

**IHS/VA Steering Committee Conference Call
April 26, 2004
Highlights of the Call**

<p>Steering Committee Members present: Dr. Craig Vanderwagen (IHS) Dr. Frances Murphy (VA) Mr. James Toya (IHS) Mr. James Floyd (VA) Ms. Linda Pyne (VA) Mr. Elmer Brewster (IHS) Mr. Reece Sherrill (IHS)</p>	<p>Invited participants: CAPT. Candace Jones (IHS) Mr. Tony Kendrick (IHS) Ms. Verna Miller (IHS) Ms. Athena Elliot (IHS) Mr. Leo Nolan (IHS) Dr. Sherrie Hans (VA) Mr. Chris Mandregan (IHS) Ms. Amy Hertz (VA) Ms. Alberta Becenti (IHS) Ms. Wanda Patrick (VA) Ms. Tami Cannady (IHS) Dr. Terry Cullen (IHS)</p>
<p>Steering Committee Members Absent: Dr. Alfonso Batres (VA) Dr. Randy Petzel (VA) Mr. Chuck Nesby (VA) Dr. Valerie Parker (IHS)</p>	

1. Minutes from the Initial Steering Committee meeting on December 12, 2003 were approved and accepted.

IT Workgroup (ITWG) Overview presented by Mr. Floyd and Mr. Sherrill. The charge to the ITWG was reviewed; 4 members are on board at this point (including Dr. Robert Kolodner and Mr. Keith Longie). Emphasis for the ITWG is on establishing full implementation of an Electronic Health Record (EHR) in IHS and in Tribal Sites. Full implementation of the EHR implies accessibility at all clinic computer workstations. VA will provide initial training and implementation support. Three sites in the Billings Area have implemented EHR in FY2004. VA and IHS will be working with the Choctaw Nation to implement EHR with contractor support. The McCallister Tribal clinic may test the package and will get support from the Muskogee VA. Phased approach for implementing EHR to include 1-the facility using the package without the interface to VA so they can get used to working with the software; 2- identifying a local sub-group to deal with the VA/IHS interface and bridging VA/IHS sites; 3- full implementation may take up to 12 months including the use of standardized input templates for local use.

An agreement between the Billings Area and the Network 19 is being developed to support implementation of EHR; Billings Area will provide funding for VA to assist with the implementation (training and transition).

Action Item:

- ✓ *Additional ITWG members to be suggested by Dr. Kolodner and Mr. Longie for consideration by Mr. Floyd and Mr. Sherrill. A workplan will be developed by ITWG to describe the proposed implementation of the EHR at IHS and the contributions of VA to that plan.*
2. Dr. Frances Murphy and Dr. Craig Vanderwagen (co-chairs) presented the Health Promotion/Disease Prevention (HP/DP) Workgroup overview. The workgroup includes 8 members; had an initial conference call where they identified HP/DP needs within each organization and discussed potential areas for collaboration – Physical Activity/Nutrition and Behavioral Health (Substance Abuse and Suicide Prevention). Question was raised as to which areas are the highest priority for national focus or should the focus be on development at local communities? The Steering Committee identified PTSD (sharing VA’s expertise and their use of telepsychiatry); common chronic diseases including alcohol abuse, alcoholism, and substance abuse. There was discussion on the sharing of resources as each organization has experience and success in different areas (IHS experience in the community/primary care and VA experience in clinical treatments/secondary care). IHS is most under funded in Behavioral Health treatments. There was group consensus that the initial focus areas are Behavioral Health to include alcohol and drug abuse and PTSD (trauma – domestic and war time) and on diabetes with an emphasis on obesity and physical activities, and the development of materials for local use.

Action Item:

- ✓ *Over the next several months, the Workgroup will develop proposals for the Steering Committees approval on Substance Abuse, Alcohol Abuse and Trauma collaborations. The proposals will include national templates/toolkits for local use.*
3. **Communication Plan** discussion by Ms. Amy Hertz and Mr. Tony Kendrick included an overview of the draft plan provided to the Steering Committee group and highlights of communication activities within IHS regarding the MOU. The Steering Committee members asked for the Communication plan to clarify the message around the MOU:
- What does it mean for VA & IHS local use – clarify how the MOU can be used for a local agreement
 - How can the MOU be used (by the Tribes)?
 - What can the communities do?

Communication should occur in a variety of ways in order to get the word out to all in the community, including the Tribes, the Urban programs, etc., by use of email, list serves, web sites. The Steering Committee suggested creating frequently asked questions (FAQ) documents; fact sheets; standard PowerPoint presentation that can be used to brief constituents; examples of case studies on how we develop joint sharing; and consider Tribal consultation in the plan.

Action Item:

- ✓ *Clarify joint messages*
- ✓ *Create FAQ (template, case studies), PowerPoint presentation*

- ✓ *Mr. James Floyd to provide a copy of SLC's template/sharing agreement package (COMPLETED)*
 - ✓ *Identify a focus group to help define the messages and discuss the communication products*
4. Mr. Chris Mandregan presented an overview of the Area/VISN Directors Meeting held January 15, 2004. The joint meeting was an excellent forum and a great opportunity to begin meaningful dialogues and collaborations with each other. Dr. Hans mentioned that Dr. Petzel had the same sentiments. The January meeting sparked a series of local follow-up meetings with joint leadership. Dr. Murphy encouraged others to have joint meetings. Dr. Vanderwagen will be presenting at the VA's Senior Management Conference and VHA will participate in the IHS HP/DP Summit in September.

Action Item:

- ✓ *Identify date for the next Joint meeting*
5. Dr. Vanderwagen briefed the group on the visit to VISN 2 Executive Leadership Council that included Mr. Leo Nolan, Mr. Ritchie Grinnell, and Dr. Murphy. Dr. Vanderwagen and Mr. Nolan provided an overview of IHS with the group and they focused on the Nashville Area Office and the local VA working together along with the Tribal nations in the area to explore needs and opportunities. IHS invited Mr. Bill Feeley, Network Director VISN 2 and his staff to participate in the recent Tribal consultation on the budget. The feedback from the VISN was quite positive as they felt it was useful to hear the Tribe's concerns and observe the process of engagement with the Tribes. Dr. Vanderwagen suggested that other VISNs join their regional Tribal consultations, initially as observers and then become a more active participant. Mr. Nolan suggested that collaborative efforts also consider and include the Urban Programs.

Action Item:

- ✓ *Follow-up on question of including Consultation as part of the Communication Plan – how to talk to tribes.*
6. Dr. Murphy briefed the Steering Committee on the meeting of the National Combined Council Directors (NCCD) Meeting held in San Diego; as she and Dr. Berkley presented an overview of the MOU and collaborative efforts underway and planned. Dr. Murphy stated how helpful it was to attend the meeting and meet so many staff from IHS as many sidebar discussions were held on potential collaborative issues.

7. The next conference call will be planned for early August before the VHA's Senior Management Conference (August 17-19).

Action Item:

- ✓ *Identify a date for next meeting*
- ✓ *Standing agenda items will be updates on ITWG and HPDP*