



SEP 04 2019

Dear Tribal Leader and Urban Indian Organization Leader:

I am writing to initiate Tribal Consultation and Urban Confer to seek input on the memorandum of understanding (MOU) and related performance measures between the Department of Veterans Affairs, Veterans Health Administration and the Department of Health and Human Services, Indian Health Service. Our first event will be held on September 16, 2019, in Pechanga, California.

Our Federal agencies entered into an initial MOU to improve access and health outcomes for American Indian and Alaska Native Veterans in February 2003. Building upon a decade of successful collaboration and further established mutual goals to advance collaboration, coordination, and resource-sharing, we entered into a new MOU in October 2010. Consistent with our efforts to promote excellence and quality, our agencies meet quarterly to discuss and identify improvements to the October 2010 MOU that will improve access and health care outcomes for American Indian and Alaska Native Veterans.

On March 21, 2019, the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) released a report entitled, "*VA and Indian Health Service: Actions Needed to Strengthen Oversight and Coordination of Health Care for American Indian and Alaska Native Veterans*" (GAO-19-291). The report recommended that as our two agencies revise the MOU and related performance measures, we should ensure these measures are consistent with key attributes of successful performance measures, including having measurable targets. A full copy of the GAO report is available on the GAO Web site at: <https://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-19-291>.

We invite you to join us at our first in-person session on Monday, September 16, 2019, from 12:30 p.m. – 2:30 p.m. (Pacific Time) at the Pechanga Casino & Resort, located at 45000 Pechanga Parkway, Temecula, California. During this session, you will have an opportunity to learn about the MOU and related performance measures, ask questions, and provide input to Federal officials. The session will be free and open to the public as part of the pre-conference day of the National Indian Health Board Tribal Health Conference.

This session will be the first of several joint consultation and confer sessions. We will provide further details soon. Thank you for helping advance our partnerships and enhance care delivery for American Indian and Alaska Native Veterans.

Sincerely,

/Michael D. Weahkee/

RADM Michael D. Weahkee, MBA, MHSA  
Assistant Surgeon General, U.S. Public Health Service  
Principal Deputy Director