



# OFFICE OF TRIBAL GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

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# Training Summit Objectives

- The goal of these meetings is to increase access to VA healthcare and benefits through informative presentations and interactive discussions about VA's efforts to reach military Veterans in Indian Country in the Southwest Region of the United States.
- Specifically, OTGR goals are:
  - Increase Veteran Access to healthcare and benefits
  - Economic Sustainability
  - Tribal Consultation



# Demographics

- As of the 2000 U.S. Census, American Indian and Alaskan Native populations represent approximately 1% of the total U.S. population.
- American Indians and Alaskan Natives have the highest representations in the armed forces (in comparison to other racial minorities – approximately 200,000 veterans).
- There are 566 federally recognized tribal governments.
- American Indian and Alaskan Native Tribal Governments have a recognized government to government relationship with the U.S. federal government.



# Legislative and Policy Timeline

**President Clinton  
Executive Order  
13175  
November 2000**



**President Obama  
Memorandum  
on Tribal  
Consultation  
(November  
2009)**



**VA solicitation  
for Tribal  
Consultation  
(2009 - 2010)**



**3 VA Milestones:  
VA-IHS MOU  
2010  
Creation of OTGR  
Tribal  
Consultation  
Policy -2011**



# Executive Order 13175 and Memorandum on Tribal Consultation

- On November 9, 2000, President Clinton signed Executive Order 13175 entitled “Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribal Governments”
  - “to establish regular and meaningful consultation and collaboration with tribal officials in the development of Federal policies that have tribal implications, to strengthen the U.S. government-to-government relationships with Indian tribes, and to reduce the imposition of unfunded mandates upon Indian tribes...” – President Clinton
  
- On November 5, 2009, President Obama signed the Memorandum on Tribal Consultation (“Presidential Memorandum”) pronouncing tribal consultations “a critical ingredient of a sound and productive Federal-tribal relationship”
  - The Presidential Memorandum directs all federal agencies to develop a detailed plan of the actions to fully implement President Clinton’s Executive Order 13175.



# OTGR Mission

The VA consults with American Indian and Alaska Native tribal governments to develop partnerships that enhance access to services and benefits by Veterans and their families.



