

FY 2014 VA-IHS MOU Executive Summary

Background

Veteran Affairs (VA) and Indian Health Service (IHS) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on October 1, 2010 with the goal “to improve the health status of American Indian and Alaska Native Veterans (AI/AN).”

On December 5, 2012, IHS and VA signed a Reimbursement Agreement ¹ allowing VA to reimburse IHS for direct health care for enrolled AI/AN Veterans. The reimbursement agreement serves as a template for VA to enter into other reimbursement agreements with Tribal Health Programs (THP). By the end of FY 2014, VA had disbursed a total of \$13.1 million to IHS and THPs to support the care of 4,500 eligible Veterans.

FY 2014 Achievements

VA, IHS, and their Tribal partners achieved significant successes through topic focused joint workgroups in care coordination, health care services, reimbursement and training and cultural competency. Listed below are some of the FY 2014 high level accomplishments:

- 440,575 prescriptions transmitted through VA Central Mail Out Pharmacy (CMOP) to AI/AN Veterans served by IHS facilities
- 18,618 AI/AN Veterans and family members impacted by VA-IHS Tribal contacts, outreach events, and training events
- 11,500 contacts made through suicide prevention outreach activities
- 3,759 Veterans served through the reimbursement program at VA and THPs
- 726 trainees attended educational presentations from the Posttraumatic Stress Disorder work group; 186 shared trainings between VA and IHS
- 8 additional IHS facilities added the Bar Code Medication Administration program to increase patient safety and avoid medication loss

Future Opportunities

AI/AN Veteran feedback, Federal legislation and VA-IHS workgroup report analyses identified several opportunities to improve the VA-IHS MOU implementation process. VA and IHS will take the following actions in FY 2015 to address the opportunities for improvement:

- Refine outreach strategies to impact more AI/AN Veterans, their families and their communities
- Develop a method to securely share VA-IHS workgroup information between agencies
- Include more Tribal representation in the structure and implementation of the VA-IHS MOU
- Grow the number of THPs participating in the reimbursement program
- Develop standard performance metrics to assess VA-IHS MOU progress.

¹ Petzel, Robert A, MD and Yvette Roubideaux, MD. (2012). Agreement Between Department of Veterans Affairs Veterans Health Administration and Department of Health and Human Services Indian Health Service for Reimbursement for Direct Health Care Service. Washington, DC.