

A Dialogue to Renew the Indian Healthcare System

by

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We've Been Listening!

We want to talk with you

Not to you

What Positive Signs Do We Observe When We Examine Our Indian Healthcare System?

- Total healthcare services have gradually expanded over decades
- Now services include less hospital care and more ambulatory care
- Programs are often on or near reservations, concentrated where there are few alternatives

What Positive Signs Do We Observe When We Examine Our Indian Healthcare System?

- Congress has continued to support IHS programs, although major budget increases in recent decades are rare
- Indian healthcare model is highly regarded, both within the U.S. and internationally

Encouraging Signs

- Respect for traditional beliefs and integration of traditional healing practices with modern medicine
- Broad spectrum of comprehensive programs and services, from medical services to public health and environmental programs
- Fully accredited programs that combine local Tribal control with quality of care
- Workforce is predominantly Indian – 71%

Encouraging Signs

- Contributed to remarkable gains in health status, especially access to primary care services
- Reduced rates of infectious diseases, safer water, and more community sanitation facilities
- Access to health care in Indian country has increased; new advances in technology, tele - medicine

Unprecedented Challenges

- No benefits package
- CHS coverage of acute care over prevention & management of chronic conditions
- Referral networks between Indian health and private sector facilities are not optimal
- Recruitment & retention of healthcare professionals; chronically high vacancy rates
- Expanding and aging Indian population

What Troubling Signs Do We Observe When We Examine Our Healthcare System?

- Depleted funds, resulting in cut-back of services and/or intermittent shutdowns
- Depleted CHS funds - thousands of denials, deferrals, or referrals with no source of payment. Tension with private sector
- Limited funds results in medically necessary/essential services being unavailable, deferred, or denied

What Troubling Signs Do We Observe When We Examine Our Healthcare System?

- Long waiting periods/waiting lists and excessive backlogs for essential services
- Insufficient clinic space, physical capacity, configuration, equipment, and staffing
- Services/benefits are uneven and not portable. Inequity is pronounced and widespread

What Troubling Signs Do We Observe When We Examine Our Healthcare System?

- Recruitment/retention - high vacancy rates put extra stress on other workers
- Referrals without compensation creates strained relationships with private sector providers
- In California, the unaffiliated are often excluded, due to inadequate funding
- Co – pays

What Troubling Signs Do We Observe When We Examine Our Healthcare System?

- Unhealthy lifestyles (diet, obesity, and lack of exercise) more pronounced among Indian people
- Overall health status of Indian people remains below U.S. and in some areas, gap is even wider
- Health problems appear to be “lifestyle related” chronic conditions rather than infectious disease/sanitation related
- Health disparities still exist, despite decades of health improvements

IDEAS FOR WAYS TO RENEW OUR SYSTEM



GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR THE IDEAS



Securing a healthcare system for Indian people that fulfils our mission and goals



Strengthening our core model – a community oriented primary care system



Transforming but not diminishing services



Equalizing access to healthcare services



Seeking consultation on policies that affect Indian people



Honoring sovereign tribal choice

Range Of Approaches To Renewal

Efforts already underway - making progress

- Optimize clinical and administrative operations to local conditions
- Innovative efforts such as the “Chronic Care Initiative” are producing exciting results
- Timely for all of us to have national dialogue about the entire Indian healthcare system
- Encourage ideas for renewal of our system as a whole

KEY IDEA: 3 DIMENSIONS OF CARE SURROUNDING EVERY PATIENT



Three Dimensions of Care

Core Services

The following services should be broadly available:

- Routine, high volume ambulatory, screening, diagnostic, and treatment services
- Basic preventive care
- Covered prescription medications
- Dental services
- Some mental health and substance abuse services

Three Dimensions of Care

Intermediate Services

- Delivered through regional/in-network referral facilities
- Are more advanced and include hospital and specialty inpatient professional services

Three Dimensions of Care

Advanced Services

- Most advanced services would be purchased
- In California, there are no Indian-specific intermediate and advanced services (IHS – funded hospitals) except through CHS
- Highly specialized diagnostic, surgical, and treatment services, including transplants and other sophisticated surgery and treatments

Three Dimensions of Care

- Ideally, we want all three types fully available
- These three dimensions of care are not intended to be absolute or mutually exclusive
- It is not necessary that all Core services must be provided before any Intermediate services are provided
- We propose to manage capacity, staffing, and resources to assure Core services are widely available

CHS Issues To Address

- We need to determine if uniform eligibility should follow the CHS model, the direct model, or some other model
- Budget - dollar impact is potentially large. Need a forecast
- Management options - extent that CHS management practices need adapting to fit local conditions

CHS Issues To Address

- Aligning CHS Priorities - Implications of 3–dimension concept on CHS medical priority list
- Integrating Services - Extent CHS policies and practices need adapting to fit
- Eligibility - How many people would be affected?

IHS Director Position Statements On Policy Issues

- No one loses Federal employment
- P.L. 93-638 106A(1) amount will not be reduced
- Revisit the Health Facilities Construction Priority System

Discussion Questions

- Current Indian Healthcare System
- Re-thinking the Indian Healthcare System
- Specific Issues/Options

WHY RENEW OUR HEALTHCARE SYSTEM?



**We must secure and
improve Indian
healthcare, not only
for this generation,
but for generations to
come!**