



Indian Health Service(IHS)/Tribal Health Program (THP) Reimbursement Agreements

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IHS/THP Milestones

- October 1, 2010: the VA Under Secretary for Health and IHS Director signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).
- March – May 2012: VA, IHS, and THPs initiated tribal consultation on a draft national agreement.
- June 2012: Confirmed approach: one National Agreement with IHS and individual sharing agreements under 38 USC 8153 for THPs due to their sovereign nature.
- August 24, 2012: VA Under Secretary for Health signed and distributed the Dear Tribal Leader Letter with program guidance.
- December 5, 2012: VA-IHS National Agreement signed.
- January 12, 2017: VA-IHS National Agreement was extended through June 30, 2019.
- January-October 2017: Most THPs Agreements were extended through June 30th, 2019.
- Ongoing coordination and onboarding of THPs.

Benefits Resulting from IHS/THP Agreements

- Promotes quality health care through collaborative relationships and agreements.
- Focuses on increasing care coordination, collaboration, and resource-sharing for eligible American Indian (AI) /Alaska Native (AN) Veterans.
- Provide eligible AI/AN Veterans with access to care closer to their homes in a culturally sensitive environment.

Payment Methodologies & Fees

- **Inpatient** hospital services are based on Medicare Inpatient Prospective Patient System (IPPS) for Lower 48 and All Inclusive Per diem Rate for Alaska.
- **Outpatient** services are based on the IHS All Inclusive Rate published in the Federal Register.
- **Critical Access Hospitals** are reimbursed at the established rate as determined by Medicare.
- **Ambulatory Surgical Services** are reimbursed at Medicare rates.
- **Administrative fees** applied to the following claims:
 - Except for Pharmacy, paper claims will incur a \$15 fee for the duration of agreements

Direct Care Services

- Direct Care Services are defined as any health service that is provided directly by IHS/THP. This does not include Contract Health Services, unless those services are provided within the walls of the IHS or THP facility.
- VA will not reimburse for any services that are excluded from the Medical Benefits package or for which the eligible AI/AN Veteran does not meet qualifying criteria.

Status of IHS/THP Reimbursement Program

- **IHS**:77 Implementation plans signed.
- **THP**: Currently 112 signed agreements, with 40 tribes in progress.
- To date, VA has reimbursed over \$77 million for direct care services provided by IHS & THPs covering over 9,500 eligible AI/AN Veterans.

IHS/THP Agreements Versus Other MOUs

Reimbursement agreements:

- Except for Alaska, only apply to AI/AN Veterans receiving direct care services.
- Do not relate to existing Memorandum of Understandings (MOUs) or sharing agreements in place, or being negotiated with VA.
- Program guidance and authorities for these agreements do not apply to other agreements or MOUs that maybe in progress and/or in place.
- While some VA Medical Centers' (VAMCs) staff involved with Reimbursement Agreements might also be the points of contact for other MOU development efforts, the efforts should be considered separate and distinct.

Basic Process for Establishing THP Agreements



- Using the agreement template, the VAMC, THP, and Contracting Officer work together to complete the draft reimbursement agreement.
- The national template shall always be used.
- Concurrently, the THP works to satisfy local implementation criteria.
- Once the draft is complete, it will be reviewed by Office of Community Care, Network Contracting Office and Regional Counsel, respectively.
- After final signatures, reimbursement for direct care can commence.

Eligibility & Enrollment

- VA and IHS are responsible for determining eligibility for health care services within their respective programs.
- The eligible Veteran must also meet IHS eligibility requirements and be eligible for services in accordance with 42 C.F.R. Part 136.
- Veterans must be enrolled in the VA system before a claim can be processed and reimbursed.
- Monthly training is provided by the VHA Health Eligibility Center (please email Tribal.Agreements@va.gov to receive a Calendar Invite).

IHS/THP Resources and Contact Information

Information on how to establish agreements, templates, forms and guides about the program are housed at Veterans Health Administration (VHA), Office of Community Care <https://www.va.gov/PURCHASEDCARE/programs/veterans/nonvacare/ihs/index.asp>

For more information on getting started with Tribal Health Program agreements, send an e-mail to tribal.agreements@va.gov

VHA Office of Community Care

VHA Office of Community Care
VHA Office of Community Care Home
Community Care Programs Overview
Information for Caregivers
Information for Dependents
Information for Veterans
Billing
Copayment Information
Emergency Care
Foreign Medical Program
Indian Health Services
No-Cost Flu Immunizations
Patient-Centered Community Care (PC3) Program

Indian Health Service / Tribal Health Program (IHS/THP)
Reimbursement Agreements Program

VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Veterans Health Administration

Office of Community Care

Tribal Reimbursement Agreements Program

The VHA Office of Community Care, the Office of Tribal Government Relations, and VA medical centers work together to implement the Tribal Reimbursement Agreements Program. The Tribal Reimbursement Agreements Program provides a means for Indian Health Services (IHS) and Tribal Health Programs (THP) facilities to receive reimbursement from the VA for direct care services provided to eligible American Indian/Alaska Native Veterans. This program is part of a larger effort set forth in the Department of Veteran Affairs and IHS Memorandum of Understanding signed in October 2010 to improve access to care and care coordination for our nation's Native Veterans.

More information about the program can be found on the [Office of Tribal Government Relations website](#) or by contacting the Tribal Agreements Program Team at tribal.agreements@va.gov.

Questions?