

VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Veterans Health Administration
Office of Integrated Veteran Care



VA Indian Health Service (IHS)/Tribal Health Program (THP)/Urban Indian Organization (UIO) (I/T/U) Reimbursement Agreement

Presented by

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VA Office of Integrated Veteran Care

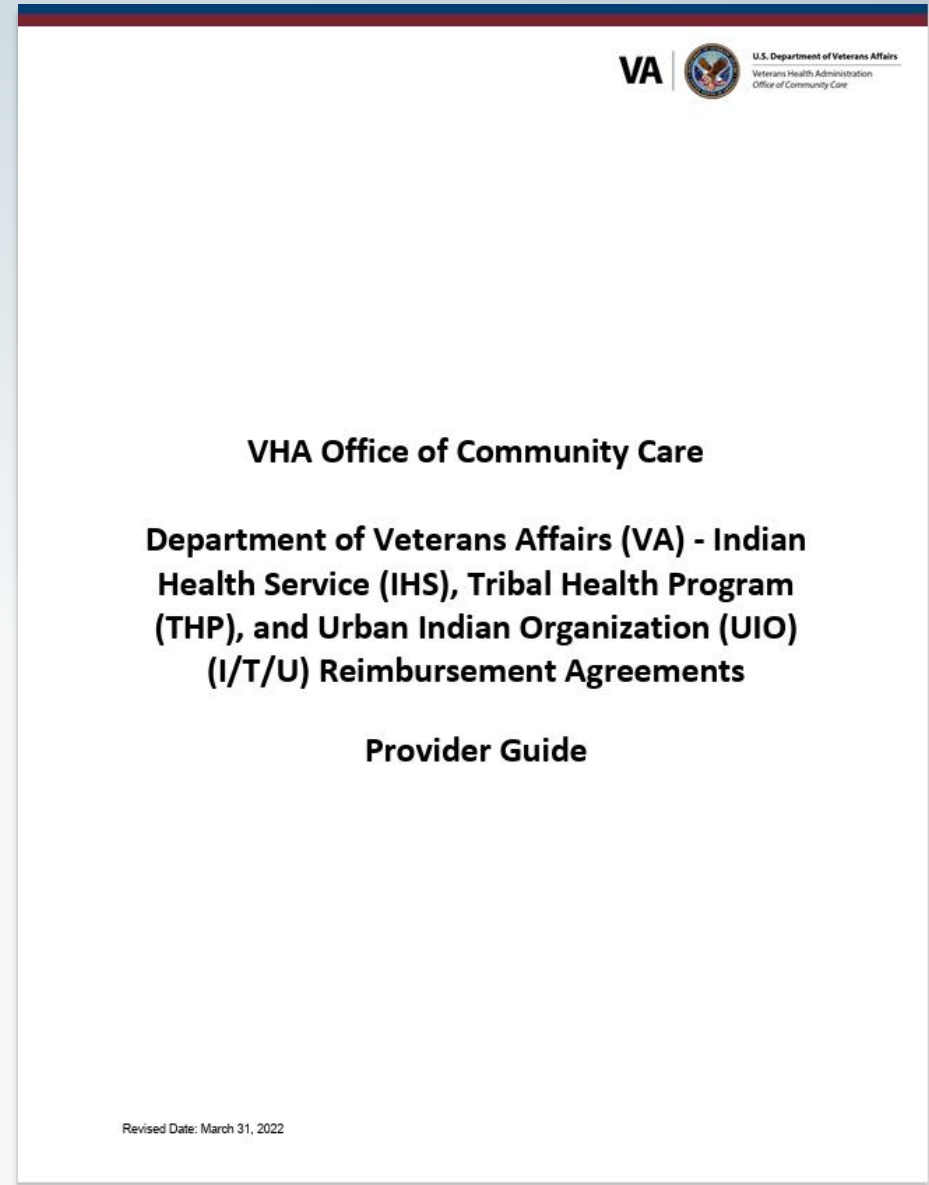


Topics

- VA-ITU Reimbursement Agreement Background
- Key Benefits
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 - Eligibility and Enrollment Requirements
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- Upcoming Meeting for ITU RAP participating THPs
- Resources and Contact Information
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Background and Key Program Features

[Provider guide](#) details specific operational details.



