



DEC 08 2017

Mr. Nicolas Barton
Chairman
Direct Service Tribes Advisory Committee
P.O. Box 167
Concho, OK 73022

Dear Chairman Barton:

I am writing to share updates from the Indian Health Service (IHS) Direct Service Tribes Advisory Committee (DSTAC) meeting held in Arlington, Virginia, on October 24. I want to thank the members of the DSTAC for the work that you all do to assist us in meeting our mission to raise the physical, mental, social, and spiritual health of American Indians and Alaska Natives to the highest level. The IHS values the Committee's thoughtful consideration and recommendations on direct services operations and policy issues.

The update that follows addresses issues, questions, and recommendations that arose during our October meeting.

Letter on Facilities Appropriations Advisory Board (FAAB): The DSTAC requested that a letter regarding recent FAAB meeting be shared with Tribes.

IHS Update: The Secretary, Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), and the Program Support Center (PSC), Real Estate, Logistics, and Operations recently approved an increase in the capital project cost thresholds for which the IHS must receive project approval from HHS and the Capital Investment Review Board. The HHS decision does not change the planning process, document requirements, or the established costs thresholds for IHS Area Office approval of capital projects that are federally funded. We will be sharing a letter with Tribal Leaders in the near future that addresses these threshold changes and their impact on IHS Headquarters and Area approval thresholds for health care facilities projects.

Updates from the IHS on Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) activities: The DSTAC requested a report on collaborative activities with the VA be provided during the Great Plains Area IHS consultation events.

IHS Update: Updates related to IHS partnership and collaborative activities with the VA health system will be shared with Tribes at all future GPA Tribal consultation meetings, including meetings and/or discussions with individual Tribes.

Share HHS Secretary's Tribal Advisory Committee (STAC) information with DSTAC Area Representatives: The DSTAC suggests STAC communications be provided through the IHS Office of Direct Service and Contracting Tribes (ODSCT).

IHS Update: The IHS ODSCT works through existing partnerships with the HHS Office of Intergovernmental and External Affairs (IEA) to continue to strengthen Government to Government relationships. Mr. Ken Coriz, Program Analyst, ODSCT, IHS, serves as the ODSCT point of contact to share information with the DSTAC. Please contact Mr. Coriz by telephone at (301) 443-1104 or by e-mail at kenneth.coriz@ihs.gov. Additionally, the IHS ODSCT provided the DSTAC with a consolidated list of HHS committees on October 25 and will continue to share updates.

I appreciate your ongoing support and look forward to meeting with you during the upcoming DSTAC meeting in February 2018.

Sincerely,



RADM Michael D. Weahkee, MBA, MHSA
Assistant Surgeon General, U.S. Public Health Service
Acting Director