



DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR
INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS
WASHINGTON DC 20420

MAY 1 2012

Dear Tribal Leader:

On March 12, 2012 the Department of Veterans Affairs sent you a letter regarding the first Tribal consultation session which was held on April 5, 2012 in Washington, DC. The Department is initiating three additional Tribal consultation sessions, through each of the VA administrations. VA is initiating consultation to request your input to enhance the delivery of services to American Indian/ Alaska Native Veterans. Tribal consultation topics include:

Veterans Benefits Administration:

The Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E) Program is authorized by Congress under Title 38, Code of Federal Regulations, Chapter 31. The program assists Veterans with service-connected disabilities to prepare for, find, and keep suitable jobs. For Veterans with service-connected disabilities so severe that they cannot immediately consider work, VR&E offers services to improve their ability to live as independently as possible. VA will consult with Tribes on the most efficient ways of communicating about the VR&E program to Tribal members. Also VA will consult with Tribes on how to involve Tribes in the awareness campaign about VR&E for Tribal members and/provide input about occupations that are of special interest.

The Native American Veteran Direct Loan Program (NADL), created by Congress in 1992, enables eligible Veterans the opportunity to use their VA home loan guaranty benefit on Federal trust land. VA is seeking recommendations from Tribes for increasing awareness and utilization of this loan program.

National Cemetery Administration:

Tribal Cemetery Grants: In 2010 a proposal to implement PL 109-461; Sec. 403 which states "Eligibility of Indian Tribal Organizations to apply for Grants for the Establishment of Veterans Cemeteries on Trust Lands". This stipulates that Grants to Tribal Organizations will be made in the same manner, and under the same conditions, as grants to States under the Veterans Cemetery Grants Program. VA is seeking recommendations for increasing outreach and awareness of the cemetery grant program in addition to seeking input on challenges Tribes experience in applying for these grants.

Veterans Health Administration:

VA/ Indian Health Service (IHS) Memorandum of Understanding (MOU): The VA-IHS MOU was signed by Dr. Robert Petzel, VA Under Secretary for Health, and Dr. Yvette Roubideaux, Director, Indian Health Service, on October 1, 2010. The purpose of the MOU is to enhance the health care status of American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) Veterans through the delivery of accessible and quality health care services. VA is seeking recommendations from

Tribes for increasing tribal government involvement in the MOU workgroups and workgroup activities at the national and local levels.

The Consultation Sessions will be held on the following dates:

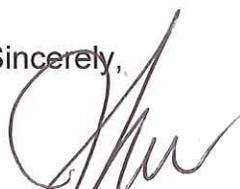
Friday May 25, 2012
Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium
400 Ambassador Drive
Anchorage, AK 99508

Sunday, June 17, 2012
Corn Husker Hotel
333 S. 13th St.
Lincoln, NE 68508

Monday, September 24, 2012
Denver Sheraton Hotel
1550 Court Place
Denver, Colorado 80202

Comments must be submitted to VA no than 30 days after each session to:
VA Office of Tribal Government Relations at (202) 461-7400, by email at Tribalgovernmentconsultation@va.gov, or by mail at Suite 915L, 810 Vermont Ave, NW, Washington, DC 20420. If you plan on attending to present your comments during one of the sessions, please provide the name, title, and Tribe of the individual who will be presenting to OTGR at the email address above. In order to facilitate the discussion, we ask that presenters provide a brief overview of the comments and include the specific issues to be addressed at the session. For any Tribe unable to attend to present comments, please be aware that OTGR will keep the comments record open for 30 days after the date of the consultation. After 30 days, OTGR will provide written responses to all comments received, including those that were presented in person.

Sincerely,



John M. Garcia
Deputy Assistant Secretary for
Intergovernmental Affairs