



JUL 20 2010

Dear Tribal Leader:

I am writing to update you about ongoing consultations to improve the Indian Health Service (IHS) contract health services (CHS) program as per my letter dated June 8. I formed a workgroup and held a listening and best practices session to evaluate and recommend changes to this important program that pays for services our health care facilities do not provide.

The IHS Director's Workgroup on Improving CHS met on June 24 and June 25 in Denver, Colorado. The purpose of the Director's Workgroup on Improving CHS is threefold: (1) to review input about improving the program, (2) to evaluate the formula for distributing new CHS funds, determining if this formula should change beginning in FY 2011, and (3) to recommend improvements in the way we conduct CHS business operations. At this first meeting, the workgroup began reviewing Tribal comments.

On July 8 and 9, I held a CHS Listening Session and Best Practices Meeting in Virginia. These sessions were so well attended by Tribal leaders and other stakeholders that I have scheduled a second session for September 9 and 10 in Denver, Colorado. Please join me for this opportunity for me to hear your concerns regarding the CHS program (agenda attached).

Following is a summary of recommendations to date. The IHS and Tribes have developed best practices for many of these improvements.

- Increase CHS funding through the annual IHS budget formulation process
- Improve patient health education
- Strengthen relationships with outside health care providers
- Maximize third party resources
- Negotiate better rates for private sector services we pay for
- Coordinate case management services in order to provide better care for our patients
- Implement cost saving measures such as telemedicine

I am committed to ensuring the CHS program meets the health care needs of those we serve. For updates about CHS and other IHS developments, please check my blog, "The Director's Corner," at www.ihs.gov. If you have any questions, please contact Mr. Carl Harper, at (301) 443-1553, or by e-mail at carl.harper@ihs.gov.

Sincerely,

/Yvette Roubideaux/

Yvette Roubideaux, M.D., M.P.H.
Director

Enclosure