

Tribal Technical Advisory Group

To the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services

c/o National Indian Health Board 926 Pennsylvania Avenue, SE Washington, DC 20003 (202) 507-4070 (202) 507-4071 fax

Delivered Electronically

April 13, 2011

Dr. Donald Berwick, M.D.
Administrator
Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services
Department of Health and Human Services
Room 445-G
Hubert Humphrey Building
200 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20201

Subject: Enabling Indian Sponsorship under Exchange Plans

Dear Administrator Berwick:

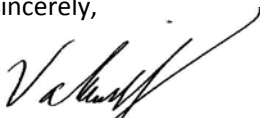
On behalf of the Tribal Technical Advisory Group to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid (TTAG/CMS),¹ I am writing to express the concurrence of TTAG with a prior recommendation made by the National Indian Health Board to the CMS Center for Consumer Information and Insurance Oversight (CCIIO).² As you know, TTAG advises CMS on Indian health policy issues involving Medicare, Medicaid, the Children's Health Insurance Program, and any other health care program funded (in whole or in part) by CMS.

In response to the CCIIO request for comments on Exchange-related provisions in the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, NIHB recommended that the Secretary of Health and Human Services require State-based Exchanges to enable Indian Tribes, tribal organizations, and urban Indian organizations to pay premiums on behalf of American Indians and Alaska Natives (referred to here as Indian Sponsorship). Sponsorship mechanisms have proven to be effective at increasing the enrollment of ethnic and racial minorities, particularly American Indians and Alaska Natives (AI/AN), in comprehensive health insurance coverage.

Please find attached background information on Indian Sponsorship mechanisms and suggested regulatory language that would facilitate the establishment of Indian Sponsorship mechanisms by State-based Exchanges.

TTAG members would like to request a meeting with you and/or the appropriate members of your staff to discuss this matter further. Thank you for your continued interest and efforts in advancing the health status of American Indian and Alaska Native people across the United States.

Sincerely,



Valerie Davidson
Chair, Tribal Technical Advisory Group to CMS

Cc: Kitty Marx, Director, CMS Tribal Affairs Group

Attachment: Indian Sponsorship under Exchange Plans, TTAG, April 13, 2011

¹ Sec. 5006(e) of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act codifies in statute, at sections 1902(a)(73) and 2107(e)(1)(C) of the Social Security Act, the requirement for the Secretary of Health and Human Services to maintain a Tribal Technical Advisory Group within CMS and the requirement that States seek advice from Tribes on a regular and ongoing basis where one or more Indian health program or urban Indian organization furnishes health care services.

² NIHB Comments Regarding Exchange-Related Provisions in Title I of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (OCIIO – 9989 – NC), October 4, 2010, pages 10 - 11.