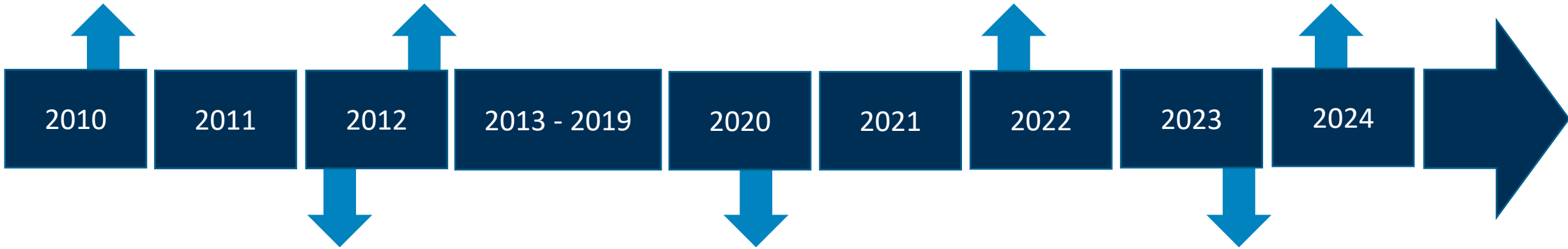
Timeline of the VA RAP

Oct. 2010 – VA and **IHS** renewed and signed an agency level **MOU** to improve access to care, care coordination, and resource sharing. The MOU was updated in 2021.

Dec. 2012 – The National VA-**IHS** Reimbursement Agreement was signed and individual THPs began establishment.

Feb. 2022 – The RAP program scope expanded to include **UIOs** to increase access to Tribal care in urban locations.

2024 – Negotiating the new **THPs** and **UIO** agreement



Summer 2012 – VA signed Reimbursement Agreements with 26 Alaska **THPs**.

Sept. 2020 – The Agreement was modified to include telehealth, COVID-19 related **PRC**, and extended until June 30th, 2024

Dec 6. 2023 – New **IHS** Agreements signed to include PRC and contract travel.

Overview of the VA the I/T/U RAP

Since 2012, VA has administered the [Reimbursement Agreement Program \(RAP\)](#)



Purpose of the program is to provide reimbursement to I/T/U health care facilities reimbursement for services provided to dually eligible American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) Veterans

Do **not** require VA preauthorization
(Care is not considered VA care)

Are **not** subject to VA Copay



123 Tribal Health Programs (THP), **74 Indian Health Service (IHS)**, and **7 Urban Indian Organization (UIO)** facilities participate in the VA RAP

I/T/U Reimbursement Agreements vs Other MOUs

Sharing Agreements are the authority to enter the relationship.

- Different from other VA Memorandum of Understandings (MOUs), Sharing Agreements, or Interagency Agreements (IAAs)
- Not part of VA purchased care programs.
 - Community Care Network (CCN)
 - Veteran Care Agreement (VCA)
 - Local Contracts
- Program managed by the Office of Integrated Veteran Care (IVC) but agreements are established between the local VAMC and ITU facilities.



