



JUL 20 2016

Indian Health Service  
Rockville MD 20857

Dear Tribal Leader:

I am writing to provide an update about the Indian Health Service's (IHS) efforts to increase access to quality health care for American Indians and Alaska Natives and to initiate a 60-day Tribal consultation on a draft Quality Framework (Framework).

The IHS strives to provide access to quality health care for all patients receiving health care in the Indian health system, at both tribally operated facilities as well as federally operated (direct service) facilities. On June 15, I sent a letter to Tribal Leaders to describe the IHS's strategy to enhance the quality of health care in the Great Plains Area and across the country. As part of this strategy, IHS developed a Framework to outline key priorities and objectives that focus on strengthening the underlying foundation of the direct service health facilities within the IHS system of care. This Framework builds on existing initiatives and programs to drive improvements in service delivery. For your review, I have enclosed a copy of the Framework.

The Framework focuses on federally operated facilities to align with the following quality priorities: 1) Strengthen organizational capacity to improve quality of care and systems; 2) Meet and maintain accreditation for IHS direct service facilities; 3) Align service delivery processes to improve patient experience; 4) Ensure patient safety; and 5) Improve processes and strengthen communications for early identification of risks.

With these priorities to guide our quality improvement efforts, IHS will work closely with our Area Offices and direct service facilities to strengthen capacity to provide patient-centered, timely, effective, safe, and reliable health care of the highest quality. In addition, IHS will work to standardize key processes and policies aimed at improving the patient experience. IHS will also enhance our communication activities to keep stakeholders informed and engaged about Framework progress and achievements.

Over the next couple of months, IHS will convene two in-person Tribal consultation sessions and one telephone consultation with a 60-day comment period to invite written comments from Tribes and Tribal organizations across the country concerning the Framework and improving the quality of care provided at federally operated facilities.

The in-person consultation sessions will be:

August 30, 2016  
13<sup>th</sup> Annual Direct Service Tribes National Meeting &  
6<sup>th</sup> Annual Great Plains Tribal Chairmen's Health Board Health Summit  
Holiday Inn Rapid City – Rushmore Plaza  
505 North Fifth Street  
Rapid City, South Dakota 57701

September 19, 2016  
National Indian Health Board 33<sup>rd</sup> Annual Tribal Health Conference  
Talking Stick Resort  
9800 E. Talking Stick Way  
Scottsdale, Arizona 85256

The telephone consultation session will be:

August 15, 2016  
2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. (Eastern Time)  
Conference Call Dial-in: (800) 988-9462  
Passcode: 6895736

Written comments from Tribes and Tribal organizations can be e-mailed to [consultation@ihs.gov](mailto:consultation@ihs.gov).

A summary of all comments received during the Tribal consultation sessions will be made available on the IHS web site following the close of the comment period. Please provide your written comments as instructed below.

Thank you for your partnership and your engagement as we continue to work to strengthen access to quality health care at IHS. I look forward to hearing your input.

Sincerely,

/Mary Smith/

Mary Smith  
Principal Deputy Director

Enclosure

Instructions for Submitting Written Comments:

Please send input by e-mail to:	<a href="mailto:consultation@ihs.gov">consultation@ihs.gov</a> Subject line: IHS Quality Framework
Send input by postal mail to:	Ms. Rebecca Spitzgo Indian Health Service 5600 Fishers Lane Mail Stop: 08E86 Rockville, MD 20857 ATTN: IHS Quality Framework
Send input by facsimile to:	Ms. Rebecca Spitzgo (301) 443-4794 Subject line: IHS Quality Framework