



DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
UNDER SECRETARY FOR HEALTH
WASHINGTON DC 20420

November 19, 2014

Dear Tribal Leader:

This letter provides an update on the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) and Tribal Health Programs (THP) Reimbursement Agreements for direct care services for eligible American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) Veterans. Since the signing of the agreement in December 2012, we are pleased to report that over \$15 million has been reimbursed to Indian Health Service (IHS) and THPs. As of August 2014, VA has completed implementation steps with all IHS sites; signed over 60 THP agreements; and over 70 more tribes are in process of signing agreements. This marks an important partnering achievement for VA, IHS, and Tribal Governments. Our partnership is key to promoting quality health care; increased access to health care; coordination and resource-sharing that benefits eligible AI/AN Veterans. This also demonstrates our commitment to sharing resources outlined in the 2010 VA-IHS Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).

The basic principles of the reimbursement agreements allow for eligible AI/AN Veterans to receive direct care services at their local tribal facility, and in turn, the tribal facility will be reimbursed by VA for that care per the terms of the agreement. The agreement benefits focus specifically on providing AI/AN Veterans.

Access to Care: AI/AN Veterans can choose to receive care at the nearest VA Medical Center or Tribal Health Care Facility.

Care Coordination: VA Medical Centers and Tribal Health Programs will have an increased means to coordinate and communicate Veteran health care.

VA is encouraged by the successful implementation of IHS and THP facilities in 2013; and looks forward to welcoming more agreements with THPs in the coming year. The agreement process allows for THPs to be reimbursed for direct care service as quickly and efficiently as possible. We look forward to working with you towards our collective goal of increasing access to care for our AI/AN Veterans.



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Please contact the VHA Chief Business Office or local VA points of contact to obtain more information about VA health care programs and how to establish reimbursement agreements with VA. Questions should be sent to the following mailbox: tribalagreements@va.gov. Program information to include templates, provider guides, and fact sheets can be found on the VA Office of Tribal Government Relations Web site: <http://www.va.gov/tribalgovernment>.

I appreciate your continued support of our mission.

Sincerely,


Carolyn M. Clancy, MD
Interim