Key Benefits

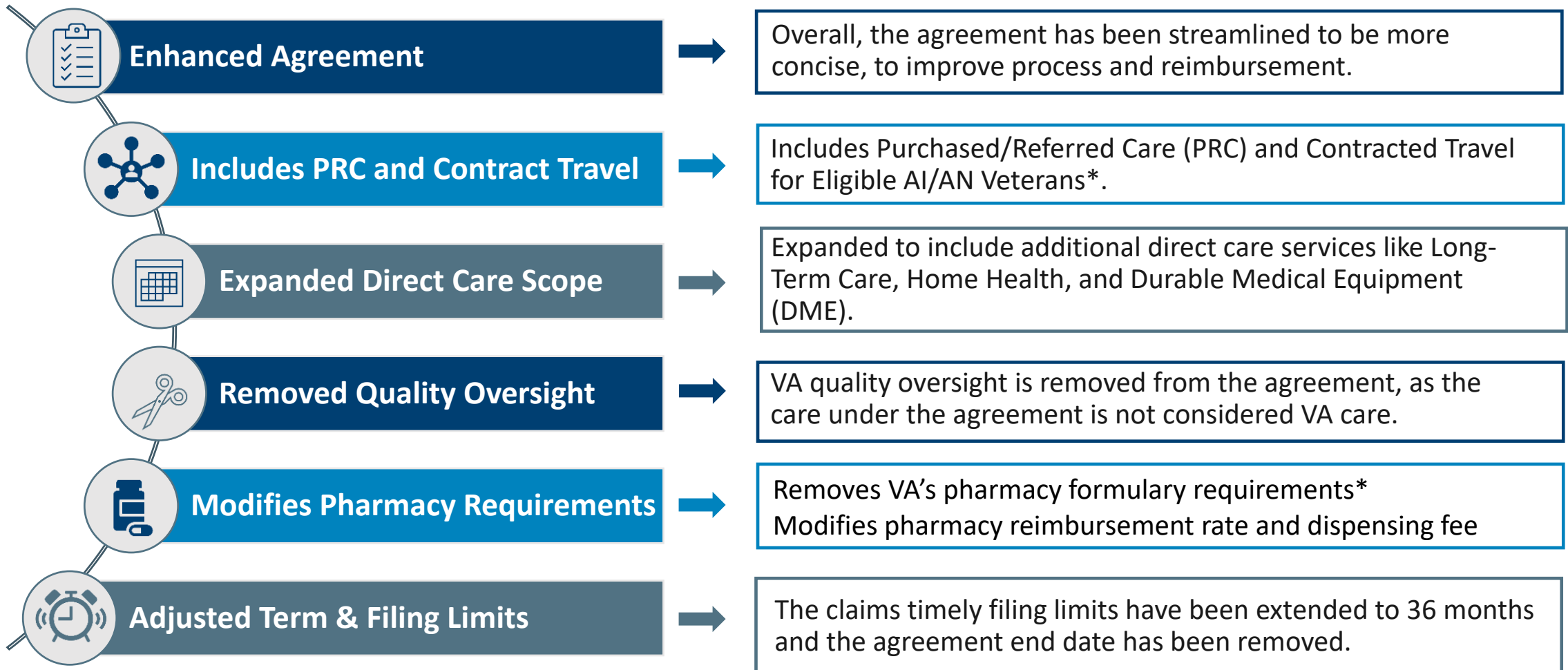
BENEFIT	DESCRIPTION
Collaboration	Promotes resource sharing through collaborative relationships both inter-governmental by sharing resources and with the community.
Choice of Provider and Access	Eligible AI/AN Veterans can choose to receive their health care from an I/T/U facility in a culturally sensitive environment, often closer to their home.
No Prior Authorization	I/T/U facilities that are providing direct care services Eligible AI/AN Veteran does not require VA-authorization to receive reimbursement from the VA.
No Copayment	VA copayments do not apply services delivered or purchased by the IHS or THP healthcare facility to eligible AI/AN Veterans under these agreements with VA. (Pursuant to section 405(c) of the Indian Health Care Improvement Act (IHCA)).
Outpatient Pharmacy Benefit	Facilities will be reimbursed for outpatient medications dispensed by the facility that are on the IHS/THP facilities formulary. UIO medications must be on VA formulary. This is not limited to emergent prescriptions.
No Outstanding Balances	ITU facilities must bill the Veteran's Other Health Insurance (OHI) prior to billing VA. VA is only responsible for the balance remaining after OHI reimbursements (except for Medicaid, which consider their payments in full).



New IHS Reimbursement Agreement

- IHS Reimbursement Agreement was signed and executed on December 6, 2023.
- Impacts all existing IHS facilities that are participating under the National IHS Reimbursement Agreement with the VA.
- There are major changes in the agreement that will affect IHS facility billing and VA payments.
- All IHS facilities will have to provide an updated **implementation plan**.

