

CHAIRMAN
John A. Barrett Jr.



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6/14/06

SECRETARY-TREASURER
D. Wayne Trousdale

CITIZEN POTAWATOMI NATION

June 1, 2006

Betty Gould, Regulations Officer
Division of Regulatory Affairs
Records Access & Policy Liaison
Indian Health Service
801 Thompson Avenue, Suite 450
Rockville, Maryland 20852

Re: Comments on Proposed Rule, MMA Section 506, Medicare-Like Rates Provision

Dear Ms. Gould:

The Citizen Potawatomi Nation appreciates this opportunity to comment on "Section 506 of the Medicare Prescription Drug, Improvement, and Modernization Act of 2003(MMA) Limitation on Charges for Services Furnished by Medicare Participating Inpatient Hospitals to Indians" as published in the Federal Register Volume 71, Number 82, Friday, April 28, 2006.

The Citizen Potawatomi Nation Health Services (CPNHS) includes a tribal ambulatory health clinic that operates a Contract Health Services program for specialty care under 42 CFR Part 136, Subpart C, pursuant to the Indian Self-Determination and Education Act, as amended. After an extensive review of this rule and its potential outcome, the Tribe fully endorses the rule as it is proposed.

Currently, the Citizen Potawatomi Nation Health Services operates at less than 50% of the Level of Need Funded. Due to our severe funding shortage, many requests for Contract Health Service are denied. In short, only services that are "Life or Limb Threatening" are approved for funding. By providing Medicare-Like Rates for inpatient services, the proposed rule will result in substantial cost savings for specialty care purchased through the private sector for our Indian patients. This cost savings will, in turn, provide a substantial benefit to our Indian people as it enables us to increase in the number of patients that can be served.

Again, we appreciate this opportunity for comment and fully support the proposed rule as published. If you have any questions, please contact Ms. Rhonda Butcher, Self-Governance Director, at 405-275-3121.

Sincerely,


John A. Barrett