



AUG 2 2012

Dear Tribal Leader:

I am writing to initiate a consultation on whether there should be a set aside of Contract Health Services (CHS) program increases for prevention services. The Director's Workgroup on Improving CHS recommended that the Indian Health Service (IHS) consult with Tribes on this topic. The Workgroup believes that ensuring a portion of CHS funding is allocated for prevention services will reduce disease and delivery care costs among Tribal populations and promote wellness in accordance with Tribal health priorities. This recommendation was made in response to the current practice of funding medical priorities in order of need or urgency which often means prevention services are lower on priority system list and may not be funded.

American Indians and Alaska Natives are disproportionately affected by health conditions and chronic diseases as a result of numerous factors, many of which can be addressed through prevention services or actions. Primary prevention includes actions to protect against disease and disability, such as getting immunizations, and applying dental sealants to prevent tooth decay. Secondary prevention is the identification/detection of disease in the earliest stage to either cure the disease or slow its progress to prevent or minimize complications. Examples include cancer screening, tobacco cessation programs, and weight loss programs. IHS and Tribal facilities may provide these services directly or may need to use CHS funding to pay for them.

I look forward to your thoughts on whether there should be a set aside of future CHS program increases for prevention, and if so, what percentage of new CHS funds should be allocated. I would also like to have your input on the types of prevention and screening activities the set aside funds should be used to support. Please submit your comments in writing to: Yvette Roubideaux, M.D., M.P.H., Director, IHS, 801 Thompson Avenue, Suite 440, Rockville, Maryland 20852 or by e-mail to consultation@ihs.gov. If you have questions, contact Mrs. Terri Schmidt at terri.schmidt@ihs.gov, or by telephone at (301) 443-1547.

Sincerely,

/Yvette Roubideaux/

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