New Agreement Update Highlights





Scope of Service

Direct Care Services: any health service that is provided directly by I/T/U healthcare facilities.

Purchased Referred Care and Contracted Travel: care provided outside of an IHS and THP healthcare facility

Generally, VA will reimburse for services that are part of the **VA Medical Benefits package** such as:

- ✓ Outpatient, inpatient hospital, and mental healthcare, including care for substance abuse
- ✓ Outpatient prescription pharmaceutical drugs
 - ✓ IHS is subject to IHS formulary
 - ✓ THP and UIO is subject to VA formulary
- ✓ Emergency care (Direct Care)
- ✓ Telemedicine

[For full details: About VA Health Benefits](#)



Scope of Service Continued

Limited Benefits:

- ✓ Dental Care
- ✓ In vitro Fertilization (IVF)

NOTE:

- Veterans must meet special eligibility for some of these limited benefit services.
- Medical records may be required to determine eligibility. Request will be sent to the billing ITU facility as needed.

Roles in the Agreement (1 of 3)

STAKEHOLDER	ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITY
I/T/U Reimbursement Agreement Program (RAP) Office	<p>Office within VHA Office of Integrated Veteran Care (IVC), focused on providing AI/AN veterans with access to health care at qualifying I/T/U facilities. The program office performs the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Administers reimbursement agreement program, ▪ Provides program guidance and communication, ▪ Coordinates the completion of tribal agreements and modifications, ▪ Manages program documentation, SharePoint site, and websites, ▪ Provides stakeholder training, ▪ Manages risks and issues, ▪ Provides reports and data, and ▪ Performs other activities to support the Reimbursement Agreement Program.
VHA Health Eligibility Center (HEC)	<p>VHA's authoritative source for the verification of a Veteran's eligibility for VA health care benefits, including enrollment determination processing and notification, priority group assignment, and income verification. They provide VA enrollment and eligibility training, assist with Veteran eligibility verification, and Veterans Enrollment for the I/T/U facilities.</p>
Western Region Payment Operations (WR PO)	<p>A centralized VA I/T/U claims processing facility for AI/AN veterans and Alaska Non-Native Veteran receiving direct care at I/T/U facilities. Provides customer service to I/T/U stakeholders related to health care claims inquiries and appropriately redirecting questions related to other programmatic areas.</p>
Contracting Officer (CO)	<p>CO is the Government signatory for the THP/UIO Reimbursement Agreements. They have the responsibility and authority to issue, modify, extend and enforce individual VA-THP Reimbursement Agreements. The COs responsibility is centralized and assigned to Regional Procurement Office West. The CO is aligned under and work within the VA Office of Acquisition and Logistics (OAL).</p>

Roles in the Agreement (2 of 3)

STAKEHOLDER	ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITY
<p>Veterans Affairs Medical Center/ Veteran Affairs Health Care Systems (VAMC/VAHCS)</p>	<p>VAMC and VAHCS are directly involved the VA-I/T/U RAP through the completion of individually signed reimbursement agreement with the THP/UIO and implementation plans with IHS healthcare facilities. VAMC and VAHCS supports the program by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide additional information about other VA programs or resources for Veterans. ▪ Assists the I/T/U with Veteran eligibility verification and enrollments. ▪ Facilitates care of coordination for eligible AI/AN Veteran and Alaska Non-Native Veterans, if care cannot be provided within the participating I/T/U facility, which could include services provided directly by VA or the Community Care Network (CCN). Includes coordinating care for durable medical equipment (DME) requests. ▪ Provides patient advocacy services when needed (Customer Service). ▪ Assigns staff to perform roles to includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VAMC Agreement Manager is the liaison between with the I/T/U and their local VAMC. Provides assistance, facilitate communication, coordinate, and provide information to the I/T/U in support of the agreement. • VAMC Care Coordinator – is the liaison to the tribe for when the tribe cannot provide services and desires to refer to VA. • Benefits coordinator assist Veterans and provides information regarding Veteran VA benefits. • Pharmacy Representatives provides pharmacy information; reviews and approves VA Non-Formulary request from UIO facilities.

