



JAN 6 2012

Indian Health Service
Rockville MD 20852

Dear Tribal Leader:

I am writing to initiate a consultation on implementing long-term care provisions arising from the Indian Health Care Improvement Reauthorization and Extension Act of 2009 (IHCIA), included as part of the Affordable Care Act.

New IHCIA authorities for long-term care, home- and community-based health services, hospice care, and assisted living services have the potential to yield more choices and fewer barriers to services for elders and those living with disabilities. While there are numerous examples of successful development and implementation of long-term care programs by Tribes and Tribal organizations, these IHCIA amendments offer new opportunities for the IHS and Tribes operating under compact and contract agreements with the IHS. When combined with incentives for sharing services between the IHS, Tribal health programs, and existing Tribal long-term care program options (including technical assistance to Tribes and the use of existing underutilized facilities for swing beds, long-term or similar care), I am optimistic that we can work together to implement needed health delivery system improvements.

As a first step towards implementation of these new authorities, the IHS sponsored a meeting in November 2010 entitled, "Long Term Care in Indian Country: New Opportunities and New Ideas," in Washington, D.C. Nearly 200 Tribal attendees gathered to initiate discussions about strategies to put these new long-term care authorities to work in Indian Country. Enclosed is a summary that highlights major themes, ideas and suggested next steps that emerged from this conference. A complete conference report is available on the IHS Web site or at the following address: <http://www.ihs.gov/MedicalPrograms/ElderCare/index.cfm?module=longtermcare>.

I invite your comments on the recommendations from the conference and its report. I am also asking for your priorities on our implementation efforts since no new long-term care-specific funding is currently available. I would like us to identify actions we can take now while working within the confines of the budget formulation process. Please e-mail your feedback by March 16, 2012, to consultation@ihs.gov, or send your comments by postal mail to: Yvette Roubideaux, M.D., M.P.H., Director, IHS, 801 Thompson Avenue, Suite 440, Rockville, Maryland 20852.

Thank you for your guidance on this important topic.

Sincerely,

/Yvette Roubideaux/

Yvette Roubideaux, M.D., M.P.H.
Director

Enclosures