



# Indian Health Service Press Release

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## IHS prepares for Affordable Care Act implementation

On August 13 to 15, 2013, the Indian Health Service (IHS) held an Indian Health Partnerships Conference in Denver, Colorado, to train key health system staff on Affordable Care Act implementation requirements, including the new Health Insurance Marketplace, and the impact on the provision of health care services to American Indian and Alaska Native people.

“The theme of this conference, ‘Partnerships 2013: Accessing Health Care through the Affordable Care Act,’ exemplifies the Agency’s commitment to ensuring that we are well prepared for the future of health care and the new opportunities available to federal, tribal, and urban beneficiaries,” said Dr. Yvette Roubideaux, Acting Director of the IHS.

For American Indians and Alaska Natives, the Affordable Care Act will help address health disparities, increase access to affordable health coverage, and invest in prevention and wellness. The



2013 Indian Health Partnerships Conference in Denver, Colorado.

Affordable Care Act will offer many uninsured American Indians and Alaska Natives an opportunity to purchase quality, affordable health insurance coverage or to enroll in Medicaid or the Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP) through the new Health Insurance Marketplace. By filling out one simple, user-friendly application, many will learn that they qualify for financial assistance either through tax credits to purchase coverage in the Marketplace, reductions in cost-sharing that will reduce or eliminate out-of-pocket costs, or through enrollment in CHIP or Medicaid, if their state expands eligibility. American Indians and Alaska Natives will also have access to special enrollment periods outside the yearly open enrollment period and can continue to get services from tribal health programs, urban Indian health programs, or IHS if they enroll in a health insurance plan through the Marketplace.

Starting October 1, 2013, a Marketplace will be open in every state, providing millions of Americans and small businesses with “one-stop shopping” for affordable health insurance coverage that can begin as soon as January 1, 2014.

The Indian Health Partnerships Conference provided an opportunity to encourage both members of tribal communities and health care professionals working with tribal communities to educate others about

important new opportunities for coverage. Operational staff from Indian health system facilities responsible for patient care participated in the conference, and tribal health program staff from around the country also attended. Sessions topics included Affordable Care Act updates, enrollment, referral and billing information, Medicaid updates and an overview of the IHS and Department of Veterans Affairs billing process for federal facilities. Attendees also learned about Medicaid expansion and the specific Affordable Care Act provisions that impact American Indians and Alaska Natives. The presentations are available at [http://www.ihs.gov/BusinessOffice/index.cfm?module=boe\\_partnership\\_presentations](http://www.ihs.gov/BusinessOffice/index.cfm?module=boe_partnership_presentations).

The IHS, an agency within the Department of Health and Human Services, is the principal federal health care advocate and provider for American Indian and Alaska Native people. It provides preventive, curative, and community health care to approximately 2.2 million American Indians and Alaska Natives in hospitals, clinics, and other settings throughout the country.