



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: August 3, 2020

612.344.4848

info@aicaf.org

American Indian Cancer Foundation's chief executive officer steps down

MINNEAPOLIS, MN -- The American Indian Cancer Foundation (AICAF) is sad to announce the resignation of chief executive officer Kris Rhodes, MPH (Bad River & Fond du Lac Bands of Lake Superior Chippewa). After a decade of service, Rhodes will leave the organization in late 2020 to pursue new professional ventures.

Rhodes has served as the leader of AICAF since its establishment in 2011. During her tenure, she brought the ideas of an American Indian Cancer Foundation into reality. With her leadership, the foundation saw tremendous growth in size, and in its impact across Indian Country. Through hard work, strong partnerships, and a commitment to the AICAF mission, Rhodes has built a team of passionate employees and has secured millions of dollars for prevention, screening, and research projects that have helped address cancer burdens in Native communities everywhere. "The partnerships have been incredible and have strengthened my heart and the organization in unimaginable ways. Cancer is the worst, but it brings out the best in people and their commitment to a better future for all," Rhodes said.

It is with mixed emotions that Rhodes will leave AICAF and the dynamic team who have become family, and the work she loves so much. "Change is hard but it is how we improve and grow. What won't change is my commitment to the healthier future for our relatives and my belief in the mission of this incredible organization. AICAF is in a strong position with so much opportunity," she added.

A public health guru and a researcher at heart, Rhodes has led the research projects and contributed to many publications. She was also featured as a guest speaker at several national conferences, panels, and legislative sessions, lending her voice to important topics for improving Indigenous health. Rhodes said "it has been an honor and responsibility to voice Native issues in places where we were previously invisible."

Powwow for Hope: *Dancing for Life, Love & Hope* has been Rhodes' most cherished memory during her time at AICAF. She helped launch the event in 2012 to bring awareness to Indigenous cancer burdens and honor survivors. Under her guidance, the event gained traction each year by engaging people across the country to fundraise to support Native cancer solutions.

The AICAF Board of Directors and employees are grateful for Rhodes' dedication that helped fuel growth and progress. The Board will begin recruiting a qualified candidate the first week of August.

"We are grateful for Kris' passion that helped create the American Indian Cancer Foundation, and especially for her leadership and innovation that has led to its success. We have grown substantially under her guidance, building a lasting presence that has improved the health of so many. Kris' dedication to this work leaves a legacy that our team will continue to honor for years to come. Qagaasakuq!" -AICAF Board Chair Dr. Gary Ferguson, ND (Aleut/Unangan)

###