

Tribal Technical Advisory Group

to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services

National Indian Health Board 101 Constitution Ave NW, #8B02 Washington, DC 20001 (202) 742-4262 (202) 742-4285 fax www.nihb.org

November 23, 2004

Dr. Mark McClellan, Administrator
Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services
Hubert H. Humphrey Building
200 Independence Ave.
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Dr. McClellan:

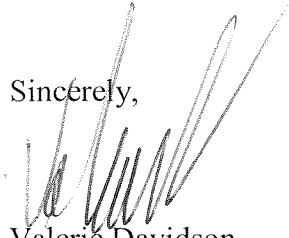
On behalf of the Tribal Technical Advisory Group (TTAG) to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, I want to take this opportunity to extend a thank you for your commitment to improve the health status of American Indians and Alaska Natives (AI/AN). This has been demonstrated by your support and commitment for the outreach and education trainings that have occurred across all of Indian country to enroll eligible beneficiaries into the Medicare Drug Discount Card Program. The two special endorsed AI/AN sponsors and cards have also allowed the trainings to focus on direct contacts with Tribal pharmacies and Indian programs for the important purpose of contracting. Without these contracts, AI/AN cannot fully participate in the new Medicare benefits.

The willingness and commitment of CMS staff contributed to a positive collaboration with Indian Health Service, Tribes, and Urban (I/T/U) programs. A significant comment from participants of the trainings indicated that the information presented was at the level needed to understand the Drug Discount Card Program. There were also additional comments made that training on Medicare Modernization Act changes must be on-going. I want to note that the Drug Discount Card training was the first Medicare training effort conducted for the benefit of tribal communities on a national basis. Previous efforts have been made as demonstrations, and although welcomed, they were limited to select tribes. Ongoing training that is national in scope will be most beneficial to not only improving the quality of how CMS programs are administered in Indian Country but will support a positive partnership between CMS and Indian health programs. We know that your support and direction will continue to be key to this accomplishment.

In the most recent training effort, we particularly want to recognize the contributions of several of your staff. Dorothy Dupree, Roger Goodacre and Tamara Jackson Douglas all worked to make the AI/AN drug discount card trainings successful. We also want to thank Regional Native American Contacts, Medicare MMA staff and other CMS staff who provided information at trainings and helped organize the sessions and training materials.

Again we thank you and look forward to continued positive collaborative efforts to improve the health status of American Indian health through effective education, outreach and enrollment efforts.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Valerie Davidson', written over the word 'Sincerely,'.

Valerie Davidson

Chair, CMS Tribal Technical Advisory Group

Executive Vice President, Yukon-Kuskokwim Health Corporation

Cc: Kathleen Harrington, Director, Office of External Affairs
Michael McMullen, Deputy Director, CBC
Dr. Charles Grim, Director, Indian Health Service