

Tribal Technical Advisory Group

To the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services

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April 15, 2009

Charlene Frizzera, Acting Administrator
Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services
Hubert H. Humphrey Building
200 Independence Avenue S.W.
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Acting Administrator Frizzera,

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) Tribal Technical Advisory Group (TTAG) has had a long and unsuccessful history trying to resolve barriers Tribes are facing when they attempt to participate in the Washington State Medicaid Administrative Match (MAM) program.

After a State Tribal consultation, Dennis Smith issued a letter outlining a compromise, which was accepted. A short time later CMS MAM staff added an additional condition related to the time studies, which was not acceptable due to the high cost of implementation.

The TTAG then formally requested a national Tribal consultation. On January 16, shortly before he left office, Herb Kuhn sent a letter to TTAG saying that he believed the discussion should occur within TTAG. On February 5th TTAG responded by providing information to CMS on the intent of Tribal consultation and the relative role of TTAG. The letter concludes by saying:

“We strongly recommend that CMS conduct a national Tribal consultation on the issues outlined in our October 15, 2008, letter to Mr. Weems. We further clarify that the TTAG is not a forum for Tribal consultation. “

As such we are again requesting that a national Tribal consultation on MAM be held and that the new reporting requirements being imposed on Washington tribes be suspended until the consultation occurs.

We appreciate that this is a time of transition within CMS and as such believe the best course of action is for CMS to continue the current MAM agreement for Washington State Tribes and postpone requirements that need further Tribal discussion. With the passage of CHIPRA and ARRA Congress and the Obama administration have sent a clear message about the importance of improving outreach and enrollment for American Indians and Alaska Natives. MAM is one of the few sources of funding available to Tribes for this important activity and as such it must be available in a way that permits all Tribes to participate in a cost effective way.

Sincerely,

/s/

Valerie Davidson, Chair
CMS TTAG