

Johnson Honored--

Praised for Work on Indian Health

Dr. Emery A. Johnson, Assistant Surgeon General and Director, Indian Health Service, has been awarded the Public Health Service Distinguished Service Medal for "outstanding accomplishments and leadership in the management and operation of the Indian Health Service—which have resulted in significantly elevating the health of the American Indian and Alaska Native populations."

The Indian Health Service is responsible for the health care of 475,000 Indians, Eskimos and Aleuts living in 24 States.

The award was made by PHS Surgeon General, Jesse L. Steinfeld and presented by Health, Education, and Welfare Secretary Elliot L. Richardson at Departmental ceremonies at the Social Security Administration, Baltimore, Maryland, Thursday afternoon, April 13.

Dr. Johnson has served as Director of the Indian Health Service since November 1969, his appointment culminating many years' experience in the Indian health program.

Dr. Johnson joined the Indian Health Service in 1955 as a medical officer at the PHS Indian Hospital, White Earth, Minnesota.

He subsequently served as medical officer in charge of PHS Indian hospitals at White Earth and Winnebago, Nebraska and Phoenix, Arizona; as Deputy Indian Health Area Director in in Phoenix; and Area Director in Billings, Montana.

In June 1966 he was appointed Assistant Director and Chief, Office of Program Services of the entire Indian Health Service, moving up to Deputy Director in 1967.

Dr. Johnson was born in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, April 16, 1929. He took his B.S.



Dr. Emery A. Johnson

degree at Hamline University, St. Paul, Minnesota in 1951 and his M.D. degree at the University of Minnesota Medical School, Minneapolis in 1954.

He interned at Asbury Methodist Hospital, Minneapolis. In 1964 he earned an MPH degree at the University of California School of Public Health, Berkeley.

Dr. Johnson's professional affiliations include the American Medical Association, American Public Health Association, American Academy of Family Physicians and the Association of Military Surgeons.

In 1966 he was awarded the Public Health Service Commendation Medal and in 1971, the Meritorious Service Medal of the Public Health Service.

Dr. Johnson is married to the former Nancy Mourning and has four children. He lives at 13826 Dowlais Drive, Rockville, Maryland.

There have been great improvements in Indians' health since the PHS assumed responsibility for a comprehensive health services program in 1955.

Infant death rates have declined 51 percent; tuberculosis death rates are down 79 percent; gastroenteric death rates are down 60 percent and death rates from influenza and pneumonia are down 45 percent.

Some of the most significant recent developments which Dr. Johnson is fostering are the Indian assumption of leadership in health program administration and participation in policy decisions and program operation; and greatly expanded opportunities for Indians in training, employment and promotion in health careers.

More than 55 percent of the Indian Health Service staff is of Indian descent.