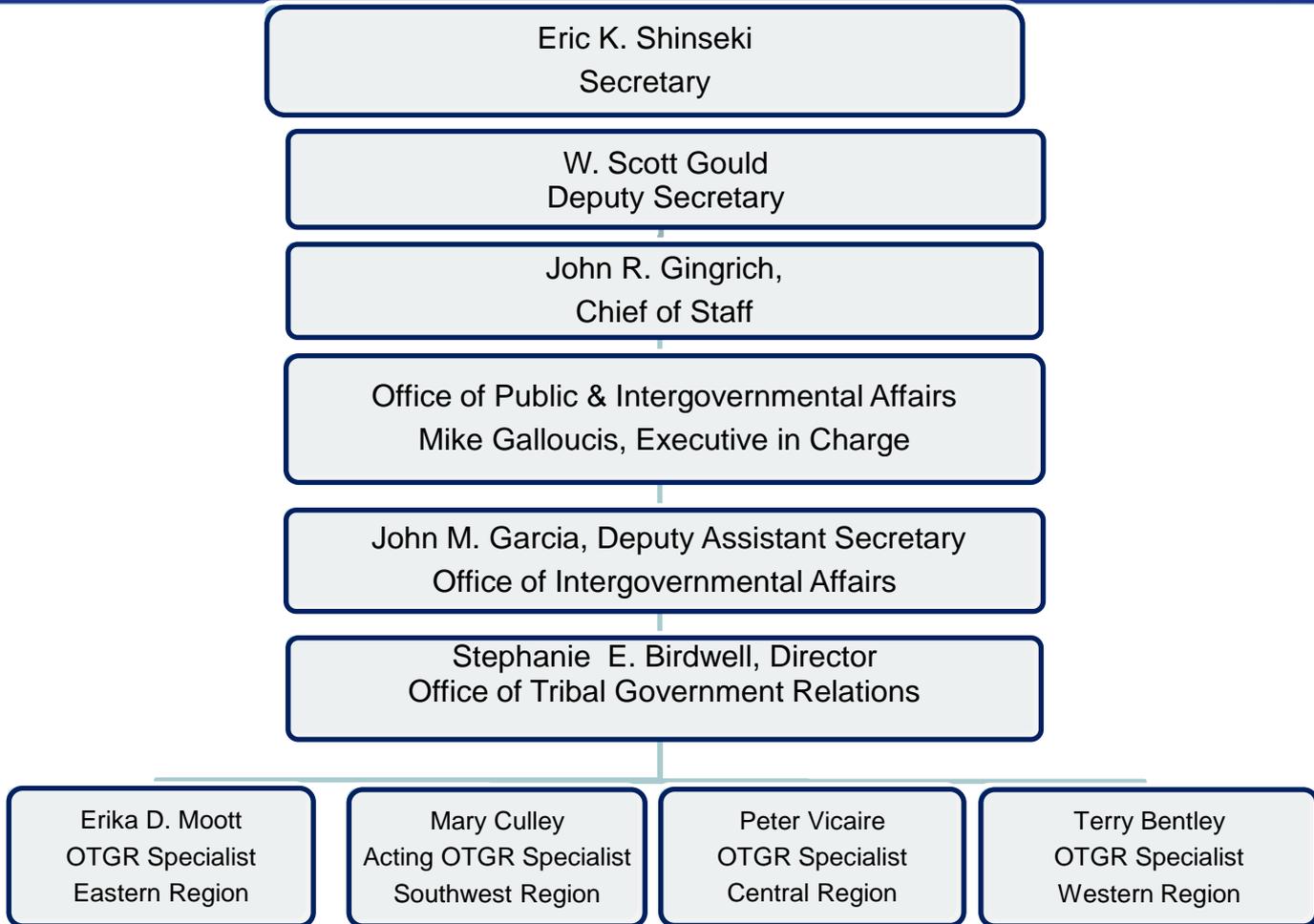
# OTGR Vision



The VA has positive relationships with American Indian and Alaska Native tribal governments and is part of the landscape of Indian Country. Every Veteran receives excellent services that are holistic in nature and that lead to optimal health. American Indian and Alaska Native tribal governments view the VA as an organization of integrity that advocates for their needs. The VA demonstrates its commitment to Veterans by being culturally competent, respecting the unique sovereign status of Tribes, and reaching Veterans in Indian Country. Veterans know how to access all VA services and benefits and are woven into the fabric of the VA.



# VA Organizational Chart





# Government to Government Partnership

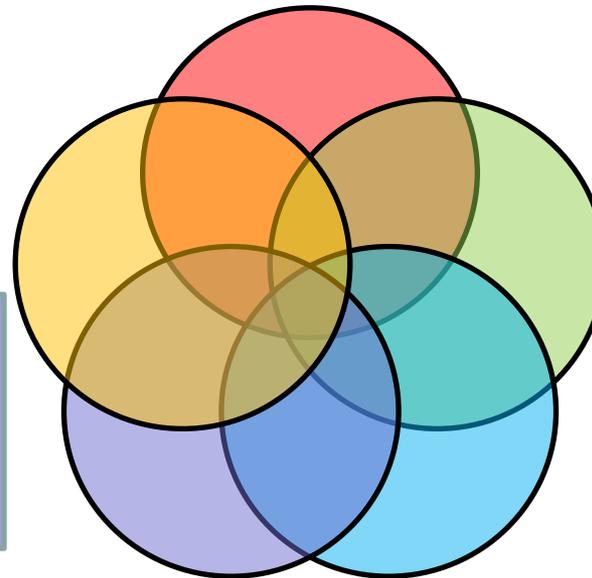


American Indian/  
Alaska Native Tribal  
Governments

National Cemetery  
Administration  
(NCA)

Office of Tribal  
Government Relations  
(OTGR)

Veterans Health  
Administration  
(VHA)



Veterans Benefits  
Administration  
(VBA)



