

**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES  
PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE  
INDIAN HEALTH SERVICE**

Refer to: ADM

ALBUQUERQUE AREA INDIAN HEALTH SERVICE CIRCULAR NO. 2004-04

**DIRECT CARE ELIGIBILITY POLICY**

Sec.

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1. **PURPOSE.** The purpose of the circular is to establish the methods by which beneficiaries seeking non-emergency direct care services from Albuquerque Area Indian Health Service (AAIHS) facilities establish their eligibility to receive those services. The IHS Director has affirmed the "Open Door Eligibility Policy" between tribes and tribal leaders.
2. **REFERENCE.** Indian Health Service Manual Part 2-1.2, 42 C.F.R. Part 136, Director, (IHS Memo dated January 10, 2000 to Tribal Leaders reaffirming the Open Door Policy).
3. **POLICY.** It shall be the policy of AAIHS operated facilities to provide uniform quality direct care services to all beneficiaries who establish their eligibility to receive those services, regardless of the location of the beneficiary's home or his or her tribal affiliation.
4. **BACKGROUND.** The Indian Health Service provides direct healthcare services to Indian people based on the eligibility criteria found at 42 C.F.R. Part 136. Because its patient population is transient in nature, direct healthcare services are frequently sought from Agency-operated facilities by eligible beneficiaries because they are not close to their home facilities. It is necessary to establish the eligibility of those patients with whom facility staff is not otherwise familiar as being eligible for treatment.
5. **RESPONSIBILITIES.** Chief Executive Officers shall be responsible for implementing this policy, as well as establishing policies and procedures at the Service Unit level that will adapt the Area policy to local needs.

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Distribution: All Albuquerque Area Indian Health Service Manual Holders

Date: August 27, 2004

6. **PROCEDURES.** When an individual requests non-emergency direct healthcare services from an Agency-operated facility, the responsible staff member will request that the individual present evidence to support eligibility. Examples of acceptable evidence are the individual's Certification of Indian Blood (CIB), an identification card issued by a federally recognized Tribe reflecting an authorizing signature, a statement attesting to the individual's Tribal enrollment that is printed on federally recognized Tribal letterhead or similar official Tribal documentation or similar documentation that shows that the individual is a member of or descendant from a federally recognized Tribe. Regardless of the form of the identification that is presented, it must be accompanied by photo identification.

When the individual cannot produce evidence, but can identify another facility at which he or she has received services, that facility will be contacted and verification of eligibility will be obtained from it.

For minors who are unable to produce documentation, eligibility may be established by producing acceptable documentation of one parent's tribal enrollment as set out above, together with the minor's birth certificate identifying that adult as the child's parent.

7. **SUPERSEDURE.** None
8. **EFFECTIVE DATE.** This circular is effective upon date of signature and shall remain in effect until canceled or superseded.



James L. Toya, M.P.H  
Director, Albuquerque Area Indian Health Service