Roles in the Agreement (3 of 3)

STAKEHOLDER	ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITY
<p>Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Office of Tribal Government Relations (OTGR)</p>	<p>VA office designed to build and strengthen relationships between the VA, tribal governments and other key federal, state, private and non-profit partners to improve service to American Indian and Alaska Native Veterans.</p>
<p>Indian Health Services (IHS) Tribal Health Program (THP) Urban Indian Organization (UIO)</p>	<p>IHS is an agency within the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) that provides federal health services to American Indians and Alaska Natives. VA has a National Reimbursement Agreement with IHS that includes several IHS Outpatient and Hospital Healthcare facility.</p> <p>THPs are health programs operated by federally recognized tribes that control sovereignty over their own health care. While UIOs are nonprofit corporate body situated in an urban center, composed of urban Indians, providing Indian groups and individuals the provision of healthcare and referral services. VA has established individual THP/UIO Reimbursement Agreements with the THP/UIO.</p> <p>The I/T/U facilities' role is to primarily deliver healthcare services to eligible AI/AN Veterans. They are also responsible to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Managing and coordinating the VA-IHS reimbursement agreement program between the VA and their respective facilities/providers. ▪ Meet the terms of their Agreement. ▪ Submit claims according to VA billing and timeliness requirements. ▪ Verify Veteran’s eligibility and enrollment status prior to billing VA. ▪ Ensure high quality of care is being delivered, to include established patient grievance process and open communication with their local VAMC.



Program Operations

Rates, Eligibility and Enrollment

[Provider guide](#)
details specific
operational details.

I/T/U RAP Reimbursement Rates

SERVICE	RATE INFORMATION
Outpatient Services	IHS and THP - IHS All Inclusive Rate published in the Federal Register UIO - Medicare rates for UIO facilities
Inpatient Hospital Services	IHS and Lower 48 THP : Medicare rates Alaska THP : IHS All Inclusive Rate Inpatient Hospital Per Diem (excludes Physician/Practitioners Services). Professional charges will be paid at the Alaska Fee Schedule.
Critical Access Hospitals	Medicare rates
Ambulatory Surgical Services	Medicare rates
Outpatient Pharmacy	IHS : Billed charges THP : Actual Cost UIO : Wholesale Acquisition Cost (WAC) plus dispensing fee
Purchased Referred Care	IHS and THP : What the Tribe paid with EOB submission. Does not eliminate PRC requirements to seek OHI



Eligibility & Enrollment Requirements

VA and I/T/U are all responsible for verifying eligibility for health care services within their respective programs

- Eligible AI/AN Veteran must meet the following qualifying criteria:
 - Eligible for services from I/T/U in accordance with 42 CFR Part 136.
 - Enrolled in the VA Healthcare System as a condition to be reimbursed for 'Direct Care Services' provided under 38 CFR § 17.38 the Medical Benefits Package.



IHS/THP

**Purchased and
Referred Care
(PRC) and
Contracted
Travel Invoice
Submission**





PRC and Contracted Travel

IHS and THP facilities may obtain reimbursement for care they purchased and paid for under their PRC and Contracted Travel authority.

The requirements for the IHS and THP facilities are similar, but Submission for IHS and THPs is different.

UIOs are not reimbursed for PRC or Contracted Travel.



Required Documentation (1 of 3)

1. **Cover letter** (in Excel format provided by the VA).

