



APR 14 2010

Dear Tribal Leader:

I am writing to report on our progress with the Indian Health Service (IHS) Director's Area Tribal Listening Sessions. In line with my priority to renew and strengthen partnerships with Tribes, I am conducting a series of Listening Sessions in each IHS Area. The purpose of the Listening Sessions is to meet with Tribal leaders and to listen to ideas on how the IHS and Tribes can work better together and improve the IHS consultation process.

To date, I have met with 7 of the 12 IHS Areas as a part of my goal to hold in-person consultation sessions in each Area. By June, I will have met with all of the 12 Areas. I would like to thank those of you who attended the Tucson, Billings, California, Portland, Bemidji, Phoenix, and Nashville IHS Area Listening Sessions. I am looking forward to meeting with the remaining Areas: Oklahoma, Albuquerque, Navajo, Aberdeen, and Alaska. Area Offices will provide scheduling details for these sessions.

Throughout the Listening Sessions, Tribes have made recommendations on how to improve our Tribal consultation process at the National, Area, and local levels. They have also presented a number of priority issues that include the need for more funding, especially for Contract Health Services and Contract Support Costs. Shared areas of concern included the need for more focus on prevention and wellness, more information on health information technology issues, and a greater focus on conditions, such as cancer, diabetes, and obesity. I have asked Area Directors to coordinate any follow up items after our individual meetings with Tribes.

I am enjoying the opportunity to personally meet with Tribal Leaders throughout Indian Country. As much as our work at Headquarters is focused on actions to improve conditions for American Indians and Alaska Natives as a whole, each Listening Session allows me to focus on the diverse issues and concerns that are impacting individual Tribes within an Area. These visits are important because they will help us work in partnership as we improve the way IHS does business. I truly believe that the only way we can improve the health of our communities is to work in partnership and to strengthen our Government-to-Government relationship.

I plan to provide a final update to Tribal leaders once I have completed Listening Sessions in the remaining 5 Areas. For pictures and additional information about the Listening Sessions, please visit the "Director's Corner" on the IHS Web site at <http://www.ihs.gov>. Thank you for your input and recommendations on how to ensure that the Agency's partnership with Tribes includes meaningful and accountable consultation.

Sincerely,

/Yvette Roubideaux/

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