians as they care for American Indian and Alaska Native people who may be experiencing cognitive impairment.

DETECT

Recognize possible cognitive impairment

- Patient & Caregiver
- Community Staff
- Primary Care Team

EVALUATE

Assess cognition and perform targeted history, physical and diagnostics

- Patient & Caregiver
- Primary Care Team
- Neurology or Geriatrics Specialists (optional)

DIAGNOSE AND DISCUSS

Integrate findings and communicate to patient and care partners

- Patient & Caregiver
- Primary Care Team
- Neurology, Geriatrics, or Neuropsychology Specialists (optional)

Content derived from expert opinions of Indian Health Service, tribal, and urban Indian health providers and based on most recent clinical evidence as of June 2025.

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IHS Dementia Clinical Support Line



Free Dementia Care Support for Health Professionals



Available Monday–Friday,
12 p.m. – 8 p.m. ET

call: 833-998-4897
email: uw-triad@uw.edu

IHS ALZHEIMER'S PROGRAM



IHS Alzheimer's Program Training Series



- Quarterly dementia trainings for multiple disciplines:
 - Providers
 - Nurses
 - Behavioral Health Specialists
 - Dental Professionals
 - Community Health Representatives
 - Pharmacists
- Will be available for live & asynchronous trainings
- Developed with the University of Washington, an IHS contractor

Our updated Training & Education pages now provide easy access to dementia care resources.

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Workforce Training Programs

Indian Health GeriScholars Program Reach

42 Physicians, NPs, PAs,
and Pharmacists

35 Tribal Facilities

11 IHS Areas

*Data from 2023-2025



Geriatric Nurse Fellowship Program Reach

25 RN, LPN, BSN, and NP
Participants

20 Tribal Facilities

9 IHS Areas

*Data from 2024-2025



MiniCog[©] Pilot & Videos



**Detect
Alzheimer's
earlier with
Mini-Cog[©]**

We'll show you how.

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Caregiver & Clinical ECHO

Dementia Caregiver Support ECHO

Build Skills, Connect, Share



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INDIAN + COUNTRY
ECHO



Additional Program Updates

IHS Alzheimer's Program



Upcoming Summit

IHS
CLINICAL AND COMMUNITY WORKFORCE
SUMMIT

DENVER, CO • MARCH 10TH-12TH 2026

ALZHEIMER'S & ELDER CARE
KNOWLEDGE, COMPASSION, AND COMMUNITY AT WORK

IHS ALZHEIMER'S PROGRAM



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES USA
INDIAN HEALTH SERVICE
PHS 1955

Outreach & Awareness



Connect with us!



Website - www.ihs.gov/alzheimers



Elder Health Listserv - <https://bit.ly/3SarALn>



Biweekly Newsletter - <https://bit.ly/3SarALn>



Contact Us - IHSElderHealth@ihs.gov



Visit our website!



Sign up for our Listserv!



Community Stories: Detecting Dementia

Nimiipuu Health



ASPE's Role & Progress



Helen Lamont, PhD

Director, Division of Disability, & Aging Policy
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

What is ASPE?

Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning & Evaluation

The Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (ASPE) advises the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services on policy development in health, disability, human services, data, and science; and provides advice and analysis on economic policy. The ASPE leads special initiatives; coordinates the Department's evaluation, research, and demonstration activities; and manages cross-Department planning activities such as strategic planning, legislative planning, and review of regulations. Integral to this role, the ASPE conducts research and evaluation studies; develops policy analyses; and estimates the cost and benefits of policy alternatives under consideration by the Department or Congress.

Office of Behavioral Health, Disability, & Aging Policy



- **Mission:** Support the independence, productivity, health and well-being, and long-term care needs of people with disabilities, older adults, and people with mental and substance use disorders.
- **Three divisions:**
 - Behavioral Health Policy
 - Disability and Aging Policy
 - Long-Term Services and Supports Policy

Approach

Study, track, and analyze policy issues in behavioral health, disability, aging, and long-term services and supports policy to provide expertise to the Secretary and HHS policymakers

Through data infrastructure development, policy research and evaluation that fills key gaps, maintaining key relationships and collaborations, reading and following ongoing grey and academic research, maximizing cross-topic collaborations

We Identify:

Emerging problems and policy issues

Policy options to address problems

Strengths and weaknesses of each option

Key considerations for policymakers

Examples of ASPE Policy Research on ADRD

- A Profile of Older Adults with Dementia and their Caregivers Issue Brief (January 2019)
- Functional Trajectories at the End of Life for Individuals with Dementia: Final Report (February 2020)
- Implications of Alternative Methods of Identifying Populations with Dementia Issue Brief (February 2020)
- Bridging Healthcare and Social Services for People Living with Dementia and Their Caregivers (December 2024)
- Use of Inpatient Psychiatric Facilities by Medicare Beneficiaries with Dementia (December 2024)

2026 ASPE ADRD Policy Research

- Approaches to Dementia Care in Special Needs Plans
(January 2026)
- Medicare Hospice Use Patterns Among Patients With Alzheimer's Disease or Related Dementias Compared to Those With Other Terminal Diagnoses
(January 2026)



LTSS and BH-Related ASPE Research with Implications for NAPA

- Long-Term Services and Supports Reform Options
- Use of Medicare-Covered Telerehabilitation in Nursing Homes for PT/OT/SLP Services
- Review of Federal and State Caregiver Tax Credit Laws and Bills
- Rebalancing of Medicaid-Funded Long-Term Services and Supports, 2016-2019

- Innovative 988 Crisis Service Systems for Children, Youth, and People with Disabilities
- Behavioral Health Prevalence, Utilization, and Spending Among Older Adult Medicare Beneficiaries: A Chartbook

Thank you!



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<https://aspe.hhs.gov/about/offices/bhdap>

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services