Elements include:

- THP facility or IHS area information
 - **If THP:** Facility name, TIN, Billing Provider NPI, and address
 - **If IHS:** IHS area name and HIS facility name. The following information is required for both area and site: TIN, Billing Provider NPI, and address
- Veteran information(Full name, full SSN *or* ICN (Client ID), DOB)
- Date of Service (From Date/To Date)
- Name of community provider Veteran was referred out to
- Pharmacy Tab (if applicable)
 - If submitting a pharmacy invoice, the pharmacy tab must also be completed.
- IHS/THP exact payment amount

Required Documentation (2 of 3)

Cover letter, Continued: Cover letter and links to form

Tab one:

THP-PRC Billing
INVOICE

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
Veterans Health Administration
Office of Integrated Veteran Care

THP Facility NAME:			
THP Facility ADDRESS:			
THP Facility CITY:	STATE:	ZIPCODE:	
NPI:			
Tax ID:			
TOTAL INVOICE AMOUNT (must exactly match E-services submission) \$			

		VETERAN INFORMATION				DATE OF SERVICE		SUBTOTAL
E-Services order #	THP Tracking # (optional)	LAST NAME	FIRST NAME	UNIQUE ID (SSN or ICN)	DOB (MM/DD/YYYY)	From Date (MM/DD/YYYY)	To Date (MM/DD/YYYY)	THP Payment Amount

Tab two (for pharmacy, if applicable):

THP-PRC Pharmacy
INVOICE

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
Veterans Health Administration
Office of Integrated Veteran Care

VETERAN INFORMATION			DRUG INFORMATION				DATE OF SERVICE		
LAST NAME	FIRST NAME	UNIQUE ID (SSN or ICN)	NDC	NDC Description	Strength	Unit of Measure	Quantity	From Date (MM/DD/YYYY)	To Date (MM/DD/YYYY)



Cover letter can be found:



Online at

<https://www.va.gov/COMMUNITYCARE/providers/in-fo-IHS-THP.asp#Billing>



Or by emailing

VHA_104p_ops_western@va.gov

Required Documentation (3 of 3)

2. From the Servicing Provider to Billed IHS/THP:

- A copy of the claim form (CMS 1450/1500).
- A copy of the Explanation of Benefit (EOB), or Payment (EOP), from any Primary Payer/Other Health Insurance (OHI) billed prior to IHS/THP.

3. From IHS/THP facility:

- Explanation of Benefit (EOB), or Payment (EOP) from the THP facility or IHS site/area showing IHS/THP payment.

Additional Requirements

- The total invoice amount included on the cover letter must exactly match the supporting documentation submission.
- For COVID-19 PRC (for the timeframe all PRC is not covered) a COVID-19 diagnosis code must be shown in the submitted supporting documentation

Covid-19 emergency period PRC Pharmacy Billing

VA will reimburse only for pharmaceutical drugs/supplies on the formulary used by VA. Requests for reimbursement of pharmaceutical drugs not on the VA formulary will be submitted for approval to the local VAMC Pharmacy in advance of the request for reimbursement.

Here is the link to the VA Formulary listing: <http://www.pbm.va.gov/NationalFormulary.asp>
Search engine: <http://www.pbm.va.gov/apps/VANationalFormulary>

VA Criteria for Use for many Non-VA formulary drugs: <http://www.pbm.va.gov/PBM/clinicalguidance/criteriaforuse.asp>

IHSTHP must use cover letter and pharmacy tab completed to submit pharmacy invoice. It must contain the following:

- Date of fill
- Pharmacy name
- Drug name (generic name)
- Amount paid by the other health plan or for Pharmacy
- Quantity/NDC Unit
- Dr.'s name
- Drug strength
- Retail price
- Number of day's supply
- National Drug Code (NDC)
- Prescription number

COVID-19 PRC Scope

Date Range: Covers COVID-19 services during the related ***Emergency Period:***
January 27, 2020, to May 11, 2023. *(For IHS, all PRC is covered starting 12/6/23.)*

Eligible services – **COVID -19 related healthcare services**, identified by having one of the below COVID-19 related Diagnoses codes:

- U07.1 COVID-19
- U09.9 POST COVID-19*
- B34.2 CORONAVIRUS Infection, unspecified
- B97.29 OTH CORONAVIRUS as the cause of diseases
- J12.81 Pneumonia due to SARS-associated coronavirus
- J12.82 Pneumonia due to coronavirus disease 2019
- B97.21 SARS-associated coronavirus causing diseases class elsewhere

IHS/THP PRC Submission Process

1. Submit to VA via Secure Message at:
vha_104p_ops_western_region_nw_ihs_thp_support@va.gov.
 - IHS - via the IHS Secure Data Transfer Service.
 - THP - to VA via Secure Message at
 - See slide 19 for instructions on secure messaging
2. VA Payment Operations will review and make annotations on the cover letter regarding the VA approval or rejection/denial determination. The VA will return the cover letter to IHS via the IHS Secure Data Transfer Service.



