



JULY 20 2016

Dear Tribal Leader:

The Indian Health Service (IHS) is launching an exciting new Pilot to increase Medicaid and Medicare enrollment of IHS patients at six health facilities in four states. The Pilot will target American Indian and Alaska Native IHS patients eligible for Medicaid and Medicare who are not yet able to access the health care options and support available through those programs because they are not enrolled. The Pilot is an opportunity for IHS facilities to improve enrollment of patients in health benefits coverage, expand access to care, increase third-party billing revenue and, in turn, leverage resources available for IHS to spend on patient care. The lessons learned from this Pilot will help the IHS to identify best practices that can be used across the IHS, Tribal, and Urban Indian health care system.

The participating facilities are: Phoenix Indian Medical Center in Phoenix, Arizona; Pine Ridge Hospital in Pine Ridge, South Dakota; Rosebud Hospital in Rosebud, South Dakota; Sioux San Hospital in Rapid City, South Dakota; Blackfeet Community Hospital in Browning, Montana; and Quentin Burdick Facility in Belcourt, North Dakota.

For our patients, having Medicaid or Medicare coverage means having more access to health care. I encourage Indian Country to get enrolled in Medicaid and Medicare: it benefits you, your family and your community.

The Pilot is expected to increase resources available for IHS to spend on patient care. As you may know, the Indian Health Care Improvement Act provides that all third-party revenue collected by a service unit remains with that service unit to be used to meet conditions of participation and to supplement needs at the local level, such as hiring more providers, purchasing new equipment, and funding additional services. Third-party collections from Medicaid, Medicare, and private insurance make up a large part of a service unit's operating budget and help to make Purchased/Referred Care (PRC) funding go further and provide more services for patients. Enrollment in health benefits coverage, particularly in Medicaid, is the cornerstone of this revenue generation and helps to leverage PRC funding.

IHS is working with the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, which oversees Medicaid and Medicare, as well as other federal agencies, national and regional Indian organizations, states and Tribes to offer enrollment assistance training and host on-site enrollment events at the six facilities. Specific enrollment event dates for August and September will be posted on the [IHS calendar](#) in the following weeks.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Mr. Raho Ortiz, Director, Division of Business Office Enhancement, Office of Resource Access and Partnerships, by e-mail at Raho.Ortiz@ihs.gov or by telephone at (301) 443-2419 (office) or (301) 873-2362 (cell).

Sincerely,

/Mary Smith/

Mary Smith
Principal Deputy Director