# Regional Map



## Office of Tribal Government Relations Regional Map



### Legend

- Eastern Region: Erika Moott, Tribal Government Relations Specialist
- Central Region: Peter Vicaire, Tribal Government Relations Specialist
- South Western Region: Thomas Birdbear, Tribal Government Relations Specialist
- Western Region: Terry Bentley, Tribal Government Relations Specialist

- 565 Federally Recognized Tribes



# Tribal Government Relations Specialists



- Manage a portfolio of relationships with tribal governments (within a specific region).
- Develop relationships with tribal leaders, federal and state VA personnel and partnership agencies. These relationships will enhance the work relationships of VA administrations with tribal governments.
- Serve as a resource to tribal governments seeking to engage in productive relationships with VA.
- Serve as the Department resource in developing more productive, positive relationships with Tribes.



# Goals



Facilitate Increase  
Access to Health  
Care

Economic  
Sustainability

Implementing  
Tribal  
Consultation  
Policy



# Goals (Continued)



## **Facilitate Increase Access to Healthcare**

- Facilitating discussions regarding the use of new media and other communication tools to promote innovative technologies (telehealth) that bring care to rural communities.
- Working closely with the VA Office of Rural Health to increase tribal government involvement in the VA/ Indian Health Service MOU workgroups and workgroup activities at the national and local levels.

## **Economic Sustainability**

- Through continued collaborations and partnerships with our VBA colleagues we will strive to increase utilization of Native American Direct Loan Program.
- Increase utilization of Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Program.

## **Implementing Tribal Consultation Policy**

- VA Tribal Consultation Policy was signed by Secretary Shinseki in February 2011, OTGR has held 3 Tribal Consultation Sessions this year. The last session will be held in September 2012 to coincide with the National Indian Health Board Annual Consumer Conference.



# Southwest Region Public Engagement and Activities FY2012

- OTGR Presentation at 13<sup>th</sup> VA-IHS Veteran's Symposium, Albuquerque, NM.
- 2011 Veteran's Day Guest Speaker at Pueblo of Laguna.
- January 2012 : American Legion visit to AZ & NM tribes on Native veteran health care.
- April 2012, OTGR 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter Southwest Region Meeting, Albuquerque, New Mexico
- May 2012, Center for Medicaid Services and Indian Health Service Training, Dallas, TX
- May 2012, OTGR Collaboration Meeting, Pawnee Nation and Muskogee VA Medical Center, Pawnee, OK



# Southwest Region Public Engagement and Activities FY2012



- May 2012, Southern Ute Memorial Ceremony, Durango, Colorado
- June 2012, OTGR Collaboration/Training Meeting, Concho CHR and OKC VA Medical Center Staff, Concho, Oklahoma
- Lawton Indian Health Hospital, Veteran Enrollment, Lawton, Oklahoma
- June 2012, OTGR Presentation, SAIGE Conference, Denver, Colorado



# Southwest Region Public Engagement and Activities FY2012

- June 2012, Sovereignty Symposium, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma
- June 2012, Collaboration Meeting, Southern Ute Tribe and Albuquerque VA Medical Center, Albuquerque, NM
- July 2012, Chinle Service Unit, Dedication Ceremony, Navajo Nation, Chinle Arizona
- July 2012, OTGR Presentation, Oklahoma State Veterans Council Meeting, Oklahoma City, OK
- July 2012, OTGR 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter Southwest Region Meeting, Oklahoma



# SW Region Training Summit Albuquerque, New Mexico





# Southern Ute Veterans Memorial Service May 2012





# VA-IHS Partnership Ribbon Untying Ceremony Chinle Health Care Facility, Arizona





# OTGR Accomplishments

- Held 3 of the 4 tribal consultation sessions for 2012.
- All Tribal Government Relations Specialist held Regional training sessions with tribes in April 2012. More training sessions are planned through the summer.
- OTGR website active – [www.va.gov/tribalgovernment](http://www.va.gov/tribalgovernment)
- Veteran Court Resource Guide



# Contact Information Southwest Region

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