ITU Quality Requirements

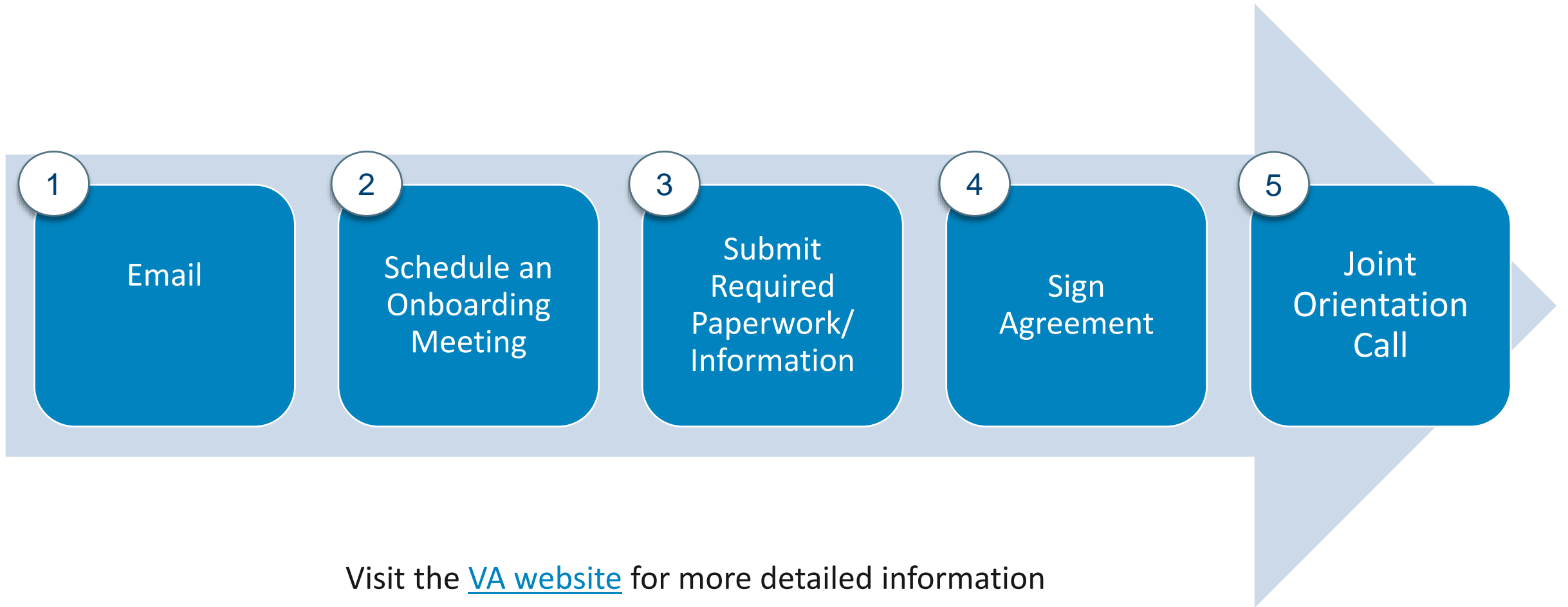
Agreement requires that the VA Medical Center (VAMC) will work collaboratively with the THP/UIO staff to ensure access to quality care for AI/AN Veterans. THP and UIO requirements include:

- Accredited: Accreditation Association for Ambulatory Health Care(AAAHC), Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JACHO) or CMS participating
- Established patient grievance process
- UIO: Ad hoc or annual medical quality assurance reviews as needed.
- THP: Annual medical quality assurance reviews
- IHS: None (No Quality Requirements)

Detailed Quality requirements can be found in the following section of the agreement:

- Section 7 for THP and UIO

Initiating a Reimbursement Agreement – PROCESS





STEP 1 & 2

Step 1: Email

Interested ITU facility can email the ITU RAP at tribal.agreements@va.gov. Provide facility and Point of Contacts (POCs) email and phone number.

