Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

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Secretary of the Interior Stewart L. Udall today directed the Department's Bureau of Indian Affairs and Office of Territories to make family planning services available in their social services programs.

The service will be on an entirely voluntary basis. It is in line with the May 25, 1965, report of the National Research Council, National Academy of Sciences. The study described the growth of U. S. population as a serious obstacle to the realization of many goals of society and one which puts the nation's general prosperity out of reach of millions of its citizens.

The Secretary's memorandum to the concerned agencies directed that birth control information and family planning services comparable to those generally available in other communities in the Nation be made available to all persons within their charge. It further specified that such services were to be "entirely voluntary" and that use of such services should "not be a prerequisite to receipt of the benefits of or participation in any program or activity."

A copy of the Secretary's memorandum on the subject is attached.

Memorandum
July 9, 1965
To: All Bureau Field Installations
From: Commissioner
Subject: Availability of family planning services

There is attached a copy of a memorandum from Secretary Udall setting forth the policy to be followed by this Bureau and others in making family planning services available.

Please note especially the last four paragraphs and be guided by their explicit instructions.

Questions of interpretation should be transmitted to this office. Any proposed procedures should also be cleared with this office.

(Sgd) John O. Crow
John O. Crow
Acting Commissioner

Memorandum

To: Commissioner of Indian Affairs Director, Office of Territories through Assistant Secretary - Public Land Management Director, Bureau of Commercial Fisheries through Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife
From: Secretary of the Interior
Subject: Availability of family planning services

The Department of the Interior has responsibilities for furnishing various social services in its assigned

programs.

From time to time the question has been raised whether the Department will furnish information or services on birth control and family planning.

In the past, on some Indian reservations and in some Indian communities in Alaska and in areas of the Territories, inadequate education, welfare, or medical services have deprived residents of the area of birth control and family planning advice and services generally available to other people in major metropolitan communities. In some of these areas the available natural resources will not be adequate in future years unless existing population growth rates decline.

To the extent possible within the Department of the Interior's authority and resources, it is the policy of the Department to seek new ways to use our knowledge to help deal with the explosion in world population and the growing scarcity in world resources, and to assure to all communities referred to above birth control information and family planning services comparable to those generally available in other communities throughout the Nation.

All such information and services shall be entirely voluntary; use of any family planning services shall not be a prerequisite to receipt of the benefits of or participation in any program or activity.

All such information and services shall be provided in accordance with State, local, and Territorial law or enactment.

Physicians employed by the Office of Territories are authorized to offer appropriate birth control advice and services to their patients, consistent with the patient's culture and conscience, or refer patients to appropriate persons.

Social service workers are authorized to refer persons who for various personal reasons may decide that pregnancy should be avoided to appropriate public or private medical services.

(Sgd) Stewart L. Udall
Stewart L. Udall
Secretary of the Interior
