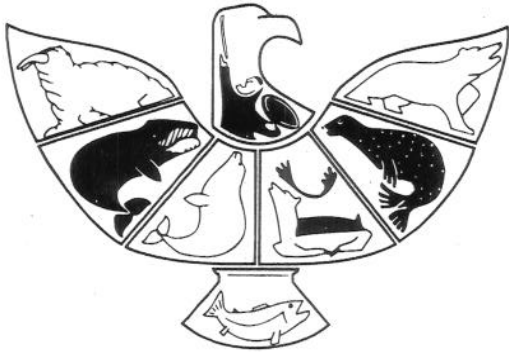


Rec'd 7/16/06



Alaska Native Health Board

3700 Woodland Drive, Suite 300
Anchorage, Alaska 99517

Phone: (907) 562-6006
FAX: (907) 563-2001

June 23, 2006

Ms. Betty Gould
Regulations Officer
Indian Health Service
801 Thompson Ave., Ste. 450
Rockville, MD 20852

Re: Section 506, MMA, Medicare Like Rates

Dear Ms. Gould:

On behalf of the Alaska Native Health Board, I am contacting you to express our support for the proposed rule regarding extending Medicare like rates to Tribally operated health programs.

This proposed rule was published in the Federal Register, Vol. 71, No. 82, on Friday, April 28, 2006, in order to implement Section 506 of the Medicare Prescription Drug, Improvement and Modernization Act of 2003.

We believe that action on this rule is long overdue. While we think there has been far too much delay in moving forward on this issue, we are pleased that the proposed rule has finally been published. Many Tribal health programs have been awaiting action on this rule for quite some time. With the serious level of underfunding that exists in Tribal health programs, our analysis indicates that this action will have a significant and positive effect on Tribal health care programs.

Thank you for the opportunity to express our support for the rule, as published. Please contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,


Trudy Anderson
President/CEO

CC: Dr. Charles Grim, Director, Indian Health Service

ALASKA NATIVE TRIBAL HEALTH CONSORTIUM
ALEUTIAN/PRIIBO OF ISLANDS ASSOCIATION
ARCTIC SLOPE NATIVE ASSOCIATION
BRISTOL BAY AREA HEALTH CORPORATION
CHUGACHMIUT
COPPER RIVER NATIVE ASSOCIATION
COUNCIL OF ATHABASCAN TRIBAL GOVERNMENTS
EASTERN ALEUTIAN TRIBES

KETCHIKAN INDIAN COMMUNITY
KODIAK AREA NATIVE ASSOCIATION
MANILAQ ASSOCIATION
METLAKATLA INDIAN COMMUNITY
MT. SANFORD TRIBAL CONSORTIUM
NATIVE VILLAGE OF EKLUTNA
NATIVE VILLAGE OF TYONEK
NINILCHIK TRADITIONAL COUNCIL

NORTON SOUND HEALTH CORPORATION
SELDOVIA VILLAGE TRIBE
SOUTHCENTRAL FOUNDATION
SOUTHEAST ALASKA REGIONAL HEALTH CONSORTIUM
TANANA CHIEFS CONFERENCE
YUKON-KUSKOKWIM HEALTH CORPORATION
VALDEZ NATIVE TRIBE