

COA Health Leader of the Year

22 June 2021

<https://coausphs.org/page/HealthLeader>

Good afternoon everybody. I would like to thank the COA Board, the COA Awards Committee and my fellow commissioned corps officers for bestowing this recognition award upon me. It is truly an honor to be included alongside the list of previous year's award recipients. I want to recognize my family, Dr. Rose Weahkee, my wife, and our three children, Tamia, Nico and Sofia, for all of their sacrifices and support throughout my career.

This past year has been a trying one for us all, and I am extremely proud of the hard-working men and women (many of them our fellow commissioned corps officers) who work in the Indian Health System of care; from those executing the response plans at the front lines in our hospitals and clinics--testing and treating our patients; to those in our Area and Tribal offices, managing the COVID response efforts at the regional level--collecting data and providing facility oversight; and finally, to those working at the national level at IHS Headquarters, and in our sister operating divisions and at HHS, supporting the efforts through congressional funding requests and top-level government coordination.

I accept this award in recognition of all of their hard work, dedication and personal sacrifice to achieve the mission of the Indian Health Service--to raise the physical, mental, social and spiritual health of American Indians and Alaska Natives to the highest level. It has truly taken an all-of-government approach to contend with this COVID pandemic, and to ensure the continuity of services for the vulnerable population that we serve, and I am humbled to have played a small role in this past year's efforts. Thank you again for this recognition, and "*In Officio Salutis.*" –Thank you all.