



VA-IHS Partnership

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VA-IHS MOU ~ Five Mutual Goals

1. Increase **access**, improve **quality** of health and leverage strengths;
2. Promote **patient-centered** collaboration and communication;
3. In consultation with tribes at regional and local levels, establish effective **partnerships** with: IHS, Tribal and Urban (I/T/U) Indian health programs in support of American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) Veterans;
4. Ensure appropriate **resources** are identified and available to support programs for AI/AN Veterans;
5. Improve **health-promotion and disease-prevention** services to AI/AN Veterans to address community-based wellness.

Reimbursement Agreement Status

- **June 2012:** Department of Justice provided guidance;
 - *approach changed from one National Agreement for both VA and IHS/THP, to (a) National Agreement for IHS and (b) individual sharing agreements under 38 USC 8513 for Tribal Organizations*
- **August 24, 2012:** Dr. Petzel signed and distributed the “Dear Tribal Leader Letter” with program guidance.
- **December 5, 2012:** VHA and IHS signed the VA-IHS National Agreement.
- **To Date:** THP has 34 signed agreements in place and 61 THP sites expressing interest/in process. *(only CA agreement signed is Indian Health Council in California)*
- Since inception, more than 400 Veterans utilized the THP agreement and approximately 1,506 claims paid as of July 2013.

VA and Tribal Health Program Highlights

Once local Tribal Healthcare facilities establish sharing agreements with VA Medical Centers (VAMCs), eligible American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) Veterans will receive the following benefits from their local tribal health facilities:

➤ Medical Benefits Package

- *The VA will reimburse for **direct** health services under the same Medical Benefits package available to all Veterans under 38 CFR § 17.38.*

➤ Choice of care provider

- *Eligible AI/AN Veterans can choose to receive their healthcare from the tribal healthcare facility and/or VAMC. No pre-authorization will be required for AI/AN Veterans if care is received at the tribal healthcare facility.*

➤ Pharmacy Options

- *Tribal Health Programs will be reimbursed when providing a 30-day supply of outpatient medications to AI/AN Veterans.*
- *After the initial 30-day supply, VA will reimburse for prescriptions using the Consolidated Mail Outpatient Pharmacy (CMOP) for routine, long-term outpatient medication.*

VA and Tribal Health Program Highlights

- **VA shall reimburse based on Medicare payment methodologies and rates for eligible services;**
 - *Inpatient hospital services are based on Medicare payment methodologies specific to inpatient stays (the Inpatient Prospective Patient System [IPPS]).*
 - *Outpatient services will be based on Medicare rates.*
 - *Professional fees will be reimbursed separately from facility fees.*
 - *VA is responsible only for the balance remaining after other third party reimbursements.*
- **Program is administered out of the National Non-VA Care Program Office of the Chief Business Office;**
- **Special Purpose funds have been set aside for FY2013 reimbursements for direct health care delivery by THPs;**
- **Beneficiary Travel costs are NOT covered by the Special Purpose Funds that have been set aside and must be covered out of normal facility BT allocations;**
- **Copayments are not required of the AI/AN Veterans who are eligible for care under this program.**

VISN 21 and Sharing Agreement Program: Where are we?

- **All VISN 21 Health Care Systems on the Mainland have been engaged in dialogue with various THPs in their catchment areas and individual inquiries are at different stages of the process. To see specific tribe and dialogue status, follow the link below to the VA-HIS & THP SharePoint Site;**
- **California has all THP programs and no IHS facilities; Nevada has both IHS and THP;**

Additional Information Resources

- **VA-IHS & THP SharePoint Site:**
[https://vaww.portal.va.gov/sites/HAC/IHS and THP/default.aspx](https://vaww.portal.va.gov/sites/HAC/IHS_and_THP/default.aspx);
- **All documentation on how to establish agreements will be housed at Office of Tribal Government Relations Website:**
<http://www.va.gov/tribalgovernment/> .

For more information on the IHS/THP
Reimbursement Program Contact:

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Questions ?