



October 21, 2021

Dear Tribal Leader and Urban Indian Organization Leader:

We are pleased to report that the United States (U.S.) Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Veterans Health Administration (VHA) and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Indian Health Service (IHS) have signed a new memorandum of understanding (MOU) aimed at improving the health status of American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) Veterans. We have enclosed a copy for your reference.

The MOU establishes a framework for coordination and partnering between the VHA and the IHS to leverage and share resources and investments in support of each organization's mutual goals. We entered into an initial MOU in February 2003 to improve access and health outcomes for AI/AN Veterans and subsequently updated the MOU in October 2010. We believe this newly signed MOU builds on nearly 2 decades of experience and will continue to support our objective to improve access and health care outcomes for AI/AN Veterans.

We would like to thank each and every one of you who participated in any of the six technical assistance and listening sessions provided in the 90-day Tribal Consultation and Urban Confer. Your recommendations and guidance have helped us make improvements that enhance the care provided to AI/AN patients. By actively encouraging collaboration between our agencies to the maximum extent permitted by law, we have made noteworthy progress. The VA published a Tribal Consultation listening session summary report that presents feedback on proposed updates to the draft revisions to the MOU, available online at https://files.kauffmaninc.com/projects/VA/VA_2021_Consultation_Final_508.pdf.

Now that we have executed a new MOU, we will begin the process of creating a new operational plan that will identify operational goals and performance metrics. Annual Tribal Consultation and Urban Confer on the newly developed operational plan will be essential to ensuring ongoing involvement by Tribal Leaders and Urban Indian Organization Leaders with the MOU.

Thank you for your partnership and collaboration. We look forward to full implementation of this MOU.

Sincerely,

/Steven L. Lieberman, M.D./
Acting Under Secretary for Health
Veterans Health Administration

/Elizabeth A. Fowler/
Acting Director
Indian Health Service

Enclosure: As stated