DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
OFFICE OF TRIBAL GOVERNMENT RELATIONS
WASHINGTON DC 20420

February 10, 2012

Dear Tribal Leader - ayukîi (hello in Karuk):

Please allow me to introduce myself to you as your new VA Tribal Government Relations Specialist for the Western Region, which covers the states of Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Nevada, California and Alaska. My name is Terry Bentley; I am an enrolled tribal member of the Karuk Tribe of California. I am a former Health Systems Specialist for the VA Roseburg Healthcare System in Roseburg, Oregon. My 25-year VA career includes working at VA facilities in Portland and Roseburg, Oregon. I have been involved for many years with the Veterans Camp Chaparral program held on the sacred ground of the Yakama Indian Nation in Washington State. Even though, I am not a Veteran, my father was a Veteran and my grandfather a Veteran of WWII. I am very passionate and honored to serve our Veterans and their families making sure they get the care and benefits they have earned and so richly deserve. I reside in Roseburg, Oregon and work on the VA Roseburg campus.

During November 2011, Stephanie Birdwell, Director of Office Tribal Government Relations (OTGR) sent out a letter to tribal leaders updating the progress of her Office, which included the announcement of hiring her regional specialists and the launching of the OTGR website (www.va.gov/tribalgovernment). The Office of Tribal Government Relations looks forward to an enhanced working relationship with tribal governments. The goals of our office are to:

1) Increase access to services and benefits for American Indian and Alaska Native Veterans
2) Economic Sustainability
3) Tribal Consultation

Please **"save the date" for April 10-11, 2012** for the OTGR Western Region's 1st quarterly conference to be held with tribal leaders and other federal and state partners within this region. You are invited to attend this meeting which will be held at the Northern Quest Resort and Casino in Spokane, Washington. Room rates are $87 for single occupancy and $97 for double occupancy. Reservations can be made by calling 1-877-871-6772, press #4 for reservations. Rooms are reserved under the "US Department of Department Veterans/Office of Tribal Government Relations." Rooms are available to be reserved now.

I am very interested in hearing about areas of focus or topics you would like our office to have presented. Please email me your topics or concerns at my email: terry.bentley@va.gov or call me at 541-440-1271. I have established an ad hoc group who is planning this event. Enclosed for your review is the draft agenda. There are a limited number of sponsorships available to help pay for travel and per diem for this event. These slots are available on a first come, first serve basis. Please email me if you are interested in a sponsorship.

It is my great honor to have this opportunity and look forward to working with you. Please feel free to contact me with any concerns. We hope to see you in Spokane.

Respectfully,

Terry R. Bentley
Tribal Government Relations Specialist – Western Region

Enclosures