

March 30, 2017

Ms. Seema Verma
Administrator
Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services
200 Independence Ave SW
Washington, DC 20201

RE: Meeting Request To Discuss Current TTAG Priorities

Dear Administrator Verma:

As Chair of the Tribal Technical Advisory Group¹ (TTAG) to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), I request a meeting at your earliest convenience in order to discuss with you the current TTAG priorities and outline strategies for effective partnership going forward. American Indians and Alaska Natives (AI/ANs) have some of the worst health disparities in the United States. On average, AI/ANs have a life expectancy that is 4.4 year less than the U.S. all races population (73.7 years to 78.1 years, respectively). AI/ANs continue to die at higher rates than other Americans in many categories, including chronic liver disease and cirrhosis, diabetes mellitus, unintentional injuries, assault/homicide, intentional self-harm/suicide, and chronic lower respiratory diseases. CMS plays a critical role in reducing health disparities and is advised by TTAG in developing its policies in a manner that upholds the United States trust responsibility to provide health care to AI/AN.

In 2009, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 mandated that the TTAG be maintained within CMS and is unique to other Tribal advisory committees because it is rooted in statute. Using TTAG as one important vehicle, CMS and Tribes have enjoyed a strong partnership to ensure that specific AI/AN protections are maintained and we look forward to a continuation of this partnership under your leadership. As the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and CMS work to implement changes in the way the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA) is enforced, I would like to meet with you to discuss the priorities

¹ The TTAG advises the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services on Indian health policy issues involving Medicare, Medicaid, the Children's Health Insurance Program, and other health care programs funded (in whole or in part) by CMS. In particular, the TTAG focuses on providing policy advice designed to improve the availability of health care services to American Indians and Alaska Natives under these federal health care programs, including through providers operating under the health programs of the Indian Health Service, Indian Tribes, Tribal organizations, and urban Indian organizations.

outlined below and highlight CMS's role in carrying out the United States' trust responsibility to provide health care to AI/AN. Our priorities are as follows:

- **Retain eligibility under Medicaid to all American Indians and Alaska Natives up to 138% of the Federal Poverty level (FPL).**
- **Maintain or strengthen affordability of individual market (e.g. Marketplace) coverage for American Indians and Alaska Natives.**
- **Ensure the trust responsibility for Indian health care remains a federal responsibility and is not shifted to the states.**
- **Maintain 100% Federal Medical Assistance Percentage (FMAP), plus the reimbursement rates for services at the OMB rates published annually in the Federal Register for inpatient and outpatient facilities and give full effect to CMS's recent State Health Official Letter**
- **Ensure Medicaid payments to the Indian health care system are not subject to a block grant or per capita cap.**
- **Preserve American Indian and Alaska Native specific provisions in Medicaid, including protections from premiums and cost sharing, prohibition of classifying trust lands and cultural and religious items as resources for eligibility purposes, and other protections.**
- **Extend and apply these provisions to urban Indian health care programs (UHPs) whenever permissible under federal law.**

I realize the tremendous demands on your schedule, but nonetheless hope we can meet soon. I can be as flexible with my schedule as needed, and am able to be in DC as early as next week. Please contact either Devin Delrow at DDelrow@nihb.org or myself directly at rallen@jamestowntribe.org to identify a date and time for our meeting.

On behalf of the TTAG, I look forward to a continued productive engagement with CMS and developing a partnership with you with the aim of a betterment of quality health care for AI/ANs. Thank you.

Respectfully,



W. Ron Allen, Chair,
Tribal Technical Advisory Group

cc: Kitty Marx, Director, CMCS Division of Tribal Affairs