

**VA****U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs**

# News Release

Office of Public Affairs  
Media RelationsWashington, DC 20420  
(202) 461-7600  
[www.va.gov](http://www.va.gov)FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
Oct. 7, 2021

## **VA Advisory Committee on Tribal and Indian Affairs appointees**

**WASHINGTON** — The Department of Veterans Affairs appointed its first-ever Advisory Committee on Tribal and Indian Affairs Oct. 4.

The committee will provide advice and guidance to the VA Secretary on all matters relating to Indian tribes, tribal organizations, Native Hawaiian organizations and Native American Veterans.

American Indians, Native Hawaiians and Alaska Natives have a rich legacy of service in the U.S. Armed Forces and have served with distinction in every major conflict for more than 200 years. There are approximately 160,000 AI/NH/AN Veterans across the country.

“This committee gives tribal leaders as well as American Indian, Native Hawaiians and Alaska Native Veterans a place at the table with the highest levels of leadership within the VA,” said Office of Tribal Government Relations Director Stephanie Birdwell. “It offers an unprecedented voice in how programs, policies and services may be delivered and provided.”

Committee members are appointed to two- to three-year terms. The initial 15 members and areas of representation are: Adam Archuleta (Albuquerque Area), Jack Austin, Jr. (Member at Large), Jestin Dupree (Billings Area), Manaja Hill (Great Plains Area), Reyn Kaupiko (Native Hawaiian Organization), Nickolaus Lewis (Portland Area), Kevin Meeks (Oklahoma City Area), Galyn Minkel (Bemidji Area), Angela Pratt (Nashville Area), Chief William Smith (Alaska Area), Eugene "Geno" Talas (Phoenix Area), Tewa "Ted" Tenorio (California Area), Sonya M. Tetnowski (Urban Indian Health Organization), Alfred "Fred" Urbina (Tucson Area) and James Zwierlein (Navajo Area).

Access the full list of advisory committee member [biographies](#).

###