Step 2 – Schedule Onboarding Meeting

VA will coordinate with the ITU POC to schedule the onboarding meeting to go through the agreement onboarding requirements.



STEP 3 – Submit Documents

- 1) Draft Agreement
 - Please keep the agreement in MS word format and use the “Track Changes” feature for all changes made to the template.
- 2) Implementation Plan
 - page 5: list of services the tribal facility provides (in-house and contracted)
 - page 6: tribal facility points of contact
- 3) Proof of accreditation/certification (see Provider Guide Appendix B for examples)
- 4) Approximate number of Veterans the tribal facility serves
- 5) Whether or not claims will be submitted electronically (EDI) to the VA
 - (see step 4, “Submitting Claims” for details on how to sign up for electronic claims submission)
- 6) Complete registration in the Systems for Awards Management (SAM)
<https://www.sam.gov/SAM/>
- 7) Attend one of VA’s monthly HEC Eligibility and Enrollment Training
- 8) Submit Vendor file to FSC
 - VA Form 10091 FMS Vendor File Request Form



Steps 4 , 5 & 6

Step 4: Signatures on Agreement

The VA –I/T/U RAP will confirm the implementation plan and all required documents been received and then seek signatures on the Agreement template, first from the tribe and then from the VA

- If major changes to the template are requested, VA legal review will be needed prior to signature.

Step 5 – Notice to Proceed.

- When step 4 is completed, VA will email the final agreement and the completed implementation plan to the I/T/Facility point of contact. The facility will be able to submit claims for reimbursement on and after the date notated on the agreement.

Step 5: Joint orientation

- VA I/T/U Program Office hosts a joint orientation call between tribe and VA Medical Center (VAMC). The purpose of this call is to connect the tribe with local VAMC contacts and provided an even greater level of detail on program and billing operations and procedures than during the Joint Orientation



UPCOMING Meeting for participating THPs on New Agreement Next Steps

Current VA-THP Reimbursement Agreements expires on June 30th, 2024, and all THPs must enter into a new Agreement to continue receiving reimbursement. This is a 30- minute meeting to talk through the process to enter into the new VA-THP Reimbursement Agreement.

- **Thursday, May 23, 2024**, at 1pm EDT/ 12pm CDT/11am MDT/ 10am PDT

[Join the TEAMS meeting now](#)

Meeting ID: 254 545 970 062

Passcode: mToSfz

Dial in by phone

[+1 872-701-0185,,555164894#](#) United States, Chicago

[Find a local number](#)

Phone conference ID: 555 164 894#

- **Thursday, May 30, 2024**, at 12:30am EDT/ 11:30am CDT/10:30 MDT /9:30am PDT

[Join the TEAMS meeting now](#)

Meeting ID: 247 222 766 928

Passcode: dNp9FP

Dial in by phone

[+1 872-701-0185,,166113915#](#) United States, Chicago

[Find a local number](#)

Phone conference ID: 166 113 915#

Resources

To contact someone in VA's RAP:
Tribal.Agreements@va.gov

Participating facilities with
payment questions, contact:
vha_104p_ops_western_region_nw@va.gov
ihs_thp_support@va.gov



- **Website** <https://www.va.gov/COMMUNITYCARE/providers/info-IHS-THP.asp>
- **Provider guide** – The guide contains specific operational details, hosted on website



I/T/U RAP Team



**Kara Hawthorne, LCSW –
Program Manager**
VA I/T/U Healthcare
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Program



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VA I/T/U Reimbursement
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Questions

tribal.agreements@va.gov