



VA Office of Tribal Government Relations

Southwest Region Conference Overview/Goals April 23-26, 2012

**Presented by:
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Director, Office of Tribal Government Relations**



Conference 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 2010 U.S. Census, American Indian and Alaskan Native (AI/AN) alone populations represent approximately 0.9% of the total U.S. population. Another 0.7% reported AI/AN in combination with one or more other races. 1.7% in total of US identified as AI/AN.
- American Indians and Alaskan Natives have one of the highest representations in the armed forces (in comparison to other racial minorities – approximately 200,000 veterans).
- There are 566 federally recognized tribal entities.
- 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:
Creation of OTGR**

**Tribal
Consultation
Policy**

**IHS – VA MOU
2010**



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.



VA Announces 3 Milestones

➤ Office of Tribal Government Relations

- OTGR was established and on January 31, 2011 Director, Stephanie Birdwell was hired.

➤ Tribal Consultation Policy

- The policy was signed by Secretary Eric Shinseki on February 4, 2011.

➤ IHS & VA MOU

- The MOU was signed by Dr. Robert A. Petzel, Under Secretary of Health, Department of Veteran Affairs and Dr. Yvette Roubideaux, Director, Indian Health Service.
 - 15 workgroups have been identified dealing with specific areas of focus
 - Office of Rural Health is driving these initiatives
 - Main differences between 2010 MOU and 2003 MOU:
 - Emphasis on promoting patient-centered collaborations and consulting tribes at the regional and local levels.



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.



Tribal Government Relations Specialists



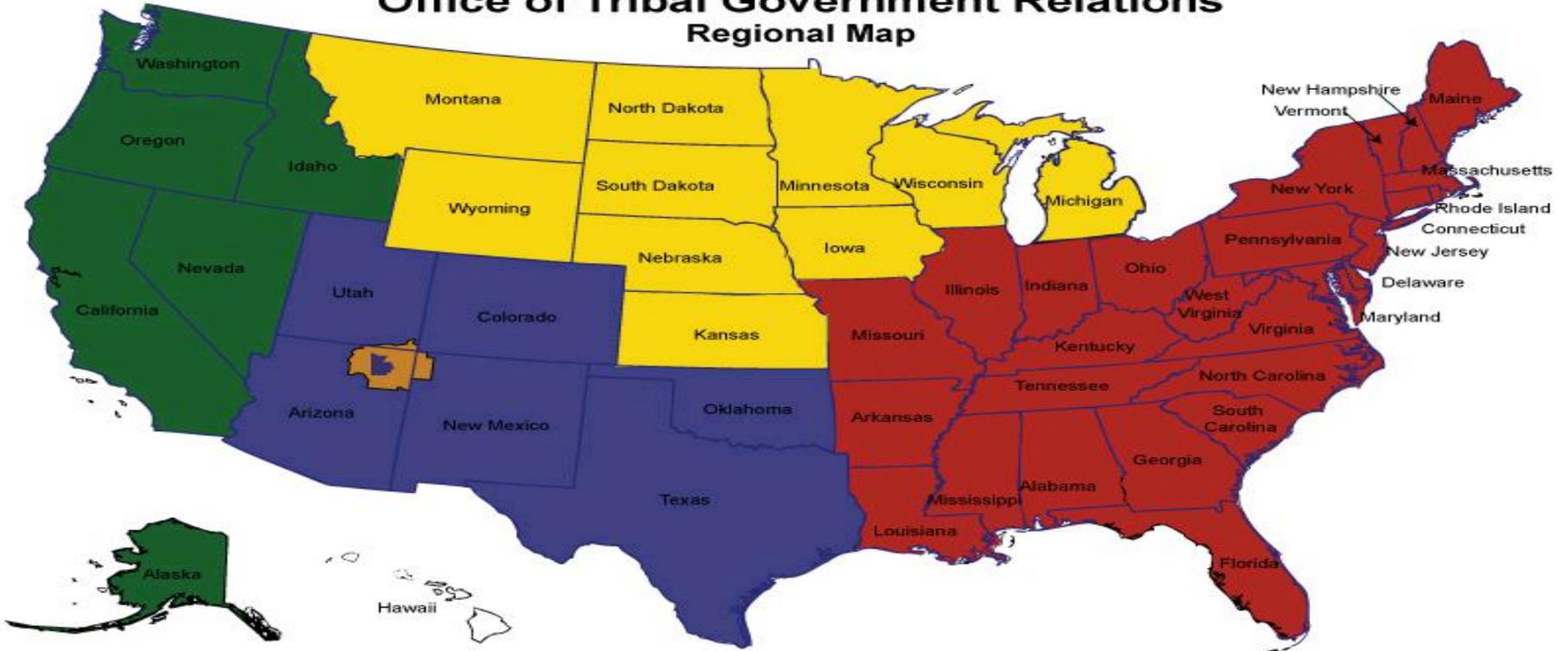
- Manage a portfolio of relationships with tribal governments (within a specific region).
- Develop relationships with tribal leaders, federal and state VA personnel and partnership agencies. These relationships will enhance the work relationships of VA administrations with tribal governments.
- Serve 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.



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



Regional Meetings

- **Eastern Region: April 3-4, 2012**
L'Enfant Plaza Hotel, Washington DC
- **Western Region: April 10-11, 2012**
Northern Quest Resort and Casino, Spokane WA
- **Central Region: April 17-18, 2012**
Mystic Lake Casino Hotel, Minneapolis MN
- **Southwest Region: April 23-26, 2012**
National Indian Programs Training Center, Albuquerque NM



Tribal Consultation Tentative Schedule



- April 5, 2012- Washington, DC
- May 25, 2012 – Anchorage, AK
- June 17, 2012- Lincoln, Nebraska
- September 24, 2012- Denver, Colorado



Elements of VA Tribal Consultation Policy

- To enhance the relationship of cooperation, coordination, and open communication
- To work in good faith to amicably and fairly resolve issues/differences
- To continue to pursue mutually agreeable objectives successfully
- To enhance positive government-to-government relations between VA and all federally recognized Indian Tribes
- To establish meaningful consultation procedures to develop, improve, and maintain partnerships with American Indians and Alaskan Native Tribes



Announcements

- DTTL March 5 and April 5, 2012 letters regarding healthcare reimbursement
- Tribal Resource Guide to assist justice involved Veterans in Indian Country – releasing soon
- OTGR Website – www.va.gov/tribalgovernment



Questions?

